STUDIA LINGUISTICA
A JOURNAL OF GENERAL LINGUISTICS

THE WORLD OF REFLEXIVES: AN INTRODUCTION*

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1. For starters

Consider a simple task: take a verb expressing a two-place relation, and use it to represent a reflexive instantiation of this relation, or – more down to earth in the words of Jespersen (1933) – let its subject and object be identical. As will be immediately obvious to a speaker of English or Dutch, one has to do something special. For instance, if the relation is one of washing and Jack is both washer and being washed one does not say *Jack washed him* in English, or *Jack waste hem* in Dutch. In English either *self* is added to the object as in *Jack washed himself*, or the object does not show up at all as in *Jack washed*. In Dutch the pronoun appears in the form *zich* and the element *zelf* is added, or the *zich*-form alone is used. If one leaves English and Dutch behind and starts exploring the worlds of reflexives in other languages one is struck by their daunting diversity. Languages may use a range of special affixes on the verb, special clitics, doubled pronouns (the counterparts of 'him him' or 'zich zich'), body-part expressions (saying, for instance, the equivalent of *Jack killed his head/his body*, etc.), focus markers with or without an additional lexical meaning (for instance, *Jack killed him alone*), put in an extra preposition (see Dimitriadis & Everaert 2004, König & Gast 2008, Everaert 2012), etc. Quite rarely one may find the equivalent of a 'bare' pronoun, or even a proper name (see Reuland 2011 for discussion).

It does not matter much what one's point of reference is: the casual observations in Jespersen's (1933) *Essentials of English Grammar*, the first proposals for a transformational analysis of anaphora and reflexivity in Lees and Klima's (1963) 'Rules for English Pronominalization', the nowadays canonical theory presented in Chomsky's (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*, or Tanya Reinhart's (1983) *Anaphora and Semantic Interpretation*. These all make the diversity one finds look truly mysterious. Evans & Levinson's 2009 pamphlet 'The Myth of Language Universals' portrays this mystery as the new norm, in the spirit of Joos (1957:96)'s often quoted passage, characterizing the American (descriptivist) tradition: "languages could differ from each other without limit and in unpredictable ways".

*This special issue is based on a selection of contributions presented at the World of Reflexives workshop (August 25–27, 2011), organized by the editors. This workshop was organized as part of the project Universals and the Typology of Reflexives, funded by grant number 3600-70-330 from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), which is gratefully acknowledged.

Studia Linguistica 71(1-2) 2017, pp. 1–11.
Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK, and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA

The question this diversity of expression raises is two-fold. Given that all languages have pronominal elements that allow expressing covaluation (intended coreference), one may wonder why so many languages do something special to express reflexive relations, rather than simply using the pronoun. On the other hand, one may wonder why what they do is (or appears to be) so diverse. Faced with such diversity one has two options. One can take the diversity at face value, concede that languages are just surprisingly diverse 'bio-cultural' systems, by fiat not amenable to scientific explanation, and leave it at that. Or else, choose to proceed in the manner of all science, act upon the working hypothesis that there is a system underlying the diversity and then set out to meet the challenge and try to find it. In pursuing the latter route, we are no better off than the (other) natural sciences, but also no worse. It is a matter of formulating hypotheses, starting out from the cases one does understand best, and moving from there to cases one does not understand, seeing how to make sense of these, and rejecting or modifying the initial hypotheses as the investigation continues.

Reuland (2011), building on ideas in Reinhart & Reuland (1993), and, earlier, Everaert (1986), develops a modular approach to the conditions on binding. Complex patterns result from the interplay between independent conditions on syntactic dependencies (chains), and an independent property of grammatical computations preventing identical variables in a co-argument domain. This entails that reflexivity must be licensed, but leaves open the precise choice of licensing mechanism (see Reuland, this volume, for an explicit discussion).

Let us give one example to illustrate the point. Schadler (2014) contains a discussion of Fijian (also relevant in view of Moyse-Faurie's contribution in this volume).

