Escaping African "Islands"

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CUNY GRADUATE CENTER | 60 YEARS

Islands

- "Islands" are configurations that "trap" constituents from moving out of them.

(1) a. Musa knows [the farmer that planted corn].

b.*What$_i$ does Musa know [the farmer that planted t_i]?

c. What is the x, such that Musa knows the farmer that planted x?

Islands

- Islands come in two basic flavors – Strong and Weak.
- Strong (or absolute) islands block the extraction of all phrase types.
  - ✦ Sentential subjects
  - ✦ Complex NPs (definite RCs & CP complements of definite Ns)
  - ✦ Adjunct clauses (temporal, reason, conditional)
- Weak (or selective) islands block the extraction of some, but not all phrase types.
- In this talk, I'll be concerned primarily with strong *clausal* islands.

Islands

- Island phenomena have played a central role in Generative syntactic theory ever since Ross's (1967) seminal work.

- Island effects have long been regarded as evidence for domain-specific innate constraints on language and as such, have been cited as one motivation for Universal Grammar.

Islands

- Decades of work on (strong) islands have uncovered similarities in (strong) island effects across a wide range of languages.
- This has lead to the conclusion that a number of Ross's island constraints are candidates for language universals.
- The languages surveyed that have given rise to this impression, however, tend not to be African languages.

A Watershed Moment for Island Research & African Linguistics

- In recent years, a number of important discoveries on the nature of islands in African languages have been made.

- In a number of African languages, one or more classic strong "island" configuration is porous for A-bar dependency formation.

A Watershed Moment for Island Research & African Linguistics

- Gould & Scott 2019 – Swahili definite RCs are A-bar porous.
- Scott 2021 – Swahili temporal & reason clauses are A-bar escapable.
- Korsah & Murphy 2019 + Hein & Georgi 2021 – Asante Twi sentential subject constructions, definite RCs, clausal complements of Ns, reason clauses, factive clauses, and embedded questions do not have island status.

A Watershed Moment for Island Research & African Linguistics

- Hein 2020 – Limbum clausal complements of Ns & factive clauses are fully transparent for A-bar extraction.
- Keupdjio 2020 – Medumba permits extraction out of definite RCs, clausal complements of Ns, temporal clauses, factive clauses, and embedded questions.
- Georgi & Amaechi 2020 – In Igbo, non-clausal domains classically defined as islands are transparent for A-bar dependency formation.
- Fominyam 2021 – In Awing, adjunct clauses and RCs are porous for *wh*- question formation.

A Watershed Moment for Island Research & African Linguistics

- Devlin et al. 2021 – In Avatime, movement out of clausal complements of Ns is possible.
- Smith 2023 – In Mende, movement out of *wh-* clauses, left branch configurations, and subject-modifying CNPs is permitted.
- Kandybowicz et al. 2023 – All varieties of Ikpana adjunct clauses are fully transparent for A-bar extraction.
- Schurr et al. 2023 – All clausal configurations typically held to have strong island status are porous for A-bar movement in Shupamem.

Putting African Island Research in Context

- These findings, while surprising and highly consequential for Generative theory, are not unprecedented.

- Over the course of Generative inquiry into islands, evidence for cross-linguistic variation in island constraints has emerged from time to time.

Putting African Island Research in Context

- Stepanov 2007 – Acceptable sub-extraction from complex subjects in Russian.
- Kiss 1987 – Successful sub-extraction from subjects in Hungarian.
- Georgopoulos 1991 – Successful sub-extraction from subjects in Palauan.

Putting African Island Research in Context

- Yoshida 2006 – A case of genuine variation in adjunct island constraints in Malay.

- Faarlund 1992; Kush et al. 2018; Bondevik et al. 2021 – Temporal and conditional finite adjunct clauses in Norwegian fail to have strong island status.

- Cinque 2010, 2020; Sichel 2014, 2018 – Successful escape from complex NPs in French, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Hebrew.

Putting African Island Research in Context

- Phillips (2013a,b) draws a distinction between "surface island variation" and "deep island variation".

- Instances of "surface island variation" involve cases in which variation in island sensitivity is reducible to independently motivated differences in structural possibilities, which give rise to the *appearance* of variability in island constraints.

- In such cases, there is no need to assume variation in the underlying island constraints themselves. (See Cinque 2010, 2020 and Sichel 2014, 2018 for analyses of apparent counterexamples to strong islandhood along these lines.)

Putting African Island Research in Context

- An illustrative example of "surface island variation" comes from Avatime, in which extraction from what seems like a clausal complement of N is possible.

(2) Avatime (Devlin et al. 2021:70)

ègé	wo-nú	liwɔlɛmɛ̀	[sì	Àyapɛ̀	a-dà	___	ní	kɛ̀-dzia	mɛ̀]
what	2SG.PERF-hear	rumor	C	Ayape	3SG.PERF-sell		LOC	CL-market	at

'What did you hear the rumor that Ayape sold at the market?'

- Major & Torrence 2021 argue that in structures like (2), *sì* is not a C head, but rather the verb 'say'. This means that structures like (2) are serial verb constructions, which are not strong islands.

Putting African Island Research in Context

- Instances of "deep island variation" involve cases of island escape that cannot be plausibly connected to independently motivated differences in structure, thus suggesting true variation in the island constraints themselves.

- Do the porous "islands" observed in African languages represent instances of "surface island variation" or do they reveal that island constraints are cross-linguistically more variable than previously believed?

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Escaping African 'Islands'

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Deadline for manuscript submissions:
2 December 2022

Message from the Guest Editor

We are pleased to announce a call for papers for a Special Issue of Languages, entitled "Escaping African 'Islands'", devoted entirely to islands and their porousness/absence in African languages. To the best of our knowledge, the volume will represent the first of its kind in the literature.

