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Author(s): Dudley K. Nylander


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ON ECP VIOLATIONS IN KRIo*  
Dudley K. Nylander  
University of Manitoba

0. Introduction  

One of the principles of grammar introduced in Chomsky (1981) is the Empty Category Principle:

(1) **Empty Category Principle (ECP)**  
\( \forall e \) must be properly governed.¹

Proper government, as defined by Chomsky, falls into two categories (see footnote ¹). Firstly, there is government by a lexical element of the \( \pm N \pm V \) type. In (2a), for instance, the empty category \( (e_i) \) is properly governed by the verb see, which is a lexical element of the \( -N+V \) type. Secondly, there is government by coindexation. In (2b), for example, the empty category in subject position \( (e_i) \) is properly governed by the coindexed trace in COMP, i.e., \( t_i \).

(2) a. Who \( i \) did you see \( e_i \)?
   b. Who \( i \) do you think \( s_i \) \( t_i \) (\( s_i e_i \) came?)

Kayne (1981) proposes a somewhat different formulation of the ECP. Pointing to the fact that

(3) "... one might wonder why ECP should have two such dissimilar halves, the second of which appears to allow for an empty category to lack an antecedent" (1981 : 102)²

Kayne proposes the following formulation of ECP:

(4) **Empty Category Principle (ECP)**

An empty category \( B \) must have an antecedent \( \forall \) such that (1) \( \forall \) governs \( B \) or (2) \( \forall \) c-commands \( B \) and there exists a lexical category \( X \) such that \( X \) governs \( B \) and \( \forall \) is contained in some percolation of \( X \).

Consider, now, the following Krio sentence:

(5) \( \text{údá}_i \text{ùnà m'mbà} (s_i, t_i \text{ sé} (s_i e_i \text{ dè kám?})) \)
   who-you-think- that- PROG-come
   "who \( i \) do you think that \( e_i \) is coming?"

As things stand, (5) poses a problem for both (1) and (4), since the empty category in subject position \( (e_i) \) is not properly governed. Given the fact that COMP branches (since it contains both \( t_i \) and \( s_e \)), \( t_i \) does not c-command (hence, does not govern) \( e_i \). More precisely, (5) has the following structure:
In this paper, I shall attempt to provide a coherent explanation for the ECP violation in (5) and (6). More precisely, I shall attempt to show that what (5) and (6) illustrate is an apparent (rather than a real) ECP violation. I shall also consider the question of whether ECP should be formulated in terms of an antecedent, as suggested by Kayne. The rest of the article is organised as follows. In section 1, the nature of the that-complementizer sé will be examined more closely. Evidence will be given to show that sé has properties which distinguish it from English that. In section 2, evidence against WH-movement as a rule of Krio grammar will be provided. This, in turn, will call for a reanalysis of the problem under study. In section 3, the question of whether ECP should refer to an antecedent will be examined. Section 4 is the conclusion. The theoretical implications of the analysis will be presented in this section.

1. On the Nature of sé

One particularity of Krio is that the choice of a complementizer depends on the semantic value of the matrix verb.5 Regarding sé, Williams (1976:177) remarks:6

(7) "The complementizer sé is found to occur almost exclusively with three groups of verbs: verbs of saying, psychological verbs, and sensory verbs" (Williams' italics).

The use of sé as a complementizer is illustrated in (8):

(8) a. à bùn yèrí (\(_S\), sé (\(_S\) John dè kám))
"I-PAST-hear- that- John-PROG-come
"I heard that John was coming"

b. ì bùn mèmbà (\(_S\), sé (\(_S\) ùnà gò kám))
"he-PAST-think- that- you-PROS-come
"he thought that you would come"
However, sé has a particularity. It is also a verb ("say"), as in (9):

(9) a. John bɛn sé ụnà fɔ fɔ kám
    John-PAST-say-you-OBL-come
    "John said you should come"

    b. wɛtɛ́n ɛ bɛn sé? "what did he say?"
    what-he-PAST-say

sé is therefore at once a verb ("say") and a that-complementizer. There is as such, one fundamental difference between Krio sé and English that, namely, that sé (unlike that) is a lexical (-N+V) element. As a lexical element, sé can be a proper governor.

