Switch Reference Production in Whitesands

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Project Aim: To disambiguate the referential and structural properties of echo subject (ES) clauses.

What are the formal properties of the ES?
What are the functional uses of ES in conversation?
How much variation is there in its usage?

Working definition of ES in Whitesands

> "The canonical ES prefix on the clause, in contrast to full finite inflection, indicates that the participant of that clause is co-referential with the "PSA" of the preceding clause that is of the same matrix level/layer."

Clauses combining

SVO; head marking; subjects (PSA) and TAM are prefixing; non-subjects are optionally suffixed. Nominal reference is not obligatory.

When a subject of a new clause is not co-referential with an antecedent then it is fully inflected for subject person, TAM and subject number.

1. nəwəin k-awt-ue i-Vila, nəwəin k-awt-uven Santo
   some 3.NPST-PROG.PL-go LOC-vila some 3.NPST-PROG.PL-go santo
   SUBJ PRED OBL SUBJ PRED OBL
   Some go to Vila, some others go to Santo.[jhws1-20080417-all01_005]

2. ia-am-ø-ek kapiel apiapwei kani t-us nelma-k
   1.EXCL-PST-SG-touch rock hot and 3SG.NPST-bite hand-1SG
   I touched a hot stone and it burnt me (lit. it bit my hand).[fn2_49]

3. t-iwoŋ t-eni = ahu…
   $3SG_x$.NPST-jump $3SG_y$.NPST-say = down
   He_x jumped, (and) she_y scolded… [MA_25 - adapted]

Same Subject or Co-referential Clauses

The *m-* 'ES' (echo subject) morpheme replaces the subject person and tense operators to indicate the subject argument clause is coreferential with an argument from the preceding clause.

4. k-l-eni aroiiu m-l-eru mə, k-apa
   1.INCL-NPST.TR-see now ES:1-TR-see COMP 3-no
   Now us three will talk and we'll see that, no. jhws1-20080417-all01_073

5. k-am-at-u-ol m-at-u-auah pisinpisin
   3-PST-PROG-DU-make ES:3-PROG-DU-cook different.RDP
   They (2) were making and cooking differently. ISJHWS3JPG29mar2010-03-all

6. ø-l-ua m-l-amnəm
   IF-TRIAL-come ES:2-TRIAL-drink
   Come (TRIAL) and drink! fn2_62

7. ia-am-ø-uven apaha iVila kani m-ø-uven apaha itehi
   1EXCL-PST-SG-go LOC Port.Vila and ES:1-SG-go LOC saltwater
   I went to Port Vila and went to the beach. fn2_29

8. ia-k-ø-asiŋapən kei, ko m-əfen tos kam
   1.EXCL-NPST-SG-spotlight flying.fox and.then ES:1-give torch OBL
9. swa- swa-akaku, ko in-u, in t-asiŋapən,
   person.M- person.M-small and.then 3SG-PROX 3SG 3SG.NPST-spotlight
10. ko ia-k-ø-ati e nafaŋa
    and.then 1.EXCL-NPST-SG-hit OBL bow.and.arrow
    I spotlight flying fox, then give the torch to the boy, then this one, he spotlights it and then I shoot it with the bow and arrow. jhws2-20090301-AK01

11. m-ø-oh las wan t-iwoŋ m-ø-ue m-ø-aharaŋ
    ES:3_X-SG-hit last one $3SG_Y$.NPST-jump ES:3_Y-SG-go ES:3_Y-SG-sit
12. t-eni = ahu m-ø-eni = ahu mən
    $3SG_X$.NPST-say = down ES:3_X-SG-day = down again
    She$_X$ hit the last one$_Y$ and he$_Y$ jumped up and he$_Y$ went and sat down, and she$_X$ scolded him again. MA_25

13. kani nowan ia-k-ø-uen m-ø-os nolul apaha pari, iSiwi
    and arrow 1.EXCL-NPST-SG-go ES:1-SG-carry k.o.wild.cane LOC landward Siwi
    And the arrows, I go collect wild cane from the west, at Lake Siwi.
14. m-ø-os m-ø-ua ko m-ø-etei nowan e niel wə naserehi.
    ES:1-SG-carry ES:1-SG-come and.then ES:1-SG-cut arrow OBL oak or k.o.tree
    I collect them, come back, and then I fit the arrows with oak tree or naserehi.

15. ko m-ø-ulakən, m-ø-ulakən kani ko m-ø-os
and.then ES:1-SG-craft ES:1-SG-craft and and.then ES:1-SG-carry
16. m-ø-orain nima-n ko m-ø-os m-at-ø-aliwok.
ES:1-SG-bind handle-3SG and.then ES:1-SG-carry ES:1-PROG-SG-walk
Then I craft and craft and then I take it bind the bow and take it walking. jhws2-20090301-AK01

17. ko ik m-apan-ø-ua m-ø-ahrun mamə
then 2SG ES:2-PROS-SG-come ES:2-SG-know COMP
Then you will be about to come to know that. ISJHWS3_20100708JVC-01-joe_061

Subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses, such as relative clauses or perception clauses, cannot provide antecedence for a matrix level ES. Nor can they use an antecedent from a matrix level clause. Within themselves though they can use the ES as per normal.

