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Book review

The defective copy theory of movement: evidence from wh-constructions [Creole Language Library 41]. By Nélia Alexandre. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 2012. xvi, 249 pp.

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Book review

The defective copy theory of movement: evidence from wh-constructions [Creole Language Library 41]. By **Nélia Alexandre**. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 2012. xvi, 249 pp.

Reviewed by **Muhsina Alleesaib** (Université Paris 8)*

The defective copy theory of movement by Nélia Alexandre, studies the syntax of *wh*-questions and relative clauses in Cape Verdean Creole (henceforth, CVC). The puzzle at the heart of this book (henceforth, DCTM) is the alternation between the *el* pronoun and a gap in *wh*-questions and in restrictive relatives. *El* always occurs inside Prepositional Phrases, as illustrated in (1) (PFV stands for perfective aspect).

(1)   *Ki   omis ki   Minda papia   ku-el?*
       which   men   that   Minda   talk(pfv)   with-3sg

       Lit.: 'Which men is that Minda talked with him?'
       'Which men did Minda talk to?'

Since the *el*-form does not pattern with resumptive pronouns in CVC, it is labelled as a spelled-out copy by the author. DCTM is divided into three parts: chapters 1 and 2 provide the basic information on CVC; chapters 3 and 4 contain a description of the phenomena under study and the data is analyzed in chapter 5. The background to the study is presented in chapter 1. It includes information on CVC, on the methodology and on the author's theoretical assumptions (Principles and Parameters theory and the Minimalist Program). Chapter 2 provides a description and an analysis of various aspects of CVC syntax. The functional structure of the clause includes a Tense Phrase, an Aspect Phrase and a Verb Phrase. There is a debate about whether there is overt movement of the verb to Tense in CVC. Since the negation marker *ka* invariably precedes lexical verbs, lexical verbs cannot be located in TP which is generally assumed to be higher than negation. Alexandre claims that the verb stays in a lower position and that it checks its Tense feature through long-distance agree. Section 2.3 lists subject, object and oblique pronouns and introduces CVC *wh*-words, which are divided into [+human] and [-human] forms: *ken/kenha* 'who' and *kusé* 'what'.

The author next considers the structure of Determiner Phrases and focuses on relative clauses. CVC is a head-initial language, therefore all modifiers follow

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the head noun, including relative clauses. Restrictive relative clauses are analyzed following Kayne's (1994) D-complement hypothesis, according to which the relative clause - a Complementizer Phrase – is the complement of the Determiner. Non-restrictive clauses are incompatible with this hypothesis because the relativized constituent may be a full DP, as shown in (2). Appositive relatives are therefore analyzed as adjuncts.

(2) [*Kel minina li*]   *ki   Djon gosta d-el   (*li) ta   bai Fransa.*
     dem girl   prox that John like   of-3sg prox ipfv go   France

     'This girl, of whom John likes, goes to France.'

Chapter 3 lists the strategies which occur in *wh*-questions (i) gaps for subjects, direct and oblique objects (ii) pied-piping, which applies exclusively to complement PPs (iii) preposition-stranding with the *el* form as a spelled-out trace (iv) resumption for PPs as a last resort (v) preposition-deletion and (vi) *wh*-in-situ. Since P + *el* may not occur inside islands, this construction is assumed to involve movement.

One of the interesting features of CVC *wh*-questions is the contrast between 'light' and 'heavy' prepositions. Light prepositions are functional items that contrast with 'heavy' prepositions as 'heavy' prepositions have well-specified meanings such as *riba di* 'over' and *kontra* 'against'. Light prepositions are deleted when their complement is *wh*-moved while 'heavy' prepositions may be stranded. 'Light' prepositions are analyzed as undergoing incorporation into the *wh*-phrase headed by *ki*. The explanation for this asymmetry lies in the ability of 'heavy' prepositions to license null pronouns (pro). Another strategy is *wh*-in-situ questions (as in *Mary saw what boy*?). This option is allowed with all *wh*-words. They trigger an echo reading, except in copula predicative structures where the interpretation is that of a standard question. According to Alexandre, Huang's (1982) analysis of *wh*-in-situ in Mandarin as involving covert *wh*-movement does not extend to CVC. *Wh*-constituents occurring in-situ are licensed by a null complementizer through A'-binding.

Chapter 4 presents how relative clauses are formed, with a special focus on the distribution of the various strategies presented in the previous chapter. Pied-piping is excluded. Resumption and the the use of the *el*-form and preposition-deletion are the available options. The factors determining their distribution in restrictive relative clauses are not well understood. Alexandre furthermore summarizes the data on resumption in other creole languages, and concludes that Cape-verdean resumption has different properties.

