

A New Perspective on German Logophoric Subjunctive

Background

Schlenker (2003) – similar von Stechow (2004) – claims that the German Konjunktiv I (= KI) „is nothing but a temporal or modal version of the logophoric pronouns that are found in Ewe“. The assumption is that KI spells out a feature on a world pronoun that forces it to be bound by an attitude, cf. (1), and introduces an additional condition to the effect that it cannot be used to express an attitude of the speaker, cf. (2) (= „logophoric effect“).

- (1) Der Peter meint, es sei später als es tatsächlich ist/*sei. Schlenker (2003):75
 the Peter thinks it be later as it actually is/be
 'Peter thinks that it is later than it is'
- (2) *Ich glaube, dass Maria krank sei. Schlenker (2003):87
 I believe that Maria sick be

In particular, Schlenker (2003) explains the logophoric effect via a restriction on the *content of the attitude* (not of the complement!): KI can be used unless the alternatives specified by the attitude „are a subset of my, the speaker's, [doxastic] alternatives“ (Schlenker (2003):116).

Problems

Non-doxastic alternatives A closer look at the data reveals that logophoric effects do not only occur with attitudes that have a word-to-world direction of fit as 'believe' or 'say' but also with predicates that have a world-to-word direction of fit like commissives, cf. (3), and directives, cf. (4).

- (3) Peter verspricht/ *Ich verspreche, alles zu tun, um zu verhindern, dass es Streit gebe.
 Peter promises/ I promise all to do for to prevent that it quarrel give
 'Peter promises/I promise to do everything to prevent trouble'
- (4) Peter verlangt/ *Ich verlange jemanden zu sprechen, der zuständig sei.
 Peter demands/ I demand someone to speak who responsible be
 'Peter demands/I demand to speak to someone who is in charge'

Under the plausible assumption that the alternatives compatible with what I demand or promise are not a subset of the alternatives compatible with what I believe, KI should be licensed – even in the first person present.

Counterfactuals under attitudes A more formal counterexample comes from counterfactuals under attitudes in the first person. Here Schlenker's condition falls together with the semantic contribution of the past subjunctive following von Fintel (1997) – in this case the use of KI is still prohibited while past subjunctive can be used, cf. (5).

- (5) Ich glaube, dass ich ein Bild malen könnte, das dir *gefalle/gefallen würde.
 'I believe that I could paint a picture that you would like'

Content Schlenker's condition of use for the KI rightly excludes the use of the subjunctive when the speaker expresses his own beliefs in the context of utterance. But since the condition is formulated via the *content* of the attitude, it wrongly excludes the use of the KI when the attitude holder happens to share the beliefs of the speaker. This is particularly relevant in cases where I report an attitude or speech act of my former self without having changed my mind.

- (6) Gerade sagte ich, dass das ein Fehler sei und an meiner Meinung hat sich nichts geändert.
 'I have just said that this was a mistake and my opinion hasn't changed'

In this case the subjunctive is not strictly excluded as long as the *context* of the attitude holder is not the speaker's context of utterance.

Proposal

To account for the data, I introduce the concept of a *doxastic perspective* as a structured conversational background associated with attitudes that can introduce new perspectives in the discourse context (for which I will propose independent tests). It combines the notion of a conversational background Kratzer (1981) with the notion of a derived context as discussed in Stalnaker (1988) and Heim (1992). The doxastic perspective associated with the verb *glauben* 'believe' with the external arguments x, w (tense ignored for simplicity) is for example:

$$(7) \quad \langle x, w, \text{Dox} \rangle, \text{ where } \text{Dox}(x)(w) = \{p \in D_{\langle s, t \rangle} : p \text{ is believed by } x \text{ in } w\}$$

I will present the doxastic perspective of an attitude as an index Δ on the attitude. KI is a feature on a perspective pronoun that introduces a presupposition to the effect that the perspective must not be the perspective of the actual speaker $\langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle$.