This Special Issue brings together research on African languages that seemingly represent counterexamples to classical island constraints in order to address the issue of the universality of island constraints and enrich our understanding of the nature of islands. Articles submitted for consideration of publication should both document instances of purported "island violations" in African languages and provide argumentation for the claim that escape (i.e. movement) took place in such cases. Articles should also discuss whether the "violations" in question reflect instances of "surface island variation" or "deep island violation" in Phillips' (2013a,b) sense and, if possible, speculate on why the relevant domains do not have island status in the language(s).

Putting African Island Research in Context

- The *Escaping African 'Islands'* volume brings together research on African languages that represent counterexamples to classical island constraints in order to address the issue of the universality of island constraints and enrich our understanding of the nature of islands.

- This talk: I'll focus on clausal "island" escape in Shupamem, the language with the most strong "island" permeability encountered thus far.

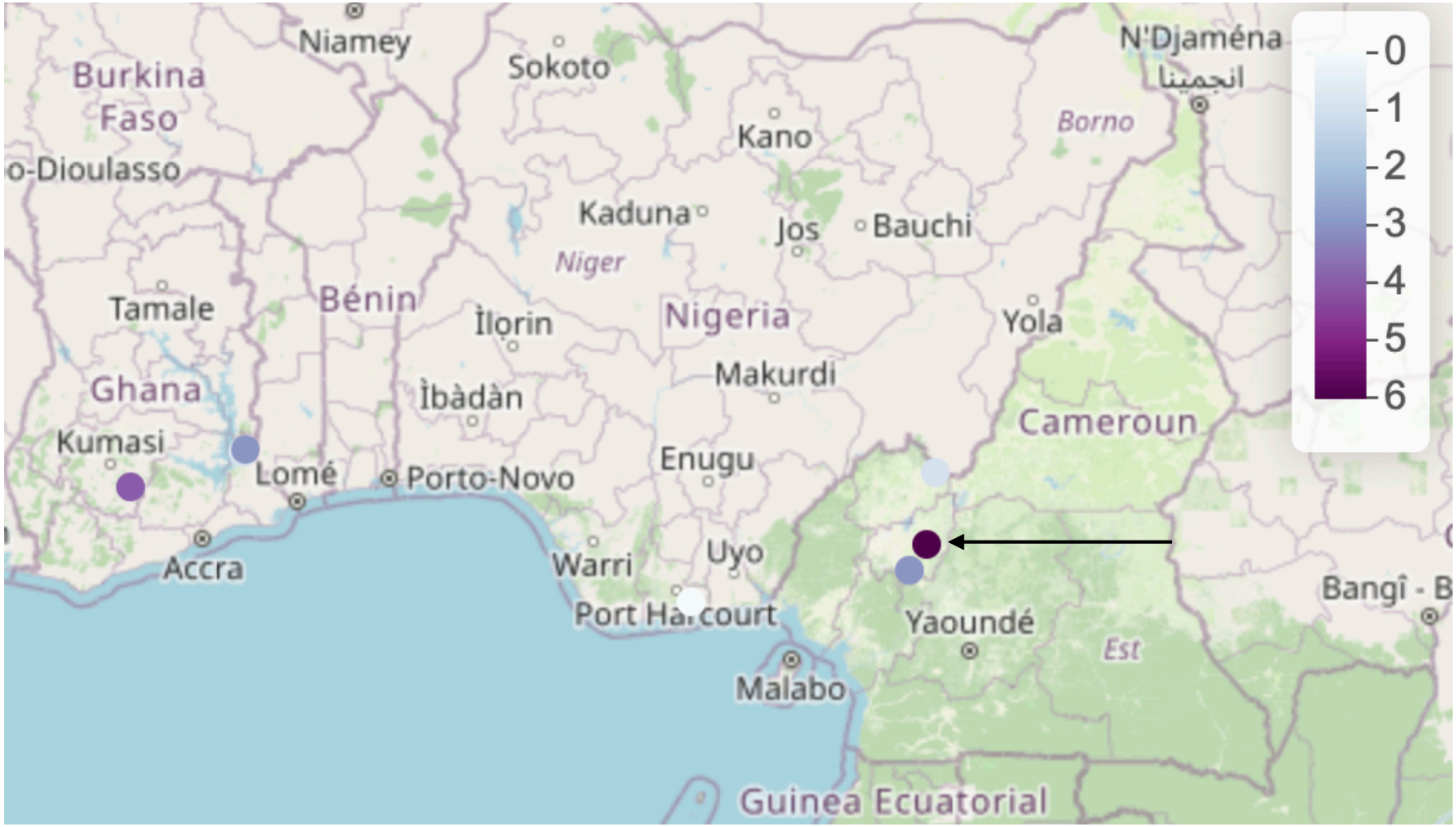

Fig. 1 – Map of West Africa illustrating number of porous clausal domains expected to be strong islands for seven languages

