

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH NON-REFLEXIVE

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Yoon, Seok Hwa(1993). **The Distribution of English Non-reflexive.** *Linguistics*, Vol 1. We have a well-known phenomenon in English where a reflexive pronoun is expected, but does not occur. In this type of sentence, a pp contains a reflexive pronoun which is coreferential with a preceding noun in the same clause, and also contains a non-reflexive pronoun which is coreferential with a preceding noun. If anaphors always exist in "bound position," it is impossible to substitute any non-anaphoric noun. This paper indicates that an anaphor must be reflexive if the pp which contains it is immediately dominated by \bar{V} , but it is phonologically realized as a non-reflexive pronoun when dominated by \bar{V} .

There is a well known phenomenon in English where, in a certain type of construction, a reflexive pronoun is expected, but does not occur. In this type of sentence, a PP contains a pronoun which is coreferential with a preceding noun in the same clause, and which should therefore be reflexive, according to principles of disjoint reference as discussed below. However, it is not. Sentences (1)a-d illustrate this:

- (1) a. Do you have some money on you?
- b. I always carry my wallet with me.
- c. Christina gathered her children around her.
- d. Sam pushed the plate away from him

Constraints on coreference require that two non-anaphoric NP's in a clause be different in reference unless the second NP is a reflexive or reciprocal pronoun (Postal, 1966; Chomsky, 1973). For example, in a sentence like (2), Herbert and him must be interpreted

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as disjoint in reference if the sentence is to be grammatical:

(2) Herbert I like him.

Where a non-coreferential interpretation is impossible, the sentence must be starred. (However, see Katz, 1980; Chomsky, 1981, Ch. 5).

(3) *I like me.

Therefore, all non-reflexive pronouns and nouns must be free--that is, non-anaphoric--within a clause. This is in contrast to reflexives, which must be bound to an antecedent. (See Chomsky, 1981, Ch. 3 for principles of anaphor binding). For instance:

(4) a. I like myself.

b. *I like himself.

Sentences (1) a-d present a problem for general constraints on coreference. In each case, the pronoun of the PP should be reflexive, since it may be construed as coreferential with the subject. It is predicted that (1) a, for example, should be as in (5):

(5) *Do you have some money on yourself?

However, (5) is clearly ungrammatical.

Various attempts have been made to account for the sentences in (1). Chomsky (1973) has shown evidence that rules of interpretation, such as those that construe coreference, are subject to certain constraints, namely the Specified Subject Condition and the Tended Sentence Condition. These constraints are subsumed under Principle B of the binding theory (Chomsky, 1981, Ch. 3), which says that a pronominal is free in its governing category. That is, a pronominal

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cannot be coindexed with anything in the NP or S which contains both it and its governor (lexical head of phrase). This is in contrast to an anaphor (e.g. , a reflexive), which must be bound by Principle A of the binding theory:

- (6) a. I know that you like me('myself).
- b. I know that you like yourself ('you).

This fact makes sentences such as (1) a-d a problem for Chomsky. The pronouns of the PP should either be disjoint in reference to the subjects, or they should be reflexives, i. e. , anaphors. To take care of these cases, Chomsky has proposed that such sentences have an underlying structure like (7):

- (7) I have some money [_S PRO on me]

In this case, it is claimed that on me is actually part of a lower clause, so reflexivization is unnecessary. Me is free as required by the binding theory.

The weakness of this argument is that there is no other reason to postulate such a deep structure. In fact, for a sentence I like (1) d (=8a) the base structure doesn't even seem to be parallel in meaning to the surface sentence.

- (8) a. John pushed the plate away from him.
- b. John pushed the plate[_S PRO away form him].

The desirability of deriving (8) a from (8) b is questionable. Also, there is no systematic way of predicting when a PP will have the structure in (7), as opposed to the usual PP structure. For these reasons, Chomsky's hypothesis does not seem to be well-motivated.

A solution could perhaps be found by considering PP to be a bounding node for subjacency and claiming that PP's are opaque for application of at least some rules, like rules of disjoint reference.

The possibility that PP's are bound nodes has been argued for by Baltin (1978) and van Riemsdijk (1978). As subjacency is generally thought to hold only for movement rules, this solution would further entail revising the theory so that subjacency holds for rules of interpretation as well.

If the sentences of (1) have the underlying structure of (9), then the pronoun will not be subjacent to its antecedent, providing PP is cyclic:

(9) [[_{NP}you]_{VP}have_{NP}some money_{PP}on you]]

Non-occurrence of a reflexive is thus accounted for because there is more than one bounding node separating the subject NP and its coreferential pronoun.

This explanation, too, encounters some difficulties. First, it incorrectly rules out sentences such as (10)a and b, where reflexives do occur (still assuming the structure of (9)).

(10) a. Bob wrote a note to himself.

b. Sarah spilled coffee on herself.

If PP is indeed a cyclic node, then reflexives should never occur in the PP. These reflexives must be considered some sort of exception.

Furthermore, in order for the above analysis to work, the PP must be dominated by NP. Usually a PP of the sort we are concerned with is immediately dominated by VP, modifying the verb rather than the object NP. Also, in a sentence like I took John with me, John with me is not a possible NP. Thirdly, in (9), the NP and the PP may be moved separately to form the sentences What do you have on you, or alternatively Where do you have some money?

A more reasonable hypothesis to account for the facts in (1) is based on the notion that some prepositions seem to be more closely allied with their verbs than others. This proposal is made in

Chomsky (1965), as part of an extensive case for verb subcategorization. To illustrate this point, Chomsky uses the sentence (11):

(11) He decided on the boat.

