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ON NON-REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS IN REFLEXIVE ENVIRONMENTS

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Central to every generative analysis of reflexivization, whether it be transformational or interpretive, is accounting for the fact that, in isolation, sentences like 1a are grammatical/acceptable whereas sentences like 1b are not:

- (1)a. I blame myself.
- b. *I blame me.

Under certain very restricted yet stateable conditions, sentences such as 1b do, in fact, occur -- not in isolation, but rather in larger contexts. Consider the sentences in 2:

- (2)a. [Philadelphia Inquirer, 12/12/82]

My husband's been unemployed for sixteen months, and now everything depends on me. At work, I'm trying to get ahead. Then, I come home and have to cheer him up. I feel sorry for him, but I feel sorry for me, too.

- b. [The Jeffersons]

Louise Jefferson: You're ashamed of your father?
Lionel Jefferson: I'm ashamed of me.

- c. [Magnum, P.I.]

Magnum [to exploited football player]: They don't own you;
Mrs. Greeley don't own you; When it comes right down to it, only you own you.

- d. [Dallas]

JR: Cliff is in the hospital because of you.
Sue Ellen: No, Cliff is in the hospital because of Cliff.

e. [M*A*S*H]

BJ: If you cut into a healthy body, you're gonna hate yourself for the rest of your life.

Hawkeye: I already hate myself. I hate me; I hate you; and most of all, I hate this war.

Given that sentences of the type illustrated in 1b do occur, albeit in restricted contexts, we must now attempt to account for their occurrence. At least two possibilities suggest themselves: the syntactic principle by which the sentences in 2 are ruled out can be reformulated in such a way that it no longer disallows such sentences; or, alternatively, the syntactic principle can be preserved and a non-syntactic account can be provided in which sentences of this type are, strictly speaking, syntactically deviant, but owe their acceptability to overriding semantic/pragmatic considerations. In this paper, I shall argue for this latter approach by providing a pragmatic analysis of non-reflexive pronouns in reflexive environments which, in conjunction with the syntactic principle of disjoint reference, can account for a wide range of heretofore troublesome facts. Before doing so, I would first like to argue against the alternative syntactic-based approach.

In his article "Pronouns", Evans proposes a 'rule of grammar' to account for the 'relation of referential dependence between pronouns and antecedents'. The rule is provided in 3:

- (3) A term can be referentially dependent upon an NP iff it does not precede and c-command that NP. (Evans, 1980 [57])

Evans defines 'referential dependence' as follows: '...the expression 't' is referentially dependent on t-1' [means] that t is to be understood by being taken to have the same reference as t-1'. (p. 358) Evans points out that 'referential dependence' is different from, although it entails, Lasnik's notion of 'intended coreference'. Two occurrences of the pronoun you, for example, may be intended to be coreferential, yet neither occurrence is referentially dependent on the other. Bill and he, on the other hand, may be intended to be coreferential, yet he is referentially dependent on, or as Evans puts it, 'picks up its reference from' the expression Bill. Referentially dependent expressions require some immediate prior mention or context in order to determine their reference; or alternatively, a belief is required on the part of the speaker that the hearer is attending to the entity in question at the time of the utterance. (see Chafe (1976), inter alia) Referentially dependent expressions include third person personal pronouns as well as pronominal epithets. Referentially independent expressions, on the other hand, do not require immediate prior mention or a belief that a hearer is attending to a particular entity in order to determine their reference. Expressions of this type include first and second person pronouns (as well as most other deictics) and proper names.

Evans' rule concerning referentially dependent expressions thus is adequate to rule out the sentences in 4, since in each case, a referentially dependent expression, he, precedes and C-commands Oscar, and thus cannot pick up its referent from it. (consider only those readings in which he and Oscar are coreferential)

- (4)a. He is happy when Oscar is in love. (=Evans' [40])
- b. Everyone here admires someone on the committee. Joan admires Susan, Mary admires Jane, and he admires Oscar. (=Evans' [54])
- c. Everyone eventually realizes that someone dear to them is incompetent. For example, Mary has realized that Fred is incompetent, Susan has realized that her daughter is incompetent, and he has realized that Oscar is incompetent. (=Evans' [56])

However, Evans doesn't mention any restrictions on the ways in which a referentially dependent expression can pick up its reference, as long as it is not from an NP which the expression precedes and C-commands. It seems clear that mere prior occurrence of the entity in question, however, is not sufficient to provide the antecedent required to allow coreference. Consider the examples in 5:

- (5)a. John went to a party last night where he really made a fool of John.
- b. John is doing fine now, considering he almost killed John last week.
- c. John feels miserable. He blames John for what happened.