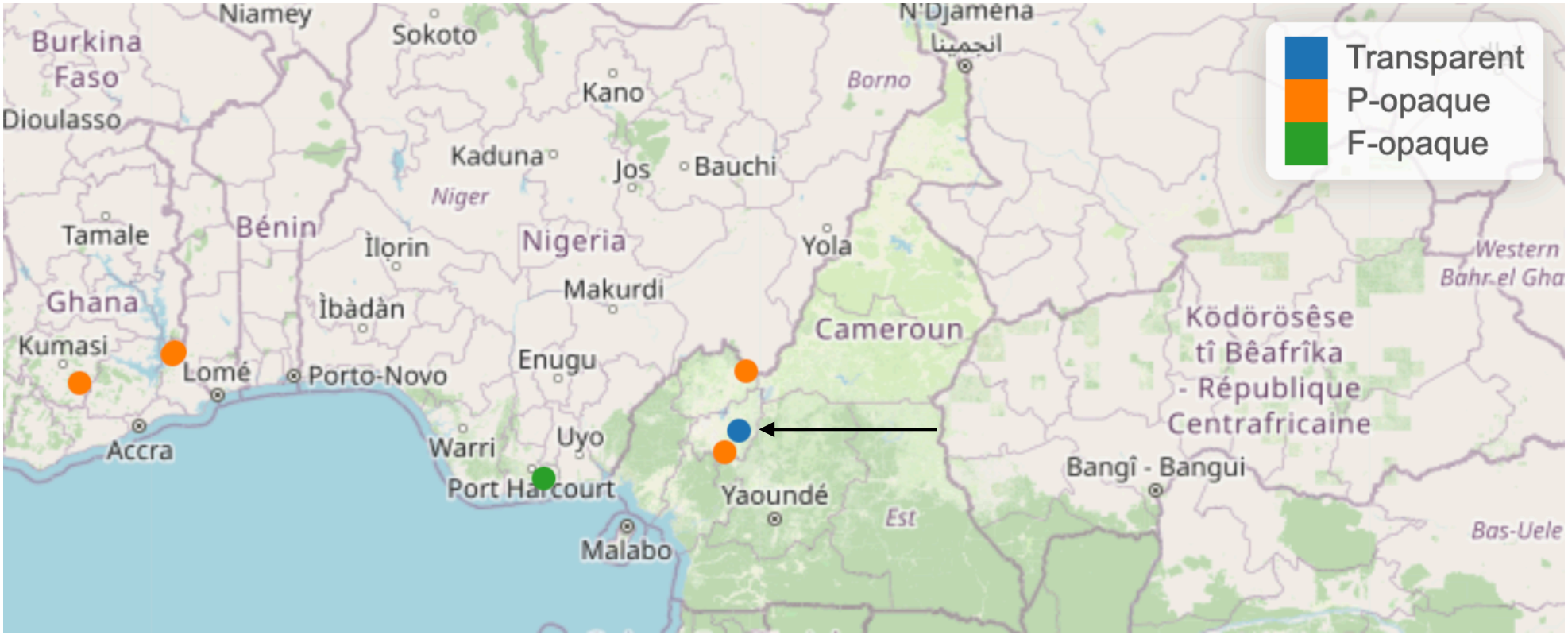

Fig. 2 – Map of West Africa illustrating opacity of clausal domains expected to be strong islands for seven languages

(*P-opaque = "partially opaque"; F-opaque = "fully opaque"*)

Preview of Findings

- Shupamem lacks clausal islands entirely.
- Shupamem thus challenges the conception of strong island constraints as universal narrow syntactic constraints.
- Not discussed: *why* Shupamem lacks strong islands.

Colleagues & Collaborators

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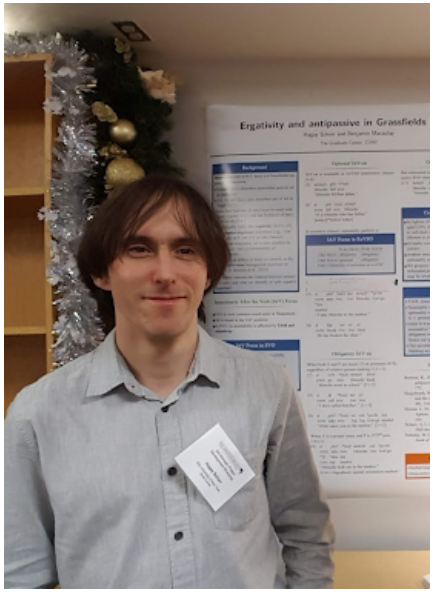

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Roadmap

- Overview of Shupamem
- Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts
- Evidence for A-bar Movement Out of Clausal "Islands"
    - ✦ Crossover Effects
    - ✦ Parasitic Gap Licensing
    - ✦ Reconstruction Effects
    - ✦ *Wh*- Quantifier Float
- Additional Evidence for Absence of Clausal Islands: NCI licensing
- Conclusion

Overview of Shupamem

- Shupamem (ISO 639-3: bax) is an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language of Cameroon.
- Spoken in the Western Region by 420,000 speakers (Eberhard et al. 2019).
- Also known as “Bamun”.
- S-V-O-X word order.

Shupamem A-bar Movement

- Two relevant A-bar configurations for our purposes:

(3) Focus cleft construction

á	(*pă)	rɨ̀ː	*(juá)	Mímʃə́	jɨ́ɣən	____	nə́.
EXPL	COP.PRS	chair	REL	Mimshe	see.PST1		REL.COMP

'It is the chair that Mimshe saw.'

(4) Topicalization construction

á	(*pă)	pòː	rɨ̀ː	(*juá)	Mímʃə́	jɨ́ɣən	____.
EXPL	COP.PRS	TOP	chair	REL	Mimshe	see.PST1	

'As for the chair, Mimshe saw (it).'

- Underlying both constructions: predicative RC structures in which the RC head is the focused / topicalized constituent.
- Both constructions: expletive subjects & obligatorily null copulae (Nchare 2012).
- Relativizers: obligatorily overt (focus clefts); obligatorily null (topicalizations).

Shupamem A-bar Movement

- Properties of Shupamem (affirmative) focus cleft & topicalization constructions:

	Expletive Subject	Copula	Topic/Focus Marker	Relativizer
Topicalization	✓	✗	✓	✗
Focus-Cleft	✓	✗	✗	✓

Shupamem A-bar Movement

- Resumption patterns in focus cleft & topicalization constructions:
  - ✦ Resumption is obligatory for subjects.

(5) á pò: **Mímʃə́** *(**í**)-jɨ́ɣən rɨ̀ː.
EXPL TOP Mimshe 3SG-see.PST1 chair
'As for Mimshe, he saw the chair.'