Sentence (11) has the possible readings of either (12) a or (12) b:

(12) a. He chose the boat.

b. He made his decision while on the boat.

If (11) is interpreted as (12) a, the NP the boat is subject to subcategorization restrictions of the verb, but if taken in the sense of (12) b, it is not. The location PP in (12) b modifies the entire sentence, thus allowing variations such as (13):

(13) On the boat, he decided.

When the PP is preposed the sentence becomes unambiguous. Contrast (13) with (14) a, a parallel but unambiguous sentence:

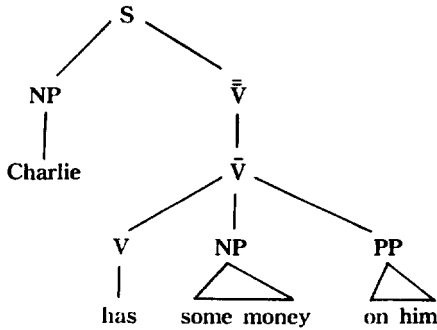
(14) a. He decided on your idea.

b. *On your idea, he decided.

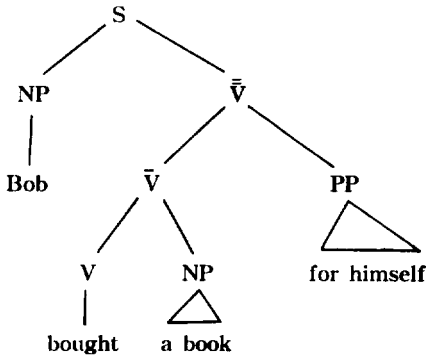
In this case, the PP cannot be preposed with grammatical results, since it is obviously not a locative but much more closely connected with the verb.

It can be postulated that a similar type of restriction is operating in sentences (1) a-d, and that the PP is more closely allied with the verb in these sentences. We propose that in sentences such as (1) a-d the relevant PP is contained under V as a complement to V. This is as opposed to sentences containing reflexives, where the PP forms a separate constituent under V. (15) a and b illustrate this contrast:

(15) a.



b.



Evidence that the PP of (15) b is a constituent separate from the V lies in its ability to undergo deletion under identity and substitution of do so, demonstrated in (16):

(16) a. Bob bought a book for himself this morning and Jane for herself last night.

b. Bob bought a book for himself this morning and Jane did so for herself last night.

In contrast with these sentence are those of (17), where the PP on him cannot be separated from the rest of the verb without creating an ungrammatical, or at least very odd, sentence. It is much more restrictively connected to the verb:

- (17) a. ?*Charlie was carrying some money on him yesterday and Shelley on her last night.
b. ?*Charlie was carrying some money on him yesterday and Shelley did so on her last night.

Also, the PP of (16) can be fronted, while the PP of (17) cannot:

- (18) a. For himself, Bob bought a book.
b. *On him, Charlie was carrying some money.

This general tendency of sentences with PP's containing reflexives to allow deletion of [V NP] exists as a separate constituent. In other words, the PP's containing non-reflexives. These must remain with the verb.

Note, in addition, That a non-coreferential NP may be substituted for the reflexive pronoun:

- (19) a. Bob is buying a book for himself and Jane is doing so for her Aunt Louise.
b. Bob is buying a book for himself and Jane for her Aunt Louise.

This is not possible in the case of the non-reflexives, where the NP must be bound:

- (20) a. *Do you have some money on me?
b. *Do you have some money on your Aunt Louise?

It has been claimed by Helke (1973) that anaphors of this type always exist in "bound positions", so it is impossible to substitute any non-anaphoric noun. This indicates to Helke that these phrases may be types of idiom chunks while the phrases containing reflexives are not. In that case, one would expect the PP's with non-reflexives to appear under V anyway. However, the solution presented above holds even for constructions which are clearly not

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idioms. Consider, for example, sentence (21):

(21) Sam pushed the plate from Mary.

Sentence (21) is not an idiom, yet *him* is not reflexive. The PP seems to be under the V, as evidenced by its inability to be successfully moved or deleted:

(23) a. ?*Sam pushed the plate away from him and Mary away from her.

b. ?*Sam pushed the plate away from him, and Mary did so away from her.

c. *Away from him, Sam pushed the plate.

A completely unified account of the phenomenon of non-reflexives is very difficult because of the marginal nature of a number of cases, such as (24) a and b:

(24) a. John saw oil near him.

b. Close the door behind you.

The PP's in these S's seem to have more mobility:

(25) a. ?Near him, John found oil.

b. ?Behind you, close the door.

Also, they seem to be marginally acceptable either with or without reflexives:

(26) a. ?John saw oil near himself.

b. ?Close the door behind yourself.

It could be that two underlying structures are possible for this type of sentence, or perhaps these marginal constructions are in the

process of changing from one class to the other. We have no definitive analysis for these cases.

In any event, the account presented above remains advantageous for two reasons. First, it is not at all dependent on the cyclic nature of PP's or on a questionable underlying structure. Its underlying structure is one which is already accepted for other reasons (idioms, for example). Secondly, it is based on structural differences which can be demonstrated. The occurrence of reflexives in PP's therefore becomes predictable in some measure and a principled statement about the distribution of reflexives becomes possible. The data presented here indicate that an anaphor must be reflexive if the PP which contains it is immediately dominated by \bar{V} , but that it is phonologically realized as a non-reflexive pronoun when dominated by \bar{V} .

The next step in this research is to explore the principles involved in this phenomenon. For instance, are the pronouns in (1) exempt from reflexivization because they do not bear a grammatical relation to the V, or in other words, are in "quasiargument" positions? This direction seems like a promising one for future developments.

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