

Pseudoclefts are a source of sluicing and fragments in Wolof

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Introduction. Much recent literature on syntactic identity conditions on ellipsis shows that sluicing must not be sensitive to (at least) the syntactic differences between non-copular and copular *wh*-questions, allowing the latter to be the source of a sluice (e.g. Vicente 2008, van Craenenbroeck 2010, Rodrigues et al. 2009, Barros 2012, Barros et al. 2014, Gribanova & Manetta 2016, a.o.). This paper adds to this research by showing that one type of sluicing in the Niger-Congo language Wolof derives from pseudoclefts, which has already been proposed for Wolof fragment answers (Martinović 2012, 2013). Sluices and fragments are here shown to be derived in the same way in Wolof.

Wolof Wh-movement. Every Wolof finite clause contains one of two types of complementizers (C), either triggering V-to-C, or *wh*-movement to Spec,CP (Martinović 2015). *Wh*-questions in Wolof come in two variants (Dunigan 1994; Torrence 2005, 2012; Martinović 2013, 2015, 2017). One has an overt *wh*-word in Spec,CP and a C surfacing as *a* in subject extraction and as *la* in non-subject extraction. The second one has a null *wh*-word in Spec,CP and a C that agrees with it in φ -features (class marker; CM) and surfaces as *u*. (For extensive evidence that these two types of questions do not differ syntactically or semantically, but that the realization of their CP-layers results from postsyntactic processes, see Martinović 2015, 2017.)

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| <p>(1) a. K-an_i a t_i jënd mbubu?
 CM-Q_i C_{Wh} t_i buy boubou
 “Who bought a boubou?”</p> <p>b. L-an_j la-{\emptyset/Demba} jënd t_j?
 CM-Q_j C_{Wh}-{3SG/Demba} buy t_j
 “What did he/Demba buy?”</p> | <p>(2) a. \emptyset_i K-u t_i jënd mbubu?
 Q_i CM-C_{Wh} t_i buy boubou
 “Who bought a boubou?”</p> <p>b. \emptyset_j L-u-{mu/Demba} jënd t_j?
 Q_j CM-C_{Wh}-{3SG/Demba} buy t_j
 “What did he/Demba buy?”</p> |
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Note also that if the subject in non-subject extraction ((1b), (2b)) is pronominal, it differs in form in the two *wh*-question types: it is \emptyset following *la* and *mu* following CM-*u*. It is crucial to mention that the pronominal subject is a clitic (SCL) and (together with other clitics) moves to a position **above** the TP (Russell 1994; Martinović 2015), effectively being incorporated into C.

Wolof sluicing. Wolof sluicing constructions in Wolof have the following properties. First, **they can contain overt Cs** (contra Merchant’s 2001 Sluicing-COMP Generalization; for other counterexamples see e.g. van Craenenbroeck and Lipták 2006), and if that C is (*l*)*a*, it **does not exhibit the subject/non-subject asymmetry**, as shown in (3); both the C in non-subject extraction, *la*, and the one in subject extraction, *a*, are allowed.

- (3) Musaa ak Demba jënd-na-ñu dara, waye xam-u(1)- \emptyset -ma l-an **la**- \emptyset /**a**.
 Moussa with Demba buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG CM-Q C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}
 “Moussa and Demba bought something but I don’t know what.”

Second, if the sluice contains the other variant of C_{Wh}, CM-*u*, as in (4), we also observe a **number-mismatched 3SG SCL following CM-*u*** (we do not see this in structures with (*l*)*a*, as 3SG SCL is null there). Note that the subject in the antecedent is plural.

- (4) Musaa ak Demba jënd-na-ñu dara, waye xam-u(1)- \emptyset -ma **l-u**-*(mu).
 Moussa with Demba buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG CM-C_{Wh}-3SG
 “Moussa and Demba bought something but I don’t know what.”

Contrast (3) and (4) with examples with no sluicing and a regular *wh*-question in place of a sluice; both of these properties—the absence of the asymmetry and the mismatch in the number of the subject—are absent:

- (5) Musaa ak Demba jënd-na-ñu dara, waye xam-u(1)- \emptyset -ma l-an **{la/(*a)}** ñu jënd.
 Moussa with Demba buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG CM-Q {C_{Wh}/(**C*_{Wh})} 3PL buy
 “Moussa and Demba bought something but I don’t know what they bought.”
- (6) Musaa ak Demba jënd-na-ñu dara, waye xam-u(1)- \emptyset -ma **l-u**-ñu jënd.
 Moussa with Demba buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG CM-C-3PL buy

“*Moussa and Demba bought something but I don’t know what they bought.*”

This suggests that simple *wh*-questions are not the source of sluicing in Wolof, at least not of the variety in which *C* is overt. Both of these properties, on the other hand, are found in pseudoclefts, shown in (7). Pseudoclefts contain two major constituents, a *wh*-clause which introduces a *variable*, and a focused DP filling in the *value* of the variable (Higgins 1979). In Wolof, the *wh*-phrase is shown by Caponigro and Heller (2007) to be a free relative (the *C* introducing the *wh*-clause in pseudoclefts is *CM-i*, and not *CM-u*).