  - ✦ Resumption is obligatory for animate-denoting direct objects.

(6) á pò: **məsì** Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən-*(**í**).
EXPL TOP bird Mimshe see.PST1-3SG
'As for the bird, Mimshe saw it.'

  - ✦ Resumption is obligatory for animate-denoting indirect objects.

(7) á pò: **Râjè** Mímʃə́ fà nʒɔ̀ʔ nə *(**í**).
EXPL TOP Raye Mimshe give.PST1 flower to 3SG
'As for Raye, Mimshe gave a flower to her.'

Shupamem A-bar Movement

- Resumption is unavailable for inanimate-denoting direct objects.

(8) á pò: **ɲí** Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən-(*í).
EXPL TOP machete Mimshe see.PST1-3SG
'As for the machete, Mimshe saw (it).'

- Resumption is unavailable for inanimate-denoting indirect objects.

(9) á pò: **rɨ̀:** Mímʃə́ fà nʒɔ̀ʔ nə̀ (*í).
EXPL TOP chair Mimshe give.PST1 flower to 3.SG
'As for the chair, Mimshe gave a flower to it.'

Roadmap

- Overview of Shupamem
- Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts
- Evidence for A-bar Movement Out of Clausal "Islands"
    - ✦ Crossover Effects
    - ✦ Parasitic Gap Licensing
    - ✦ Reconstruction Effects
    - ✦ *Wh*- Quantifier Float
- Additional Evidence for Absence of Clausal Islands: NCI licensing
- Conclusion

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

- A number of configurations that behave as stable syntactic islands across languages seem to allow A-bar movement out of them in Shupamem.
    - Sentential subjects
    - Complex NPs
        - ✦ Definite relative clauses
        - ✦ Clausal complements of definite Ns
    - Adjunct clauses
        - ✦ Temporal clauses
        - ✦ Reason clauses
        - ✦ Conditional clauses

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

(10) Sentential subjects

a. [mí Râjè jɨ́ɣən rɨ̀ː] vɛ̌t Mímʃə̀.
COMP Raye see.PST1 chair surprise.PST1 Mimshe
'That Raye saw the chair surprised Mimshe.'

b. á pòː **rɨ̀ː** [mí Râjè jɨ́ɣən ___] vɛ̌t Mímʃə̀.
EXPL TOP chair COMP Raye see.PST1 surprise.PST1 Mimshe
'As for the chair, that Raye saw (it) surprised Mimshe.'

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

(11) Complex NPs (Definite relative clauses)

a. Râjè jì̀ [màmbà juá í-jùn ndáp ná].
Raye know.PRS man REL 3SG-buy.PST1 house REL.COMP
'Raye knows the man who bought the house.'

b. á pò: **ndáp** Râjè jì̀ [màmbà juá í-jùn ____ ná].
EXPL TOP house Raye know.PRS man REL 3SG-buy.PST1 REL.COMP
'As for the house, Raye knows the man who bought (it).'

(12) Complex NPs (Clausal complements of definite Ns)

a. Mímʃá jù? [sàŋgăm mí Râjè jɨ̀ pɛ́n].
Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP Raye eat.PST1 fufu
'Mimshe heard the story that Raye ate the fufu.'

b. á pò: **pɛ́n** Mímʃá jù? [sàŋgăm mí Râjè jɨ̀ ____].
EXPL TOP fufu Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP Raye eat.PST1
'As for the fufu, Mimshe heard the story that Raye ate (it).'

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

(13) Adjunct clauses (Temporal clauses)

a. Mímʃə́ sɛ̀n lɛ́nə́mì̀ [kà Râjè n-ʒɨ́ɣən ndáp].
Mimshe break.PST1 mirror before Raye REAL-see.INF house
'Mimshe broke the mirror before Raye saw the house.'

b. á pò: **ndáp** Mímʃə́ sɛ̀n lɛ́nə́mì̀ [kà Râjè n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____].
EXPL TOP house Mimshe break.PST1 mirror before Raye REAL-see.INF
'As for the house, Mimshe broke the mirror before Raye saw (it).'

(14) Adjunct clauses (Reason clauses)

a. Mímʃə́ lɔ̃? [mə ŋgă ká: Râjè lăp rɨ̀: nə́].
Mimshe left.PST1 on reason REL Raye hit.PST1 chair REL.COMP
'Mimshe left because Raye hit the chair.'

b. á pò: **rɨ̀:** Mímʃə́ lɔ̃? [mə ŋgă ká: Râjè lăp ____ nə́].
EXPL TOP chair Mimshe left.PST1 on reason REL Raye hit.PST1 REL.COMP
'As for the chair, Mimshe left because Raye hit (it).'

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

(15) Adjunct clauses (Conditional clauses)

a. [Mímʃə́ kə̀ n-ʒɨ́ɣən ndăp] mbû: Râjè ná: tuə́ lɔ́ʔ.
Mimshe if REAL-see.INF house then Raye IRR FUT1 leave
'If Mimshe sees the house, then Raye will leave.'

b. á pò: **ndáp** [Mímʃə́ kə̀ n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____] mbû: Râjè ná: tuə́ lɔ́ʔ.
EXPL TOP house Mimshe if REAL-see.INF then Raye IRR FUT1 leave
'As for the house, if Mimshe sees (it), then Raye will leave.'

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

- Not all expected island configurations are transparent for A-bar movement. NP coordinate structures have island status, but only with respect to the second conjunct. This is similar to Awing (Fominyam 2021).