Levinson (2000) brings up Fijian as a severe problem for the canonical binding theory. He states the issue as follows, quoting Dixon (1988): " …. In the third person, a verb with the transitive marker *–a* and without an explicit object is interpreted as having unmarked reference to a third-singular object which is noncoreferential with the subject. If coreference or reflexivity is intended, a full object pronoun (e.g. *'ea*, third singular object) is required, and although this might be interpreted disjointedly, it encourages a coreferential reading:"

(1) sa va'a-.dodonu-.ta'ini' 'ea o Mika
ASP correct 3SG+OBJ ART Mike
'Mike corrected himself' or 'Mike corrected him'

At a first glance, this pattern is puzzling. How can a pronominal facilitate a reflexive interpretation? Crucial for resolving the puzzle is a fact Levinson mentions and does not interpret, but that is noted by Schadler: without an explicit object the interpretation of (1) is necessarily non-

coreferential. Moreover, not noted by Levinson, Dixon (1988:256) observes that if *'ea* is absent the verb has a different form, reflecting a suffix *–Ca*, instead of the *–Ci* –suffix found in (1).

Schadler (2014) provides an analysis of reflexivity in Fijian that is based on a more precise investigation of *–Ci*. As Schadler shows, *–Ci* has the role of an object agreement marker, allowing binding of the object by the subject.

As Schadler shows, *–Ci* simultaneously ensures that conditions on chain formation are satisfied and that reflexivity is licensed (see for a similar pattern the analysis of the Uralic language Khanty in Volkova & Reuland 2014). Therefore, what initially looked like a problem for the requirement that reflexivity must be licensed, ends up supporting it, once a sufficiently detailed analysis has been provided.

In the spirit of this example, then, the work to be presented here reflects the second choice, that of meeting the challenge. On the one hand carefully describing the diversity, formulating descriptive generalizations, but, simultaneously, looking for the underlying system of language universals, thus moving from a variety of worlds of reflexives to one world.

The contributions in this volume address a variety of issues in different languages and language types that arise from this variation and show how we can understand the diversity we observe on the basis of a few general principles.

But it is important to note that successfully exploring the worlds of reflexives, as we trust is exemplified in the current work, has only been made possible by the immense amount of work done by descriptive linguists (many of them not even professionals) who started out to describe languages for their own sake, or for the sake of interaction with their speakers, by language typologists, by structural linguists, or linguists with very different aims, many of them even highly sceptical of the type of universals we will discuss. Due to this work we have at least a basic knowledge of a significant part of the world's languages, which can serve as the basis for further systematic data collection. Some collections of data are still at a rather superficial level, as in the WALS project (wals.info) or many fieldwork-based references grammars. Other databases – of smaller groups of languages – are more detailed, such as the databases accessible via the Typological Database System (http://languagelink.let.uu.nl/tds/), or the Surrey Morphology databases (http://www.smg.surrey.ac.uk/databases/). In the domain of anaphora we have the Afranaph project (http://www.africananaphora.rutgers.edu), the Typological Database of Intensifiers and Reflexives (http://www.personal.uni-jena.de/~mu65qev/tdir/), or the Anaphora Typology Database (http://languagelink.let.uu.nl/anatyp/). It is such work that allowed us to properly interpret the facts described in the contributions in this issue.

There is another, equally important factor, namely the advance in our understanding of the organization of the language system over the last two decades, and the way this enabled us to formulate fundamental questions and articulate hypotheses to guide our research.

In the next section we present an overview of the main results of the contributions in this issue.

2. Overview of the contributions and what they tell us about the issues raised

Why is reflexivity so special? Understanding of the world of reflexives

Eric Reuland

This contribution sketches a number of results from the past few decades that should be taken into account when answering the research questions sketched at the beginning of this introduction. Reuland outlines in more detail the essential background against which current issues in binding theory, including the results of the contributions in the present issue, are to be interpreted. This exposition is followed by a detailed explanation of why reflexivity must be licensed.

A formal typology of reflexives

Rose-Marie Déchaine & Martina Wiltschko

As we saw, cross-linguistically, reflexivity must be licensed, but the means differ. Some languages use SELF-anaphors; others use body-part reflexives, yet others use clitics or verbal markings. The question is, then, whether these choices are arbitrary of whether there is a further systematicity in the means languages use. This issue is addressed in Déchaine & Wiltschko's contribution. In line with what our theoretical considerations would lead us to expect, they show in detail that the elements occurring as reflexives do not constitute a homogeneous class. On the basis of data from English (Germanic), French (Romance), Shona (Bantu), Plains Cree (Algonquian), and Halkomelem (Salish), they argue for the existence of (at least) five categorically distinct reflexive forms: D-reflexives, φ-reflexives, Class-reflexives, *n*-reflexives, and N-reflexives. Elaborating on their earlier work on pronouns, they base their analysis on the existence of a universal syntactic spine and show that reflexive marking can associate to each layer of the spine, namely N, *n*, Class, φ, and D. Each mode of attaching reflects a syntactic category with a characteristic semantic mode of composition. In fact, there is a systematic, regular and predictable relation between syntactic category and semantic type. They argue that for each of the five reflexive types, local binding – including the availability of proxy-interpretations – is a by-product of the semantic mode of composition that gives rise to the semantic reflexive relation.