2. Evidence against WH-Movement in Krio

The construction known as the cleft predicate (CP) is found in a number of African and creole languages." (10) and (11) are Krio examples of CP:

(10) nà álà i John dè álà i
    it is-shout-John-PROG-shout
    "what John is doing is shouting"
(lit. "it is shout that John is shouting")

(11) nà wàkà i ɛ bèn dè wàkà i
    it is-walk-I-PAST-PROG-walk
    "what I was doing was walking"
(lit. "it is walk that I was walking")

Consider, now, Muysken's (1978) analysis of CP.10 Muysken points out that CP involves not WH-movement, but, rather, base-generation and coindexation. Let us assume, for a unified analysis of WH-phenomena in Krio, that the language lacks a WH-movement rule. Then (5) (repeated here as (12)) must be reanalysed as (12'):

(12) údá i ụnà mìmbà (follows, t you think that e i dè ká?)
    who-you-think-    that-  PROG-come
    "who do you think that e i is coming?"

(12') údá i ụnà mìmbà (follows, sé e i dè ká?)

In (12'), (i) COMP does not branch and (ii) the empty category in subject position (e i) is properly governed from COMP by the lexical item sé. Under this analysis, there is no longer any ECP violation.
3. Should ECP Refer to an Antecedent?

Consider the contrast in grammaticality between the following impersonal constructions:

(13) a. l tán l`k`l` sé John dè kám
    "it-appears-like-that-John-PROG-come"
    "it appears that John is coming"

b. *ì tán l`k`l` sé e_i dè kám
    "it-appears-like-that- PROG-come"
    "it appears that e_i is coming"

The ungrammaticality of (13b) is surprising, since the relationship between sé and e_i is the same in (13b) as in (12'), repeated here as (14):

(14) údá_i ùnì m`mbà (S, sé(S e_i dè kám?))
    "who_i do you think that e_i is coming?"

Consider, however, the contrast in grammaticality between (13b) and (15):

(15) údá_i l tán l`k`l` sé e_i dè kám?
    who-it-appears-like-that- PROG-come
    "who_i appears that e_i is coming?"

Like (13b) vs. (15) is (14) vs. (14'):

(14') *ùnà m`mbà (S, sé (S e_i dè kám))
    you-think- that- PROG-come
    "you think that e_i is coming"

Before accounting for the difference in grammaticality between the above pairs, let us consider the contrast between (16a) and (16b):

(16) a. John bìn kám    "John came"
    John-PAST-come

b. *e_i bìn kám    "e_i came"
    _PAST-come

The ungrammaticality of (16b) shows that Krio is not a pro-drop language. As such, an empty category will only be permitted in Krio if it has an antecedent. The ungrammaticality of (13b) and (14') can then be attributed to the absence of antecedents for the empty categories in the sentences. Since (13b) vs. (15) and (14) vs. (14') involves the presence vs. the absence of an antecedent, it can safely be concluded that ECP should be formulated in terms of an antecedent. (See also 4.I below,)
Alternatively, the ungrammaticality of (13b) and (14') can be explained if we assume that every empty category in every language must be identified as one of the following types: (a) little pro (b) PRO (c) a variable (d) an anaphor. The empty categories in (13b) and (14') cannot be little pros, given the un-grammaticality of (15b). They cannot be PROs, since they are not controlled by any element. They cannot be variables, since they are not operator-bound. Nor are they anaphors, since they are not argument-bound.

4. Conclusion

The theoretical implications of the foregoing analysis can be summarised in four points, namely:

I. ECP must be formulated in terms of an antecedent, as suggested by Kayne (1981). Such a formulation neatly accounts for the ungrammaticality of (13b) and (14').

II. Since Krio does not permit null nominative subjects, but does have that-t structures, it must be concluded that there is no correlation between the presence of null subjects and that-t structures in a language, as pointed out by Rouveret (1980: 105).

III. Kayne's approach requires the antecedent of a (governed) empty category to be contained in a (percolation) projection of the governor. In (14), the empty category \( e_i \) is governed by \( s' \), and has its antecedent (údá) ' in S'. However, the question of whether COMP or V is the head of S' does not arise (or arises in rather different terms) in the case of Krio, since \( s' \) has complementizer and verbal properties.