(16)

a. Mímʃə́ kɨ̀p [rɨ̀ː pôː tɛ́ːbɛ̀] nə kɨ́.
Mimshe break.PST1 chair CONJ table with strength
'Mimshe broke the chair and the table quickly.'

b. á pòː **rɨ̀ː** Mímʃə́ kɨ̀p [____ pôː tɛ́ːbɛ̀] nə kɨ́.
EXPL TOP chair Mimshe break.PST1 CONJ table with strength
'As for the chair, Mimshe broke (it) and the table quickly.'

c. * á pòː **tɛ́ːbɛ̀** Mímʃə́ kɨ̀p [rɨ̀ː pôː ____] nə kɨ́.
EXPL TOP table Mimshe break.PST1 chair CONJ with strength
Intended: 'As for the table, Mimshe broke the chair and (it) quickly.'

Basic Clausal "Island" Escape Facts

- With regard to the data in (10)-(15), we can entertain two options:
  - (i) The topicalized constituent (X) has undergone A-bar movement out of the relevant "island": *á pò:* $\mathbf{X_i}$ [TP … [ISLAND …$\mathbf{t_i}$…]]
  - (ii) X is base-generated in its surface position and binds an empty category in the "island": *á pò:* $\mathbf{X_i}$ [TP … [ISLAND …$\mathbf{e_i}$…]]
- I'll argue for analysis (i), concluding that the structures in (10)-(15) do not have island status in Shupamem.
- *Explaining* the absence of island effects is beyond the scope of the talk.

Roadmap

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Crossover Effects

- A-bar fronted elements cannot move across c-commanding pronouns that they end up binding (Strong Crossover), nor can they move across non-c-commanding pronouns that they end up binding (Weak Crossover).

(17) Strong Crossover effect

a. í-jɨ́ɣàn wà?
3SG-see.PST1 who
'Who did he/she see?'

b. á **wà** juá í-jɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́** nâ?
EXPL who REL 3SG-see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
'Who did he/she see?'
✓'Who is the x such that y saw x?'
* 'Who is the x such that x saw x?'

Crossover Effects

(18) Weak Crossover effect

a. mɔ́n-ì̀ jɨ́ɣàn wà?
child-3SG see.PST who
'Who did his/her child see?'

b. á **wà** juá mɔ́n-ì̀ jɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́** nâ?
EXPL who REL child-3SG see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
'Who did his/her child see?'
✓'Who is the x such that y's child saw x?'
* 'Who is the x such that x's child saw x?'

Crossover Effects

- *Wh-* clefting of material internal to sentential subject configurations gives rise to both strong (19a) and weak (19b) crossover effects.

(19) Crossover effects in sentential subject constructions

a. á **wà** juə́ [mí í-jɨ́ɣən-**ɨ́**] vɛ̌t Mímʃə́ nə̂?
EXPL who REL COMP 3SG-see.PST1-3SG surprise.PST1 Mimshe REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that that y saw x surprised Mimshe?'
* 'Who is the x such that that x saw x surprised Mimshe?'

b. á **wà** juə́ [mí mɔ́n-ì̀ jɨ́ɣən-**ɨ́**] vɛ̌t Mímʃə́ nə̂?
EXPL who REL COMP child-3SG see.PST1-3SG surprise.PST1 Mimshe REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that that y's child saw x surprised Mimshe?'
* 'Who is the x such that that x's child saw x surprised Mimshe?'

Crossover Effects

- *Wh-* clefting of complex NP-internal material (RC variety) gives rise to both strong (20a) & weak (20b) crossover effects.

(20) Crossover effects in definite RC constructions

a. á **wà** juá Râjè jì̀ [màmbà juá í-jɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́** nâ]?
EXPL who REL Raye know.PRS man REL 3SG-see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that Raye knows the man y who saw x?'
* 'Who is the x such that Raye knows the man x who saw x?'

b. á **wà** juá Râjè jì̀ [màmbà juá món-ì̀ jɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́** nâ]?
EXPL who REL Raye know.PRS man REL child-3SG see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that Raye knows the man y whose child saw x?'
* 'Who is the x such that Raye knows the man x whose child saw x?'

Crossover Effects

- *Wh-* clefting of complex NP-internal material (clausal complement of N type) gives rise to both strong (21a) & weak (21b) crossover effects.

(21) Crossover effects in CP complement of definite N constructions

a. á **wà** juá Mímʃə́ jù? [sàŋgăm mí í-jɨ́ɣən-**í**] nâ?
EXPL who REL Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP 3SG-see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that Mimshe heard the story that y saw x?'
* 'Who is the x such that Mimshe heard the story that x saw x?'

b. á **wà** juá Mímʃə́ jù? [sàŋgăm mí mɔ́n-ì jɨ́ɣən-**í**] nâ?
EXPL who REL Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP child-3SG see.PST1-3SG REL.COMP.Q
√'Who is the x such that Mimshe heard the story that y's child saw x?'
*'Who is the x such that Mimshe heard the story that x's child saw x?'

Crossover Effects

- *Wh-* clefting of material internal to conditional clauses gives rise to both strong (22a) & weak (22b) crossover effects.

(22) Crossover effects in adjunct conditional clause constructions

a. á **wà** juá [í kà n-ʒɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́**] mbû: Râjè ná: tuá lɔ́? nâ?
EXPL who REL 3SG if REAL-see.INF-3SG then Raye IRR FUT1 leave REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that if y sees x, then Raye will leave?'
* 'Who is the x such that if x sees x, then Raye will leave?'

b. á **wà** juá [mɔ́n-ì̀ kà n-ʒɨ́ɣàn-**ɨ́**] mbû: Râjè ná: tuá lɔ́? nâ?
EXPL who REL child-3SG if REAL-see.INF-3SG then Raye IRR FUT1 leave REL.COMP.Q
✓'Who is the x such that if y's child sees x, then Raye will leave?'
* 'Who is the x such that if x's child sees x, then Raye will leave?'

- Similar effects obtain in temporal and reason clause constructions.

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Parasitic Gap Licensing

- An illicit gap is licensed in the presence of a non-c-commanding A-bar gap.