$$(8) \quad \llbracket \text{believe-}\Delta\{\text{LOG}\} \rrbracket^{o.g}(p)(x)(w) = 1 \text{ iff } \llbracket \text{believe-}\Delta \rrbracket^{o.g}(p)(x)(w), \\ \text{defined, only if } g(\Delta) \text{ is the perspective of the attitude and } g(\Delta) \neq \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle.$$

$$(9) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. } \checkmark \text{ w Peter glaubt-}\Delta\{\text{LOG}\} \lambda w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \text{ dass } w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \text{ Maria krank sei} =\text{log} \\ \text{b. } * \text{ w ich}\{1\text{SG}\} \text{ glaube-}\Delta\{\text{LOG}\} \lambda w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \text{ dass } w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \text{ Maria krank sei} =\text{log} \end{array}$$

$$(10) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. } \llbracket (9\text{-a}) \rrbracket^{o.g} \text{ is defined, only if } g(\Delta) (= \langle \text{Peter}, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle) \neq \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle. \\ \text{b. } \llbracket (9\text{-b}) \rrbracket^{o.g} \text{ is defined, only if } g(\Delta) (= \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle) \neq \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle. \end{array}$$

To account for the overt distribution of KI morphology, I integrate my proposal in existing theories of feature transmission under binding (marked by $\langle =\text{log} \rangle$), cf. von Stechow (2004), Heim (2008).

Explaining the data The idea is that every attitude – also attitudes with a world-to-word direction of fit – come with a doxastic perspective, cf. Heim (1992). The subjunctive excludes the speaker's perspective. Whenever the speaker expresses an attitude of his own in the context of utterance or performs a speech act, he refers to his own perspective and the subjunctive is excluded. Feature transmission under binding guarantees that the KI can have long distance effects with respect to the embedding attitude. This explains (3):

$$(11) \quad * \text{ w ich}\{1\text{SG}\} \text{ verspreche-}\Delta\{\text{LOG}\} \lambda w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \dots \text{dass } w' \langle =\text{log} \rangle \text{ es Streit gebe} =\text{log} \\ \dots \text{ defined, only if } \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle \neq \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle.$$

Analogue for (4). We also don't run into problems for (5) in the counterfactual case since, the semantic condition is predicated over the distant attitude (= its perspective) and not the local world. Accidental identity of content, e.g., $\cap \text{Dox}(\text{Peter})(w_o) = \cap \text{Dox}(x_o)(w_o)$, doesn't exclude the KI anymore as long as the perspectives differ: $\langle \text{Peter}, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle \neq \langle x_o, w_o, \text{Dox} \rangle$.

Free Indirect Speech

In the last part of the talk I want to sketch how this proposal can be extended to cover occurrences of the KI in Free Indirect Speech and how the concept of a perspective could be used to model the logophoricity of pronouns, e.g., the logophoric pronoun in Ewe.

Selected References: [Fabricius-Hansen und Sæbø 2004] In a Meditative Mood: The Semantics of the German Reportive Subjunctive. In: NLS 12, 213-257 • [von Fintel 1997] The Presupposition of Subjunctive Conditionals. MIT WPL:25. • [Heim 1992] Presupposition Projection and the Semantics of Attitude Verbs. JOS 9.3. • [Heim 2008] Heim, Irene: Features on Bound Pronouns. In: Phi theory, 35-56 • [Kratzer 1981] The Notional Category of Modality. [Pearson 2012] The Sense of Self: Topics in the Semantics of De Se Expressions. Harvard University, Diss, 2012. • [Schlenker 2003] A Plea for Monsters. In: L&P 26:1, S. 29-120. [Schwager 2008] On what has been said in Tagalog: Reportative 'daw'. GLOW 2008. • [Stalnaker 1988] Belief Attribution and Context. In: Contents of Thought. Tucson, 140-156. • [von Stechow 2004] Binding by Verbs: Tense, Person and Mood under Attitudes. In: The Syntax and Semantics of the Left Periphery. Berlin, 431-488.