Their analysis raises interesting issues for the distribution of reflexives that enforce reflexivity or just license it (are *exempt*). As discussed in Reuland, this volume, in certain English *himself* shows exemption effects,

indicating that there is a syntactic factor determining whether it is interpreted as a reflexive. Many languages, however, do not show exemption effects under the conditions where English does (see Reuland 2011 for a discussion of Dutch *zichzelf*, or Volkova 2014 and this volume for the absence of exemption effects in Uralic languages). Under an optimal implementation of Déchaine & Wiltschko's approach one would expect a unified semantics for both enforcing and exempt reflexives (as in Reuland & Winter 2009). Consequently, to put it in their terms, the operation composing *himself* with the verb would have to depend on an additional syntactic step in English, but not in other languages. It is then an intriguing question whether or not one finds such syntactic effects in other languages: A challenging prospect for further research.

Reflexive markers in Oceanic languages

Claire Moyse-Faurie

One of the predictions of the approach outlined in the first part of this introduction is that all languages do 'something special' to license reflexivity. Evaluating this prediction involves extensive investigation of a variety of different languages from different language families. And, given the fact that many languages do exhibit special marking even at a rather superficial inspection, it is worthwhile to pay specific attention to languages that prima facie do not show much in the way of marking. If one evaluates the literature it is important to keep in mind that there is not always clear what is counted as marking. A bundling operation in the sense of Reinhart & Siloni (2005) (discussed in section 5.2.1 of Reuland, this volume), for instance, will often yield a syntactically intransitive verb form, as in English *John washed*. In the descriptive literature, however, this is often not recognized as resulting from a reflexivization operation, and these expressions are classified as intransitive with reflexive meaning. For languages making extensive use of this means, this may even cloud the real picture.

In contrast, Moyse-Faurie (2008:107) argues that in the literature so far other markers – mainly expressing middle situations – were taken for the unique markers of reflexivity. However, in fact, Oceanic languages "offer a large spectrum of morpho-syntactic devices to mark coreference".

In the present contribution Moyse-Faurie offers a detailed overview of the types of anaphors/reflexive markers one finds in the Oceanic languages, and the way to distinguish them from middle and reciprocal markers. Looking at their various origins this contribution examines the links most of them have with intensifiers. An intriguing issue is the coexistence in several Oceanic languages of reflexive markers of different origins, probably due to recent grammaticalization processes. Although this is not the focus of the present contribution, such coexistence of

different reflexive markers constitutes an important source to evaluate theoretical proposals (such as Safir 2004, or Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd 2011) that assign a key role to complementarity.

Another question is to what extent the use of special strategies to license reflexivity is obligatory. As it appears to be the case, the situation is not entirely clear. Yet, although, again, this is not the main focus of the article, the following quote merits attention:

> in contrast to the grammaticalized and compulsory use of reciprocal markers, markers expressing reflexive situations are seldom obligatory, *even if they are typically required with third person arguments*. (Moyse-Faurie, this issue:2) (our italics, Eds.)

The contrast that is implied here between 1st and 2nd person pronouns on the one hand and 3rd person pronouns on the other is reminiscent of the well-known contrast between these in most Germanic languages and in Romance, and analysed in Reuland (2011). The observation that special reflexive markers of the type discussed in this contribution are typically required with 3rd person pronouns suggests that the mere use of pronominals to represent reflexivity is to be avoided in these languages as well. However, to ultimately resolve such issues in-depth analyses are required. The contribution by Dagmar Schadler in the next section gives an excellent picture of what may be involved.

Reflexivity in two Zhuang dialects

Dagmar Schadler

In her 2014 doctoral dissertation Schadler provides a detailed investigation of the licensing of reflexivity in a considerable number of languages; among these are the Oceanic language Fijian and two related dialects of Zhuang (a Tai-Kadai language).