(23) Parasitic gap licensing

a. Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən ndáp kà í-n-ʒún ndáp.
Mimshe see.PST1 house before 3SG-REAL-buy.INF house
'Mimshe saw the house before buying the house.'

b. * Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən ndáp kà í-n-ʒún ____.
Mimshe see.PST1 house before 3SG-REAL-buy.INF
Intended: 'Mimshe saw the house before buying (it).'

c. ✓ á pòː **ndáp** Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən ____ kà í-n-ʒún ____.
EXPL TOP house Mimshe see.PST1 before 3SG-REAL-buy.INF
'As for the house, Mimshe saw (it) before buying (it).'

Parasitic Gap Licensing

- Topicalization of material internal to sentential subjects licenses parasitic gaps inside subject CPs (24b) that are not licensed in the absence of topicalization (24a).

(24) Parasitic gap licensing in sentential subject constructions

a. * [mí Râjè jɨ̀ pɛ́n kà í-n-ná ____] vɛ̌t Mòlɨ̀.
COMP Raye eat.PST1 fufu before 3SG-REAL-cook.INF surprise.PST1 Molu

b. ✓ á pò: **pɛ́n** [mí Râjè jɨ̀ ____ kà í-n-ná ____]
EXPL TOP fufu COMP Raye eat.PST1 before 3SG-REAL-cook.INF
vɛ̌t Mòlɨ̀.
surprised Molu
'As for the fufu, that Raye ate (it) before cooking (it) surprised Molu.'

Parasitic Gap Licensing

- Topicalization of complex NP-internal material licenses parasitic gaps in relative clauses (25b) that are not licensed in the absence of topicalization (25a).

(25) Parasitic gap licensing in definite RC constructions

a. * Râjè jì [màmbà juá í-jùn ndáp kà í-n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____
Raye know.PRS man REL 3SG-buy.PST1 house before 3SG-REAL-see.INF
nə́].
REL.COMP

b. ✓ á pò: **ndáp** Râjè jì [màmbà juá í-jùn ____ kà
EXPL TOP house Raye know.PRS man REL 3SG-buy.PST1 before
í-n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____ nə́].
3SG-REAL-see.INF REL.COMP]
'As for the house, Raye knows the man who bought (it) before seeing (it).'

Parasitic Gap Licensing

- Topicalization of complex NP-internal material licenses parasitic gaps in CP complements of Ns (26b) that are not licensed in the absence of topicalization (26a).

(26) Parasitic gap licensing in CP complement of definite N constructions

a. * Mímʃə́ jù? [sàŋgăm mí Râjè jùn ndáp kà í-n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____].
Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP Raye buy.PST1 house before 3SG-REAL-see.INF

b. ✓ á pò: **ndáp** Mímʃə́ jù? [sàŋgăm mí Râjè jùn ____ kà í-n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____].
EXPL TOP house Mimshe hear.PST1 story COMP Raye buy.PST1 before 3SG-REAL-see.INF
'As for the house, Mimshe heard the story that Raye bought (it) before seeing (it).'

Parasitic Gap Licensing

- Topicalization of reason clause-internal material licenses parasitic gaps inside those adjunct clauses (27b) that are not licensed in the absence of topicalization (27a).

(27) Parasitic gap licensing in adjunct reason clause constructions

a. * Mímʃə́ lɔ̌ʔ [mə́ ŋgă ká: Râjè jùn ndáp kà í-n-ʒɨ́ɣə̀n ____ nə́].
Mimshe leave.PST1 on reason REL Raye buy.PST1 house before 3SG-REL-see.INF REL.COMP

b. ✓ a pò: **ndáp** Mímʃə́ lɔ̌ʔ [mə́ ŋgă ká: Râjè jùn ____ kà í-n-ʒɨ́ɣə̀n ____ nə́].
EXPL TOP house Mimshe leave.PST1 on reason REL Raye buy.PST1 before 3SG-REAL-see.INF REL.COMP
'As for the house, Mimshe left because Raye bought (it) before seeing (it).'

- Similar effects obtain in temporal and conditional clause constructions.

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Reconstruction Effects

- A-bar-displaced constituents behave as if they occupy a lower structural position with respect to binding theoretic considerations.

(28) Reconstruction effect

a. Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən fítú ŋwàr-ì.
Mimshe see.PST1 picture body-3SG
'Mimshe$_i$ saw a picture of himself$_i$.'

b. á pò: **fítú ŋwàr-ì** Mímʃə́ jɨ́ɣən ____.
EXPL TOP picture body-3SG Mimshe see.PST1
'As for the picture of himself$_i$, Mimshe$_i$ saw (it).'

Reconstruction Effects

- Reconstruction effects are observed when anaphor-containing constituents inside sentential subjects are topicalized.

(29) Reconstruction effects in sentential subject constructions

á	pò:	**sàŋgăm**	**məʃí?**	**ŋwàr-ì**	[mí	Râjè	să:	____]	vĕt	Mímʃə̀.
EXPL	TOP	story	about	body-3SG	COMP	Raye	tell.PST1		surprise.PST1	Mimshe

'As for the story about herself$_i$, that Raye$_i$ told (it) surprised Mimshe.'

Reconstruction Effects

- Reconstruction effects are observed when anaphor-containing material that is internal to relative clauses is topicalized.

(30) Reconstruction effects in definite RC constructions

á	pò:	**fítú**	**ŋwàr-ì**	Râjè	jì	[màmbà	juá	í-jɨ́ɣàn	____
EXPL	TOP	picture	body-3SG	Raye	know.PRS	man	REL	3SG-see.PST1	

nə́].
REL.COMP

'As for the picture of himself$_i$, Raye knows the man$_i$ who saw (it).'

Reconstruction Effects

- Reconstruction effects are observed when anaphor-containing material internal to clausal complements of Ns is topicalized.