In each of these examples, the first occurrence of John is neither preceded nor C-commanded by the referentially dependent expression he. Therefore, the latter should be able to obtain its reference from the former; however, coreference in these examples is not possible.

I would like to propose an alternative account to handle these facts. In discourses such as those in 2, I would like to claim that what is involved is an open proposition which is obtained by replacing the stressed constituent with an unbound variable. The resulting open proposition must be salient in the discourse as well as 'given information' in the sense of Chafe (1976): something which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of the utterance. Sentences of the type illustrated in 2 involve assigning a new value to the unbound variable of the relevant open proposition, which, like the variable it replaces, is not bound within the sentence. This new value represents the 'new information' in the sentence, while the open proposition represents what the speaker is taking to be 'given' or 'presupposed'. The procedure I make use of here is Wilson and Sperber's method for determining the 'background entailments' of a sentence (Wilson & Sperber, 1979). In their analysis, the presuppositions associated with a particular sentence are limited to the open propositions which are derived from the sentence by replacing the tonically stressed constituent with a variable. The procedure is repeated, replacing larger and larger constituents with variables, and the resulting set of open propositions are ordered in a way corresponding to the constituent structure of the sentence in question. The relevant point is that all of the non-reflexive pronouns in reflexive environments illustrated in 2 are stressed, and when replaced by a variable, represent an open proposition which occurs in the

immediately preceding linguistic context. Thus, in example 2b, if we replace the stressed constituent me with a variable, we obtain Lionel is ashamed of X/someone. This represents the open proposition. The new value of the variable is Lionel, which is not bound within the open proposition, thereby accounting for the absence of a reflexive pronoun, i.e. a bound anaphor, in this sentence. The salience of the open proposition in 2b can easily be accounted for given the preceding utterance: You're ashamed of your father. Once uttered, this sentence enters the discourse and serves as the 'background' for the open proposition.

However, not all open propositions rely on the immediately preceding linguistic context for their salience/givenness. Consider the sentences in 6:

(6)a. [ad for Philadelphia Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health Coverage]

TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF. YOU BELONG TO YOU.

b. [E.P., personal communication]

A: There's a certain point at which you can't keep a major poet down.

B: No.

A: OK, I don't agree with me either.

c. [Kojak]

A: You're my girl.

B: I'm my own girl. I belong to me.

d. [from M*A*S*H where BJ is talking to a monolingual Korean girl while he is fixing a hole in the roof of her hut]

BJ: I figured your father could do without the air conditioner.

Girl: ??

BJ: That's OK, sometimes I don't understand me either.

In these examples, the salience of the open proposition must be inferred. In 6d, the open proposition X doesn't understand BJ is salient in the context of the Korean girl obviously not understanding BJ, the speaker. Example 6a contains the open proposition addressee belongs to X which is salient in the context of take good care of yourself, since it brings to mind the song in which this sentence is followed by you belong to me. Without knowledge of the song, there would be no salient open proposition which could be assigned a new value, and the second sentence in 6a would simply be ungrammatical. In example 6c, speaker B implicates that she doesn't 'belong to' speaker A by means of the implicit open proposition B belongs to X which is salient in the context of A's uttering you're my girl, since B interprets this as entailing B belongs to A. The new value of the

variable is B, which, when uttered by B, becomes me.

It is no coincidence that all of the cases Evans chooses to consider in arguing against Lasnik's 'disjoint reference' rule involve new values of open propositions. Consider the examples from Evans in 7:

- (7)a. Look, fathead. If everyone loves Oscar's mother, then certainly Oscar must love Oscar's mother. (=Evans' [48])
- b. Who loves Oscar's mother? I know Oscar loves Oscar's mother, but does anyone else? (=Evans' [50])
- c. Everyone here admires someone on the committee. Joan admires Susan, Mary admires Jane, and Oscar admires Oscar. (=Evans' [53])

Evans' attempt to provide a unified account of all 'coreference' phenomena fails simply because sentences which result from variable replacement in open propositions are semantically and pragmatically (and perhaps syntactically) distinct. Similar confusion has resulted in the vacillating status of the sentences in 8: (see Partee 1975)

- (8)a. Only Lucifer pities Lucifer.
b. Even John likes John.

If we assume that only and even implicate that others are involved in the relevant state of affairs, (see Horn (1969), Karttunen & Peters (1979)), then the mere presence of these words provides an appropriate context necessary for the existence of the open proposition which permits the assigning of a new (unbound) value in sentences such as 8. In this way, the sentences in 8 are similar to those in 7; the only difference being that in 8 the necessary context is provided intrasententially by the presuppositions associated with even and only.

