
Experimental paradigm for clausal determiners: The case of Akan *no* with relative clauses

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Introduction. This paper contributes the first experimental data on the clausal determiner *no* in Akan, whose semantic status is debated in the literature. When it surfaces with relative clauses, it has been argued to apply (i) at the level of propositions (Owusu 2022) or (ii) at the level of individuals (Bombi et al. 2019). However, the empirical picture – mostly based on elicitations – is unclear.

Study. We tested the above approaches in a picture-sentence acceptability judgment task. Two factors were manipulated: 1/ SENTENCE TYPE (a relative clause with either (1) NP-*no*; (2) RC-*no*; or (3) BARE NOUN (negative baseline)), and 2/ CONTEXT, presented in picture form: (i) UNIQUENESS, satisfying NP+RC uniqueness (one man standing); (ii) and NON-UNIQUENESS (two men standing)

- (1) papa **no** [a o-gyina hɔ] hyɛ Ghana atadeɛ
man DEF REL 3SG-stand there wear Ghana shirt
'Man NO who is standing wears a Ghana shirt'
- (2) papa ∅ [a o-gyina hɔ] **no** hyɛ Ghana atadeɛ
man REL 3SG-stand there DEF wear Ghana shirt
'Man who is standing NO wears a Ghana shirt'
- (3) papa ∅ [a o-gyina hɔ] hyɛ Ghana atadeɛ
man REL 3SG-stand there wear Ghana shirt
'Man who is standing wears a Ghana shirt'

30 Akan speakers were presented with picture-sentence pairs, and asked to judge on a 1-3 scale whether the sentence was a good description. Bombi et al. (2019) predict a lower acceptability of (1) and (2) in non-uniqueness vs. uniqueness contexts, whereas Owusu (2022) predicts acceptability of (2) across uniqueness and non-uniqueness, which both supply the required familiarity of the (existentially bound) RC-proposition. *Results.* Both NP-*no* and RC-*no* are accepted in uniqueness contexts (high proportion of 3), and judged as odd in non-uniqueness contexts. A Logit model revealed a significant effect of context ($\beta = 1.23$, $z = 1.9$, $p < 0.05$), but no significant effect of sentence type (RC-*no* = NP-*no*).

Conclusion. Our pilot study provides preliminary support for Bombi et al. (2019), contributing to the debate with novel quantitative data. Methodologically, this is the first application of a picture-sentence task to Akan, aimed at investigating a presuppositional phenomenon.

References: • Owusu, A. (2022). *Cross-categorical definiteness/familiarity*. Rutgers PhD thesis. • Bombi, C. et al. (2019). On the (so-called) clausal determiner *nó*. *SuB Proceedings*.