(31) Reconstruction effects in CP complement of definite N structures

á	pòː	**fítú**	**ŋwàr-ì**	Mímʃə́	jù?	[sàŋgăm	mí	Râyè	siɛ̌t	____].
EXPL	TOP	picture	body-3SG	Mimshe	hear.PST1	story	COMP	Raye	tear.PST	

'As for the picture of herself$_i$, Mimshe heard the story that Raye$_i$ tore (it).'

Reconstruction Effects

- Reconstruction effects are observed when anaphor-containing constituents originating inside adjunct temporal clauses are topicalized.

(32) Reconstruction effects in adjunct temporal clause constructions

á	pòː	**fǐtú**	**ŋwàr-ì**	Mímʃə́	sɛ̀n		kàmèrá	[kà	Râjè	n-ʒɨ́ɣən ____].
EXPL	TOP	picture	body-3SG	Mimshe	break.PST1		camera	before	Raye	REAL-see.INF

'As for the picture of herself$_i$, Mimshe broke the camera before Raye$_i$ saw (it).'

- Similar effects obtain in reason and conditional clause constructions.

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Wh- Quantifier Float

- *Wh-* quantifier float refers to configurations in which a quantifier is construed together with its *wh-* associate despite a non-local relation between them (33b).

(33) *Wh-* quantifier float

a. mɔ́n jùn **kɨ́ɣə** **mɔ̀ntɛ́n** ŋkù:rə̀ nâ?
child buy.PST1 what all yesterday Q
'What all did the child buy yesterday?'

b. à **kɨ́ɣə** juá mɔ́n jùn _____ **mɔ̀ntɛ́n** ŋkù:rə̀ nâ?
EXPL what REL child buy.PST1 all yesterday REL.PART.Q
'What is the x such that the child bought all x yesterday?'

c. à **kɨ́ɣə** **mɔ̀ntɛ́n** juá mɔ́n jùn _____ ŋkù:rə̀ nâ?
EXPL what all REL child buy.PST1 yesterday REL.PART.Q
'What is the x such that the child bought all x yesterday?'

Wh- Quantifier Float

- Sentential subject constructions that contain a quantified *wh*- object yield the same interpretation when the quantifier and its associate are both in situ (34a) and when the *wh*- item is focus-clefted (34b).

(34) *Wh*- quantifier float in sentential subject constructions

a. [mí Râjè fì? **kɨ́ɣə** **màntɛ̀n** ŋkù:rà] vɛ̌t Mímʃə́?
COMP Raye move.PST1 what all yesterday surprise.PST1 Mimshe
'That Raye moved what all yesterday surprised Mimshe?'

b. á **kɨ́ɣə** juá [mí Râjè fì? ____ **màntɛ̀n** ŋkù:rà]
EXPL what REL COMP Raye move.PST1 all yesterday
vɛ̌t Mímʃə́?
surprise.PST1 Mimshe
'What is the x such that that Raye moved all x yesterday surprised Mimshe?'

Wh- Quantifier Float

- Fronted *wh-* objects that originate inside RCs are construed together with floating RC-internal quantifiers as if they occupy a position inside the complex NP (35b).

(35) *Wh-* quantifier float in definite RC constructions

a. ú-jɨ́ɣàn ndáp [ná kámíndà lɨ̌ɣəm **kɨ́ɣə màntɛ́n** nâ]?
2SG-see.PST1 house REL carpenter keep.PST1 what all REL.PART.Q
'You saw the house where the carpenter kept what all?'

b. à **kɨ́ɣə** juá ú-jɨɣən ndáp [ná kámíndà lɨ̌ɣəm _____
EXPL what REL 2SG-see.PST1 house REL carpenter keep.PST1
màntɛ́n nâ]?
all REL.PART.Q
'What is the x such that you saw the house where the carpenter kept all x ?'

Wh- Quantifier Float

- Fronted *wh-* objects that originate inside clausal complements of definite Ns are construed together with floating quantifiers as if they occupy a position inside the complex NP (36b).

(36) *Wh-* quantifier float in CP complement of definite N constructions

a. Râjə jù? pèsáʔkɨ̀ɣə [mí Mímʃə kɨ́p **kɨ́ɣə mèntɛ́n** nə̂]?
Raye hear.PST1 account COMP Mimshe break.PST1 what all Q
'Raye heard the account that Mimshe broke what all?'

b. à **kɨ́ɣə** juə́ Râjə jù? pèsáʔkɨ̀ɣə [mí Mímʃə
EXPL what REL.PART Raye hear.PST1 account COMP Mimshe
kɨ́p ____ **mèntɛ́n**] nə̂?
break.PST1 all REL.PART.Q
'What is the x such that Raye heard the account that Mimshe broke all x?'

Wh- Quantifier Float

- Fronted *wh-* objects that originate inside adjunct reason clauses are construed together with floating quantifiers as if they occupy a position inside the adjunct clause (37b).

(37) a. Ndám tâ ǹ-ʃǐ [mə ŋgă ká: Mímʃə kɨ̀p **kɨ́ɣə**
Ndam PROG PTCP-angry on reason REL Mimshe break.PST1 what
màntɛ́n ŋkù:rə nâ]?
all yesterday REL.PART.Q
'Ndam is angry because Mimshe broke what all yesterday?'

b. à **kɨ́ɣə** juə́ Ndám tâ ǹ-ʃǐ [mə ŋgă ká: Mímʃə
EXPL what REL Ndam PROG PTCP-angry on reason REL Mimshe
kɨ̀p _____ **màntɛ́n** ŋkù:rə nâ]?
break.PST1 all yesterday REL.PART.Q
'What x is the x such that Ndam is angry because Mimshe broke x all yesterday?'

- Similar effects obtain in temporal and conditional clause constructions.