- (7) a. [FR \tilde{N} -i damm siis bi] [DP xale yi] **la- \emptyset /(\tilde{n} u)/a.**
 [FR CM.PL-C_{FR} break chair the.SG] [DP child the.PL] **C_{Wh}-3SG/(3PL)/ C_{Wh}**
 “*Who.PL broke the chair were the children.*”
- b. [FR L-i xale yi damm] [DP siis bi] **la- \emptyset /a.**
 [FR CM-C_{FR} child the.PL break] [DP chair the.SG] **C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}**
 “*What the children broke is the chair.*”

Furthermore, speakers accept pseudoclefts as very natural in non-sluiced counterparts of (3) and (4):

- (8) \tilde{N} oom jënd-na- \tilde{n} u dara, waye xam-u(l)- \emptyset -ma [FR l-i- \tilde{n} u jënd] [DP l-an] **la- \emptyset /a.**
 they buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG [FR CM-C_{FR}-3PL buy] [DP CM-Q] **C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}**
 LIT: “*They bought something but I don’t know what they bought what it is.*”
- (9) \tilde{N} oom jënd-na- \tilde{n} u dara, waye xam-u(l)- \emptyset -ma [FR l-i- \tilde{n} u jënd] [DP \emptyset] **l-u-mu.**
 they buy-C_V-3PL things but know-NEG-C_V-1SG [FR C_{FR}-3PL buy] [DP CM-Q] **CM-C_{Wh}-3SG**
 LIT: “*They bought something but I don’t know what they bought what it is.*”

I therefore conclude that that the source (of at least one type) of sluicing in Wolof are pseudoclefts.

Wolof fragments. Martinović 2012, 2013 suggests that fragment answers in Wolof are derived from pseudoclefts, and not regular *wh*-movement (which is in Wolof also used in exhaustive focus constructions, of the type that Merchant 2004 proposes are the source of fragments). The evidence is parallel to that presented here for sluicing: the lack of the subject/non-subject asymmetry in fragment answers. A fragment answer to both a subject and a non-subject question (*Who saw Moussa?* and *Who did Moussa see?*) can have either the complementizer *a* or *la*, regardless of the grammatical relation of the *wh*-word, as in (10).

- (10) Xale yi **la- \emptyset /a.**
 child the.PL **C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}**
 “*The children.*”

Martinović 2013 argues that fragments in Wolof are derived via the deletion of the FR in pseudoclefts:

- (11) [~~ki-Musaa-gis~~] xale yi **la- \emptyset /a** (12) [~~ki-gis-Musaa~~] xale yi **la- \emptyset /a**
 who-Moussa-see child the.PL **C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}** who-see-Moussa child the.PL **C_{Wh}-3SG/C_{Wh}**
 “*[Who-Moussa-saw] are the children.*” “*[Who-saw-Moussa] are the children.*”

Analysis. Given the parallelism between sluices and fragments, I propose they are both derived in the same way. Since the FR is always left-dislocated in Wolof pseudoclefts, the question is how to implement an ellipsis analysis. I propose that the free relative carries a feature requiring it to be topicalized [Top*], and failure to do so causes the structure to crash at PF. Next, following Merchant (2001, 2004), I assume that sluicing is triggered by an [E] feature on C_{Wh}, and that ellipsis of the TP containing the FR deletes the structure with the unchecked [Top*] feature, rendering the structure interpretable at PF. In other words, when the TP is elided the FR does not have to move (ellipsis can bleed movement). This is essentially a *salvation by deletion* account, which has also been used to explain the repair of island violations via ellipsis (Fox & Lasnik 2003, Merchant 2004).

Conclusion. In this paper I show that one type of sluicing in Wolof derives from the deletion of a free relative of a pseudocleft, and not the TP of a regular *wh*-question, adding to the evidence for syntactic mismatches between the antecedent and the sluice. I connect this to the previous observation that fragments in Wolof are derived in the same manner (Martinović 2012, 2013), confirming the same source for the two types of elided structures (Merchant 2004).