Given the appropriate context for an open proposition (be it linguistic or situational), there remains the question of how a discourse entity can be referred to in a reflexive environment when it occurs in an open proposition with a 'coreferential' expression as its new value, since even in this more permissive context, not all referential expressions are possible. First of all, I believe the distinction Evans makes between referentially independent and dependent expressions is crucial. Since referentially independent expressions do not require an antecedent for their reference, they can occur freely given the existence of a salient open proposition. Consider the sentences in 9:

- (9)a. I don't blame you, I blame me.
b. You didn't let me down, I let me down.
c. John doesn't blame you, John blames John.
d. You didn't let John down, John let John down.

Without the open proposition interpretation, the grammatical binding principles apply and these sentences are ruled out. However, referentially dependent expressions cannot occur so freely in the same contexts if that from which they pick up their reference is in a reflexive environment. Consider the sentences in 10:

- (10)a. Mary doesn't blame you, Mary blames her.
 b. Mary doesn't blame you, she blames her.
 c. You didn't let Mary down, she let Mary down.
 d. You didn't let Mary down, she let her down.

I would like to argue that the impossibility of a coreferential interpretation in these sentences is due to the interaction of the discourse notion of 'new information' with the intonational principle that new information receive heavy stress. In general, new/assorted/focal information receives heavy stress while old/given/presupposed information receives reduced stress. (see Halliday (1967); Schmerling (1971); Wilson & Sperber (1979); Ladd (1980), inter alia) In sentences involving open propositions, the new value certainly represents 'new information' and thus it follows that it should receive heavy stress. A problem results, however, if the new value to be stressed is a referentially dependent expression, for there exists another independently motivated pragmatic principle which involves stressed anaphoric pronouns: when an anaphoric pronoun is stressed, its referent is not the one which is in 'parallel construction' to the pronoun, i.e. it is not the one the hearer would otherwise take to be the referent. (see Lakoff (1971); Kuno (1974); Prince, (1981)) Consider the well-known sentences in 11:

- (11)a. John entered the room and then he left.
 b. John called Bill a Republican and then he insulted him.
 c. Mary thinks she should do it.

(Of course, in 11c if X should do it is a salient open proposition, then she, not being in a reflexive environment, can refer to Mary.) Given this principle, the stressed referentially dependent expressions in 10 instruct the hearer to look outside the sentence for their reference. In this way, coreference is quite difficult to construe, since the hearer is being forced intonationally to take the anaphoric pronoun as disjoint in reference, yet there is no other salient referent available for it to refer to - hence the confusion on the part of speakers trying to assign a coreferential interpretation to such sentences.

If a referentially dependent expression is not stressed, then it appears that a coreferential interpretation within a reflexive environment is possible, assuming that the expression occurs as the new value of a Chafe-given open proposition. Consider the sentences in 12:

- (12)a. What do you mean Oscar loves no one. He loves Oscar.
 [from Evans, p. 358, fn. (f)]
 b. What makes you think Brown voted for Wilson? Why wouldn't he have voted for Brown?
 c. No, you're wrong. John does blame someone. He blames John.

Coreference seems much more possible in these sentences than in 5. The difference, of course, is that the sentences in 12, unlike those in 5, are the result of substituting a new value for a variable in an open proposition. If the NP representing the new value is not bound within the sentence in question, as I have claimed, then it follows that it should be free to refer to any element outside the sentence in which it

occurs. Thus, in 12c, the subject pronoun he, not being bound to or by John, is free to refer to the John mentioned in the preceding sentence. However, not all speakers readily accept a coreferential interpretation in sentences like those in 12. Rather than posit a dialect difference, I would like to claim that, for all speakers, in discourse contexts not involving a new value for an open proposition, referentially dependent expressions, at least, must be free (i.e. not bound) in their governing category. (see Chomsky, 1981) For those speakers who categorically reject a coreferential interpretation in 12 and similar sentences, then, this 'grammatical' Pronoun Principle is simply inviolable in all discourse contexts, including those which involve the substitution of a new value in an open proposition. For speakers who are unsure about a coreferential interpretation in 12, it can be said that the grammatical Pronoun Principle is interfering with, yet not completely excluding, a discourse-based coreferential interpretation given the appropriate context.

The sentences in 10, however, do not allow such an interpretation since they violate not only the grammatical Pronoun Principle, but, in addition, the intonational principle regarding referentially dependent expressions. Therefore, I would predict that for those who accept a coreferential interpretation in 12, a similar interpretation is much less possible for the sentences in 10, given that the latter violate a principle which the former do not.

In sum, I have argued that apparent counter-examples to the syntactic principles involved in Reflexivization and Disjoint Reference can be handled by independently motivated pragmatic and semantic principles which, if correctly formulated, can lead to a clearer understanding of the relevant syntactic principles with which they interact.

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