The Zhuang facts remind us of the Fijian case, and are equally intriguing. Schadler studies two closely related dialects. Mashan Zhuang represents a very flexible system prima facie employing locally bound pronouns as well as complex anaphors for a reflexive interpretation, whereas Qinzhou Zhuang uses only one reflexive strategy, namely a complex anaphor. Locally bound pronouns are not allowed. The complex anaphor is just obligatory to obtain a reflexive interpretation. Crucial ingredients for an understanding turn out to be the poor agreement system, which both dialects share, together with the morpho-syntactic make-up of DPs, and specifically the differences in DP structure between Mashan Zhuang and Qinzhou Zhuang. In fact, the factor accounting for their difference is shown to reside in a relatively superficial contrast that hides the underlying similarity. Namely it can be independently shown that in Mashan Zhuang there is a position in the left periphery of an N-projection that has to be filled, whereas in Qinzhou

Zhuang this is not the case. Thus where it looks as if we see a bare pronominal in Mashan Zhuang, what is actually there is a complex expression with the pronoun moved into a position on the left periphery. This instantiates one of the options discussed in Reuland, this volume (section 5.2.2), that leads towards allowing local binding of a pronominal.

Minimal pronouns, logophoricity and long-distance reflexivisation in Avar

Pavel Rudnev

Rudnev's contribution addresses a fundamental issue in the encoding of anaphoric dependencies. Is their encoding based on the valuation of so-called minimal pronouns in the sense of Kratzer (2009) – that is, elements with no features of their own – or are such elements not necessarily minimal, but endowed with at least some φ-features, with consequences for the precise manner in which dependences are established?

This theoretical discussion is based on a very interesting analysis of reflexives in Avar, a Nakh-Daghestanian language. Avar reflexives are instantiated by three morphologically related pronouns: the simplex reflexive *ži–cm*, the complex reflexive *ži–cm = go*, and the reduplicated form of the latter, *žinca = go ži–cm = go*. The last one – the reduplicated form – is strictly local, requiring a co-argument binder, which is strikingly similar to what we see in languages as diverse as the Uralic languages discussed by Volkova (2014, this volume) and the Indonesian languages discussed by Schadler (2014) and Kartono (2013).

Rudnev's contribution focuses on the other two reflexives. The element *žiwgo* allows both local and non-local binding. That it allows local binding is to be expected from the perspective sketched in Reuland (this volume), since its complexity protects the variable. In this It is quite similar to what Volkova (2014, this volume) refers to as *semi-reflexives* in the Uralic languages she discusses, and again to the Bahasa Indonesia semi-reflexive *dirinya* (Kartono 2013, Schadler 2014). An important observation is that for the purposes of variable binding and structural constraints on their use, both local and long-distance instances of *žiwgo* behave alike in requiring a c–commanding antecedent and strongly favoring sloppy readings in elliptical continuations. Essentially *žiwgo* is always interpreted as a bound variable. There are restrictions on its non-local binding though. It cannot be bound across a finite clause boundary, moreover if it is in an adjunct clause it cannot be bound by an antecedent outside the latter.

The simplex element *žiw* differs from *žiwgo* in that it may not be used with an antecedent, either referential or quantificational within the same minimal domain. In this it behaves as expected. The prototypical environments for the simplex reflexive to occur in are finite complement clauses, where the more complex reflexives are unacceptable. Unlike

žiwgo it allows strict readings in ellipsis contexts. However, like *žiwgo* the simplex reflexive cannot appear in coordinate clauses and adjunct clauses with the antecedent situated in the main clause. Crucially, *žiw* must always have an attitudinal predicate as its licensor. This leads to the hypothesis that *žiw* is a genuine logophoric pronoun, which leads in turn to a number of interesting predictions, which, as Rudnev shows, are borne out.

For his analysis, Rudnev takes as starting point the intuition in Kratzer (2009) that reflexives are the simplest form of pronouns in that they are merely bound variables that inherit most or all of their features from their antecedents via an Agree relation. This relation is mediated by verbal functional heads like v that in Kratzer's system do the actual binding (see also Reuland 2011). In Kratzer's system, at the point where the reflexive predicate is calculated, the reflexive pronoun has no φ-features – it only acquires them after interpretation has taken place. They are then realized in the morphological spell-out. Interestingly, applying this idea to *žiwgo,* Rudnev shows that it cannot be maintained in full. Avar being an ergative language, verbal agreement will be object agreement. If the reflexive pronoun in object position were φ-deficient, the unvalued φ-features on the relevant verbal head would fail to receive a value and the resultant structure would be morphologically ill-formed.