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NCI Licensing

- The licensing of "island"-embedded negative concord items (NCIs) by domain-external matrix negation furnishes additional evidence for the non-island status of the clausal domains previously discussed.

- In this way, the permeability of Shupamem clausal domains is not limited to A-bar *extraction,* but extends to probes that "look inside" such configurations.

NCI Licensing

- NCIs are items that are licensed in the presence of root clause-level negation.
- Shupamem NCIs: N-words that take the form of *nʃə̀-* initial lexical items (Nchare 2012).
- NCIs give rise to single negation readings (38a) (Jespersen 1922) and may be used as fragment negative answers (39) (Giannakidou 2006).

(38) a. Râjè **mâ** n-ʒɨ́ɣən-ì̀ **nʃə̀-mɨ̀n**.
Raye NEG PTCP-see-3SG NEG-person.SG
'Raye didn't see anybody.'

b. * Râjè jɨ́ɣən **nʃə̀-mɨ̀n**.
Raye see.PST1 NEG-person.SG

(39) A: à kɨ̀p kɨ̀ɣəː?
EXPL break.PST1 what.Q
'What broke?'

B: ŋʃə̀-jɨ̀m!
NEG-thing
'Nothing!'

NCI Licensing

- NCI licensing is island-sensitive and thus a narrow syntactic phenomenon.

  - ✦ Xhosa factive clauses are islands for NCI licensing (Carstens & Mletshe 2016).
  - ✦ RCs are islands for NCI licensing in West Flemish (Haegeman & Zanuttini 1991).
  - ✦ RCs are islands for NCI licensing in Spanish (Aranovich 1993) (40).

(40) Spanish (Aranovich 1993: 209)

* **No** encontré los cigarillos [que fuma **ninguno** de tus amigos].
NEG find.PST the cigarettes REL smoke.PRS NEG/person of your friends
Intended: 'I have not found the cigarettes that any of your friends smokes.'

NCI Licensing

- If the clausal domains previously considered are not islands for A-bar dependency formation in Shupamem, then we predict that NCIs within those domains should be accessible to outside probes.

- This prediction is borne out. NCIs embedded in the various would-be clausal “islands” are successfully licensed by domain-external negation.

NCI Licensing

- RC-internal NCIs are licensed by domain-external negation (41).

(41) a. mə pí **mâ** ǹ-ʒí-à màmbà: [juə́ í-jɨ́ɣàn
1SG PST3 Neg.PST PTCP-know-1SG man.SG REL 3SG-see.PST1
nʃə̀-mɨ̀n nə́].
NEG-person.SG REL.PART
'I didn't know the person that saw anybody.'

b. * mə pí jí màmbà: [juə́ í-jɨ́ɣàn **nʃə̀-mɨ̀n** nə́].
1SG PST3 know man.SG REL 3SG-see.PST1 NEG-person.SG REL.PART

- NCIs embedded in CP complements of definite Ns are licensed by domain-external negation (42).

(42) a. Râjè **mâ** ǹ-ʒù?-ní ndàm [mí Móli̋ nkwàt **nʃə̀-jì̋m**].
Raye NEG PTCP-hear.PST1-3SG rumor COMP Molu eat.PST1 NEG-thing
'Raye did not hear the rumor that Molu ate anything.'

b. * Râjè jù? ndàm [mí Móli̋ nkwàt **nʃə̀-jì̋m**].
Raye hear.PST1 rumor COMP Molu eat.PST1 NEG-thing

NCI Licensing

- NCIs inside reason clauses are similarly licensed under the scope of domain-external negation (43).

(43) a. Mímʃə́ **mâ** ǹ-ʃɨ̌-nì̀ [mə ŋgă ká: Ndàm kɨ́p
Mimshe NEG PTCP-angry-3SG on reason REL Ndam break.PST1
nʃə̀-jɨ̀m nə].
NEG-thing.SG REL.PART
'Mimshe isn't angry because Ndam broke anything.'

b. * Mímʃə́ ʃɨ̌ [mə ŋgă ká: Ndàm kɨ́p **nʃə̀-jɨ̀m** nə].
Mimshe angry on reason REL Ndam break.PST1 NEG-thing REL.PART

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Conclusion

- The Shupamem "island" configurations discussed in this talk:
  - ✦ Are loci of crossover effects in A-bar constructions
  - ✦ Are loci of parasitic gap licensing in A-bar constructions
  - ✦ Are loci of reconstruction effects in A-bar constructions
  - ✦ Can host floating *wh-* quantifiers
  - ✦ Are penetrable for NCI licensing
- I conclude that A-bar movement from these domains is possible and that none of the configurations are strong islands in the language.

Conclusion

- From a generative perspective, this is a VERY unexpected result! The transparent domains in question constitute cross-linguistically stable and purportedly "universal" strong islands.

- From an Africanist perspective, however, it may be less unexpected. Recent work has uncovered an areal trend, whereby one or more canonical "island" configuration in a variety of African languages exhibits transparency for A-bar dependency formation.
  - **Asante Twi** (Korsah & Murphy 2019; Hein 2020; Hein & Georgi 2021)
  - **Avatime** (Devlin et al. 2021)
  - **Awing** (Fominyam 2021)
  - **Igbo** (Georgi & Amaechi 2020)
  - **Ikpana** (Kandybowicz et al. 2023)
  - **Limbum** (Hein 2020)
  - **Medumba** (Keupdjio 2020)
  - **Mende** (Smith 2023)
  - **Shupamem** (Schurr et al. 2023)
  - **Swahili** (Gould & Scott 2019; Scott 2021)

Conclusion

- The implications of these findings, I believe, are two-fold:
  - (i) They have the potential to shape the landscape of future research on islands.
  - (ii) They clearly demonstrate the value of (under-studied) African languages for linguistic theory.

Thank you!

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