IV. The grammaticality of (15) shows that S is not a bounding node in Krio. The analysis assumed is that of (15'). As can be seen, \( e_i \) is separated from its antecedent (údá) by two S nodes:

\[
(15') \text{údá } i \text{ (S ' tán (pp lèkè (S', sé(S e_i dè kám?))))}
\]

NOTES

* Preliminary versions of this paper can be found in two articles ("Should ECP refer to an Antecedent? Evidence from Krio" and "COMP, Government and the ECP") submitted to Linguistic Inquiry (LI) for publication. (Neither article was published.) I wish to thank some anonymous LI reviewers for their comments on the papers in question. In some instances, however, I have chosen not to follow their advice. Some of the issues raised here are also discussed (from different perspectives)

1. Chomsky (1981: 250) defines proper government as follows:

Consider structure (i)

(i) \( \beta \cdots \gamma \cdots \alpha \cdots \gamma \cdots \), where

(a) \( \alpha = \gamma^0 \) or is coindexed with \( \gamma \)

(b) where \( \emptyset \) is a maximal projection, if \( \emptyset \) dominates \( \gamma \) then \( \emptyset \) dominates \( \alpha \)

(c) \( \alpha \) c-commands \( \gamma \)

In this case, \( \alpha \) governs \( \gamma \)

\( \alpha \) properly governs \( \beta \) if and only if \( \alpha \) governs \( \beta \) (and \( \alpha \neq \text{AGR} \)).

2. Kayne's study is based on examples mainly from French. See Aoun (1981) for a summary of Kayne's position.

3. Krio is an "English-based" creole language spoken in Sierra Leone and other parts of West Africa.

(On pidgins and creoles in Africa, see Berry (1971). On Krio more specifically, see Jones (1971).)

A word of caution is in order, since some readers may not be acquainted with features of creole languages.

The lexicon of Krio is mainly from English. Jones (1971:69) points out that "something like four-fifths of what may be called the kernel lexicon of Krio is derived from English." Phonologically and syntactically, however, Krio is far removed from English. For example, phonologically, Krio is a tone language. (See, in this regard, Coker (1977), Coomber (1969), Fyle & Jones (1980), Johnson (1974) and Nylander (1979).) In this article, the tones are noted as follows: \( \uparrow \) (high tone) \( \downarrow \) (low tone).

Syntactically, Krio is characterised by constructions typical of West African languages (Givón (1979), Jones (1971)). As Givón (1979:12-13) points out:

In looking at Krio, one is immediately struck by the following dichotomy: The bulk of the vocabulary comes from English. But the bulk of the grammar is unmistakably Kwa. The English derived lexicon has been fully adapted into the Kwa mold.

(Kwa is the name of a group of languages spoken in West Africa. The best known of these languages are Yoruba and Igbo.) For this reason, Givón classifies Krio as an African-based (rather than an English-based) creole language.

As regards the verb system, Krio has a number of preverbal markers. (On creole verb systems, see Muysken (1981). On the Krio verb system, see Jones (1968, 1971).) The following abbreviations will be used: PROG = progressive aspect; PROS = prospective mood.
4. ECP accounts for the difference in grammaticality between (i) and (ii) as follows. In (i), the presence of **that** in COMP prevents the trace in COMP (t₁) from counting as the local antecedent of e₁. In (ii), in the absence of **that**, t₁ counts as the local antecedent of e₁.

(i) *Who₁ do you think (₅₁, t₁ that (₅₁ e₁ came?))
(ii) Who₁ do you think (₅₁, t₁ (₅₁ e₁ came?))

Since (i) is the English equivalent of (5), it is legitimate to wonder the effect of **sé**-deletion (or non insertion of **sé**) is, in Krio. As I have elsewhere (Nylander (1981)) pointed out, (5) becomes ungrammatical in the absence of the complementizer. (On the non deletability of complementizers in creole languages, see Givón (1979:24).) Note, however, that even if the absence of **sé** had any effect, the grammaticality of (5), which has a branching COMP, would still have to be accounted for.

5. Krio is, in this respect, like Standard Arabic—see Aoun (1981).


7. See Williams (1976:177-178) for other examples.

8. In her classic study, Lord (1976) lists over thirty languages in which a given form is ambiguous between the verb *say* and a that-complementizer.

9. See Bynoe-Andriolo & Yillah (1975). (Note, also, that in (10( and (11), CP corresponds to an English pseudocleft construction.)

10. Muysken's study is based on Papuamnu, a creole language whose structure is similar to that of Krio.


12. See also Nylander (1981).


15. In other words, if S were a bounding node, (15') would violate Subjacency (Chomsky (1973,1977)). Given the grammaticality of (15'), it can further be concluded that at most one out of PP and S' is a bounding node in Krio.
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Department of French & Spanish,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada R3T 2N2.