Thus, in order for agreement to work *žiwgo* must have some φ-features of its own. As Rudnev notes, this result converges with the result in Reuland (2010), who reaches such a conclusion about anaphors in other languages on similar grounds.

As for the simplex anaphor *žiw,* Rudnev concludes that it is a bona fide logophoric pronoun familiar from some African languages, which denotes the author of the reported context, with the descriptive content being contributed by its φ-features, specifically, person.

Rudnev's contribution is once more testimony to the striking similarity of anaphoric systems cross-linguistically, contra for instance, the suggestion in Cole et al. (2015). Here too we see that languages from very different language families display characteristics that are by and large familiar.

Reflexivity in Meadow Mari: Binding and Agree

Anna Volkova

Uralic languages provide a challenging testing ground for the idea that binding in natural language is governed by universal principles, only allowing for variation within a limited space. Volkova (2014) provides a fascinating overview of the microvariation within that domain. The present contribution focuses on the anaphoric system in one of these languages, namely Meadow Mari. Meadow Mari has pronominal elements that straightforwardly behave in accordance with the canonical

condition B. It has a 'supercomplex' anaphor *škenžəm ške* that is strictly local (in accordance with the canonical condition A), intriguingly just like its supercomplex counterpart in Avar, and the supercomplex *dirinya sendiri* in Bahasa Indonesia.

Volkova focuses on the element *škenže*. This element is what she refers to as a *semi-reflexive*. It is a morphologically complex element that can be locally bound, irrespective of the type of predicate, but need not be. Or, in terms of Reuland (2011), it can license reflexivity, but does not enforce it. Elements that appear to license reflexivity but do not enforce it include Mandarin *ziji*, and Japanese *zibun* (but see Hara 2002 for a caveat concerning the latter). These, however, have generally been analysed as mono-morphemic. The first analysis in the literature of a complex element with this property was provided by Jayaseelan (1997) with a discussion of Malayalam *taan tanne*. Subsequent work on Peranakan Javanese by Cole and co-authors, such as Cole et al. (2008) showed that there are more languages with this type of anaphor. However, it was only by work such as Volkova (2014), Schadler (2014), and Kartono (2013) that it became clear that far from being a rare and isolated phenomenon, semi-reflexives abound, and are realized in languages of very different families (also including Nakh-Daghestanian, as shown in Rudnev's contribution in the present volume).

While semi-reflexives share the property that they are complex enough to license reflexivity, but do not enforce it, in other respects they may differ. For instance, Bahasa Indonesia *dirinya* disallows quantificational antecedents. This is not the case with Meadow Mari *škenže*. What they both share is allowing split antecedents. It would be interesting to see how Avar fares in this respect. Ideally we would like to explain such properties on the basis of the fine structure of such elements (see, for instance Reuland 2016 for a suggestion concerning *dirinya*).

Volkova provides such a detailed analysis of *škenže*, taking the fact that it allows split antecedents as a starting point. Like Avar *žiwgo* it cannot be separated from its antecedent by a finite clause boundary, and Volkova provides an explanation of why this is so, based on natural assumptions concerning the role of finiteness marking in the left periphery.

Curiously, the binding domain of *škenže* changes dramatically if it serves as the dative argument of an experiencer predicate in an embedded participial or even a *finite* relative clause. If so, it can be bound only by an argument of the matrix predicate, and, moreover, it allows a much more distant antecedent than the subject of the immediately dominating finite clause. That no local antecedent is available follows from standard assumptions about the structure of these predicates. That the first finite relative clause is not a boundary follows from properties of the functional structure of relative clauses. That also more distant antecedents are allowed follows from the fact that structural properties of this

environment conspire to make it exempt from all structural binding requirements; consequently *škenže* is effectively interpreted as a logophor (in accordance with the logic of Reinhart & Reuland 1993).

All in all, Volkova's contribution is an excellent example of a methodology that takes unexpected patterns as a challenge and as a reason to put in every effort to understand them, rather than as a cause for scepticism.

An important result of the present volume is that it demonstrates how a simple set of universal principles, together with properties of reflexives and their environment that can be encoded in straightforward morpho-syntactic features, is able to capture both the unity and the variation in the world of reflexives.

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