One of the main descriptive issues of the study is the distribution of the *el*-form and of resumptive pronouns. Alexandre points out the difference between resumptive pronouns and the *el*-form:

(i)   *el* is banned inside strong islands, whereas resumptive pronouns may occur inside islands;

(ii)   *el*, on a par with wh-traces, licenses parasitic gaps, but resumptive pronouns do not;

(iii)   *el* may occur inside weak islands;

(iv)   *el* does not agree in gender and in number with its *wh*-constituent and with the relativized head;

(v)   resumptive pronouns are only used for *wh*-constituents if they occur inside islands.

The *el*-form and resumptives do, however, share some characteristics:

(i)   neither may occur if the raised constituent is a subject or a direct object.

(ii)   neither may occur outside Prepositional Phrases.

(iii)   Both *el* and true resumptives are legitimate relativization strategies if there are no barriers to movement.

The author notes that there is a singular resumptive pronoun which is homophonous with the *el*-form under study, but that they differ in syntactic distribution.

The complementary distribution between *el* and gaps is described in detail. When subjects and indirect objects are either relativized or *wh*-moved, a gap is left in the extraction site. However, gaps are not allowed if they are inside a prepositional phrase. In other words, most prepositions in CVC are not allowed to govern traces unless there is some phonological material in the extraction site. PP relativization involves Preposition-chopping, the *el*-form, resumption or pied-piping. Preposition-stranding is banned. The *el*-strategy is in complementary distribution with P-chopping and pied-piping. P-chopping is the process of first deleting the preposition, then moving the *wh*-constituent.
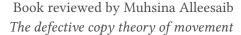
Different tests suggest that *el* is the result of movement, and Alexandre implements this analysis through the copy theory of movement. The interesting characteristic of the *el*-strategy is that when there is movement, other languages do not have phonologically overt material in the original position. These positions usually contain a gap. One of the major contributions of DCTM is the defective copy analysis, whose details are laid out in section 5.2.5.2. of chapter 5, whereby a defective copy is left in the position of the deleted constituent.
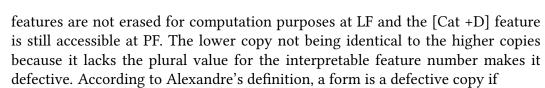
In example (1) above, *wh*-movement of *ki omis* triggers the formation of a chain of three non-distinct occurrences which are called copies. Copies are pairs of formal and phonological features of the same element.

All features are erased except for the category feature which has the value Determiner (identifying the constituent as a DP). In the lower copy, the formal

features are not erased for computation purposes at LF and the [Cat +D] feature is still accessible at PF. The lower copy not being identical to the higher copies because it lacks the plural value for the interpretable feature number makes it defective. According to Alexandre's definition, a form is a defective copy if

(i) it is an underspecified/expletive pronoun post-syntactically inserted in the complement position of a preposition, and (ii) it is the foot of a nontrivial chain with a *wh*-constituent with which it is co-indexed.

DCTM shows the author's excellent command of syntactic theory as well as a concern for rigorous data collection. The analysis is elegant and convincing. However, the section where Boeckx's (2003) stranding theory is reviewed and criticized is very technical and may put off an uninformed reader. The book has a clear structure and the data is thoroughly described, with sufficient details for understanding the issues. I have one point of criticism concerning the exposition of the argument. In the overview of *wh*-questions and relativization strategies, Alexandre introduces an unfamiliar term, 'null gap', which is confusing at first, but which is made clearer later in the book. Gaps that do not contain any phonological material are null and, as such, they contrast with gaps containing *el*, the spelled-out trace.

While the title of the book emphasizes the concept of movement, its main contribution is that it makes us rethink what copies and resumptive pronouns are composed of. The term 'resumptive pronoun' covers a wide range of phenomena. In some languages, resumptive pronouns only appear in cases where a gap would violate a rule of grammar. They are called 'intrusive pronouns' (cf. Shlonsky 1992; Sharvit 1999; Asudeh 2007). The pronouns labelled 'resumptive pronouns' by Alexandre fall in this category. In other languages, resumptive pronouns may occur in every position where a gap is expected. Asudeh 2007 uses the term 'true resumptives' to describe them. It would be interesting to see whether *el* is classified as a true resumptive or an intrusive pronoun.

Since *el* occurs where one would expect a gap, it does not fit in either category, unless one were to analyze it as a special kind of true resumptive that may only occur inside PPs. The author could also have compared Cape-Verdean *el* with Vata resumptives which are reported to pattern like *wh*-variables (Cf. Koopman and Sportiche 1982 and 1986, cited in Asudeh). To conclude, I recommend DCTM for its description of CVC grammar as well as for its contribution to our understanding of dependencies.

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