

formed via *pro*-drop and the absence of a copula verb (Merchant 1998), as in the hypothetical English example ‘John punched someone, but I don’t know who ~~it was~~’.

4. Tokelauan simple equative clause sluicing. This section examines sluicing examples which cannot have a pseudocleft underlying structure. Sluicing has a well-established identity requirement. Deleted content must be identical to an antecedent clause in the sentence or discourse. While it is debated whether this identity requirement is syntactic (Fiengo and May 1994) or semantic (Dalrymple et al. 1991, Merchant 2001), a key requirement is that material cannot be deleted without some sort of antecedent. Tokelauan sluicing may have minimal antecedents with only a simple equative clause, such as in (4).

(4) Ko he tamaloa te faifeau, kae e hē kō iloa pe ko ai.
 PRED INDF man DEF minister but TAM NEG 1SG know COMP PRED who
 ‘The church minister is a man, but I don’t know who.’

(5) Ko ai ia?
 PRED who 3SG
 ‘Who is he?’

It holds that the deleted segment cannot have more content than is in the antecedent, meaning an underlying pseudocleft structure is untenable, since pseudoclefts have a verbal component (inside the headless relative clause). However, since *wh*-phrases may also appear as the predicate of a simple equative clause, it is possible that (5) may underlie the sluice in (4).

We now must rule out a pseudosluicing (*pro*-drop) analysis for (4), which can be done using *pro*-drop restrictions as a diagnostic. Tokelauan allows *pro*-drop for 3SG pronouns (6), but not 1SG pronouns (7). If an antecedent simple equative clause has a 1SG pronoun (8), then the sluiced clause must also contain a 1SG pronoun, which is deleted to create the sluice. *Pro*-drop cannot be the method of deletion, as the language resists 1SG *pro*-drop, indicating this is genuine sluicing.

(6) (Ko ia) na fano ki Hamoa. (7) *(Ko au) na fano ki Hamoa.
 TOP 3SG PST go.SG to Samoa TOP 1SG PST go.SG to Samoa
 ‘(He) went to Samoa.’ ‘I went to Samoa.’

(8) Context: playing the game ‘20 questions’
 Ko au ko he mea kae e hē iloa e V. pe ko he ā.
 TOP 1SG PRED INDF thing COMP TAM NEG know ERG V. COMP PRED INDF what
 ‘I am something, but Viliamu doesn’t know what.’

5. Conclusion. Tokelauan sluicing occurs with nominal *wh*-predicates marked with *ko*. The sluiced clause may either be a pseudocleft, or a simple equative clause. Although these structures are very similar, both having a nominal predicate and a subject, it would be incorrect to call Tokelauan sluicing pseudocleft sluicing, as this term is too narrow for the sluicing found in Tokelauan. Instead, this abstract proposes Tokelauan exhibits nominal predicate sluicing. Without extrapolating too far, I tentatively suggest this may be the case for other Austronesian languages which exhibit so-called “pseudocleft sluicing”, since many of these also have simple equative clauses in addition to pseudoclefts for interrogatives.

Selected References

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