18. na-k-ø-eru m-ø-eru mə [k-ot-atiŋ m-awt-uven]
2-NPST-SG-see ES:2-SG-see COMP 1.INCL.NPST-PL-live ES:1-PROG.PL-go
You see that we (PL.INCL) live on. jhws1-20080417-all01_003

19. ikən, tem na-k-ø-olkeikei mə na-k-ø-ol raha-m = ikən, namaiwi
PLACE man 2-NPST-SG-like COMP 2-NPST-SG-make POSS-2SG = PLACE yam.mound
Where you want to make yours, the yam mounds. ISJHWS3_20100708JVC-01-joe_011

The problematic data: 1. ES shared across turns

In these examples we can see that ES clauses can sometimes refer back to other's turns for antecedence. In 20 in particular the actual person value changes as the clausal deictic centre shifts across the turns.

20. NA iou ie-n-ø-os mani, iou
1SG 1EXCL-PERF-SG-carry money 1SG
I have money, I
SJ m-en-ø-alu e
ES:2-PERF-SG-forget DAT
You have forgotten.
NA m-en-ø-alu e kastom aha
ES:1-PERF-SG-forget DAT kastom that
I have forgotten that kastom. jhws1-20080417-all01_050-2

21. EK t-em-eni arafin
3SG-PST-say all
He (Isut) told all of that.
R m-ø-eni metou ilah k-om-ot-ol pək pes e nati pa petan
ES:3-SG-say because 3PL 3-PST-PL-make INTENSIFIER best DAT thing LOC woman
He said, (it is) because they were all better for the women. WS4-110524-imaiim

2. Combinatorial coreference ES forms

The antecedent for the ES clause in 22 is a combination of different arguments from the preceding clauses.

22. (And he_x gave one_y his_y food, and he_x gave $another_z$ his_z food and he_x took his_x own food)
    ko m-l-un m-a:-l-uven
    then ES-TR-eat.TRNS ES-PROG-TRIAL-go
    And then $they_{xyz}$ (TRIAL) ate the food and $they_{xyz}$ went along.[ek.pear]

3. Skipped reference

Strongly established antecedent can be co-referenced even if they are not the grammatical subject of the immediately preceding clause. In line 23, the 1SG is continually referred back to with the ES despite fully infected predicates intervening. In line 27, we can see a plural marked ES clause that combines only part of the preceding topic and nothing from the preceding clause. Does topic fulfill the antecedent?

(I held tight the line, I couldn't hold it well, I held it, it was strong)

23. m-at-ø-eiwi t-at-uven m-ø-eiwi m-ø-eiwi
    ES:1-PROG-SG-pull 3SG.NPST-PROG-go ES:1-SG-pull ES:1-SG-pull
24. m-ø-ua, t-uven
    ES:1-SG-come 3SG.NPST-go
    I was pulling it, and it was going. I pulled and pulled it towards me and it went. [SM]

(And we craft it and put in the wood, for when the dogs corner the pigs.)

25. ko ia-k-ø-eləs nerow m-ø-aiiu m-ø-uven iwakir
    and.then 1.EXCL-NPST-SG-hold.SG spear ES:1-SG-run ES:1-SG-go close
26. ko m-oh pukah-i
    and.then ES:1-hit pig-TRANS
27. t-əmis ko m-ot-etei m-ot-eləs m-h-awt a(paha)
    3SG.NPST-die and.then ES:1-PL-cut ES:1-PL-carry.SG ES:1-PL-quick LOC
28. lahwanu
    village
    And then I take the spear run close up to the pig and hit the pig.
    It dies, then we cut it up, and carry it and hurry back to the village. [jhws2-20090301-AK01]

SRP: 4 variables controlled across 48 excerpts

1. Strong discourse topic AND this is the PSA of the final clause
   [+topic +PSA]
2. Strong discourse topic AND this is not the PSA of the final clause (but is an argument)
   [+topic –PSA +argument]
3. Strong discourse topic AND this is not the PSA of the final clause (and is not an argument in the final clause)
   [+topic –PSA –argument]
4. No (obvious) discourse topic AND the PSA of the final clause is not in any of the preceding clauses
   [- topic +new PSA]

Preliminary Results

Of 304 Novel predicates there are 123 tokens of ES clauses in the production phase.

Of these there is a strong distributional preference for type 1 clauses, supporting the claims that ES is likely to align with the preceding PSA especially if it is topical.

There are only 13 tokens of “ambiguous” ES reference where it is not the preceding clause and these are equally distributed across all types.

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Abbreviations:

1 'FIRST PERSON', 2 'SECOND PERSON', 3 'THIRD PERSON', COMP 'COMPLEMENTISER', DAT 'DATIVE', DU 'DUAL', ES 'ECHO SUBJECT', EXCL 'EXCLUSIVE', INCL 'INCLUSIVE', M ‘MASCULINE’, N 'NON/NEGATIVE', NEG 'NEGATIVE CIRCUMFIX', NMLZ 'NOMINALISER CIRCUMFIX', NOM 'AGENTIVE NOMINALISER', OBL 'OBLIQUE', PL 'PLURAL', POSS 'GENERAL POSSESSION CLASSIFIER', PERF 'PERFECT(IVE)', PROG 'PROGRESSIVE', PROX 'PROXIMAL', PROS 'PROSPECTIVE', PSA ‘PRIVELEDGED SYNTACTIC ARGUMENT’, PST 'PAST', RDP 'REDUPLICATION', SEQ 'SEQUENTIAL', SG 'SINGULAR', SUBJ 'SUBJECT', TAM 'TENSE/ASPECT/MOOD', TR 'TRIAL', TRNS/TRANS 'TRANSITIVE'.