Chapter 32

Questionnaire on reflexive constructions in the world's languages

Katarzyna Janic
Adam Mickiewicz University

Martin Haspelmath
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology & Leipzig University

A short note on our terminology: the term REFLEXIVIZER refers to any specialized form that expresses coreference within a clause. By SPECIALIZED FORM we understand a form which at least in certain conditions necessarily expresses the coreference meaning (even if non-coreference meanings are possible elsewhere). Reflexivizers can be dependent or non-dependent forms like reflexive (pro)nouns, reflexive argument markers, or reflexive voice markers. Languages that have not developed a specialized reflexivizer express coreference with the help of other linguistic forms, e.g. personal pronouns. In this context, we prefer to talk about a NON-REFLEXIVE FORM.

Basic uses of reflexivizers

1. Describe the *personal pronouns* and *reflexive pronouns* of the language. If the language also has *verbal reflexivizers* (reflexive argument markers or reflexive voice markers), give a brief description of the relevant verbal marking patterns.

2. If the language uses a *reflexive pronoun* to express coreference, does it have distinctions such as the following?

    a. person   b. case   c. number   d. obviation   e. gender

3. How is *coreference of the agent subject with the patient referent in object function* expressed in the language? Give examples like (a–d) and indicate the form (if any) expressing coreference.

    a. I saw myself in the mirror.[1]

    b. My friend hates himself.

    c. She praised herself.

    d. The man killed himself.

4. If the language uses a specialized reflexivizer to express coreference, is this form *obligatory or optional*?

5. If the language has *several different reflexivizers* used under different conditions, what determines their distribution?

    a. If they are in a complementary distribution, define the conditions under which each reflexivizers is selected.

    b. If the forms can occur in the same environments, can you think of any context in which one form is preferred over another?

Some languages use a range of different forms to express agent-patient coreference. For instance, Dutch employs reflexive pronouns only in the third person; coreference with the first and second person is expressed by ordinary personal pronouns.

6. Is the use of reflexivizers subject to specific conditions relating to person or number? If it is, define them and provide relevant examples.

Specialized reflexive form in other functions

7. Does the reflexive form have other uses? Specify and provide relevant examples.

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[1]Feel free to change the provided examples here and elsewhere in the questionnaire, if for some reasons they are problematic in your language.

Contrast between introverted and extroverted verbs

Transitive verbs that allow a human object can be divided into introverted and extroverted classes (Haiman 1980: 803; König & Siemund 2000: 61). Extroverted actions express socially antagonistic events such as 'kill', 'kick', 'attack', 'hate' and 'criticize', whereas introverted actions include body care (or grooming) actions exemplified by 'wash', 'shave', 'dress', 'bathe', and a few others such as 'defend oneself'.

8. How are autopathic actions with extroverted verbs expressed in the language? Give examples like (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) responsible for the coreference interpretation.

    a. The dog bit itself.

    b. The girl hates herself.

    c. The politician criticized himself.

9. How are autopathic actions with introverted verbs expressed in your language? Translate the examples (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) responsible for the coreference interpretation.

    a. The dog was washing himself.

    b. The girl washed.

    c. He shaved.

Contrast between body-part and whole-body actions

Some languages encode body-part actions (combing hair, brushing teeth, clipping nails) similarly to those involving whole-body actions (wash, bathe, get tented) i.e. with the help of the same reflexive form (e.g. French *se peigner* 'to comb one's hair' vs. *se laver* 'to wash'). In other languages, body-part and whole-body actions are treated apart, the former being expressed through a transitive construction with the body part expressed as object (e.g. English: *I comb my hair.* vs. *I washed.*). Moreover, some languages specify the body-part object in addition to the reflexive form (e.g. French: *Il se lave les mains* 'he washes his hands'). If your language contrast body-part actions with whole-body actions in coding, proceed to point 20, otherwise skip it.

10. How are body-part actions expressed in your language: (i) through coreference, or (ii) through a transitive construction with the body part expressed as object? Translate (a–c).

    a. The men shaved their beard.

    b. She scratched her back.

    c. He brushed his teeth.

11. If your language employs a specialized reflexive form to express body-part actions, can the body part be expressed as well?

12. How are whole-body actions expressed in your language? Translate the examples (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) responsible for the coreference interpretation.

    a. The men got dressed.

    b. She washed.

    c. I bathed.

Reflexive pronoun in subject position

13. Except for a few cases (e.g. Georgian), languages do not allow reflexive pronouns in subject function. Does your language support this crosslinguistic observation? If it does not, provide a relevant example.

Coreference of the subject with various semantic roles

14. (a) *Possessor*. How is coreference of the subject with a possessor referent expressed in your language? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) triggering the coreference meaning.

    a. She_1 took her_1 umbrella.

    b. $John_1$ reads his_1 book.

    c. The $women_1$ swept $their_1$ rooms.

    Can you contrast examples from 14a with those provided in 14b in which the referent of possessor is not coreferential with a subject?

    (b) a. She_1 took her_2 umbrella.

    b. John1 reads his_2 book.

    c. The women1 swept their2 rooms.

15. (a) *Locative*. How is coreference of the subject with a spatial referent expressed in your language? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) triggering the coreference meaning.

    a. She$_1$ saw a snake beside her$_1$.

    b. John$_1$ put a book next to him$_1$.

    c. She$_1$ left the traces behind her$_1$.

  (b) Contrast examples from 15a with those in provided 15b in which the spatial referent is not coreferential with a subject.

    a. She$_1$ saw a snake beside her$_2$.

    b. John$_1$ put a book next to him$_2$.

    c. She$_1$ left the traces behind her$_2$.

16. (a) *Benefactive*. How is coreference of the subject with a beneficiary referent expressed in your language? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) triggering coreference.

    a. She bought a book for herself.

    b. The boy cooked a dinner for himself.

    c. They built a house for themselves.

  (b) Contrast examples from 16a with those provided in 16b in which the referent of beneficiary is not coreferential with a subject.

    a. She bought a book for her.

    b. He cooked a dinner for him.

    c. You built a house for them.

17. (a) *Recipient*. How is coreference of the subject with a recipient referent expressed in your language? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) triggering the coreference meaning.

    a. John talked to himself.

    b. They sent a postcard to themselves.

    c. The girl gave herself a present.

  (b) Contrast examples from 17a with those provided in 17b in which the referent of recipient is not coreferential with a subject.

a. John talked to him.

b. They sent a postcard to them.

c. The girl gave a present to her.

Coreference between non-subject arguments

18. How is coreference between two non-subject arguments expressed in a single clause? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) responsible for the coreference interpretation.

a. She told us_1 about $ourselves_1$.

b. He spoke with $John_1$ about $himself_1$.

c. John showed $Mary_1$ a picture of $herself_1$.

Contrast between coreference and disjoint reference

19. Contrast the subject-coreference pronoun in object position (examples') with disjoint reference pronoun in object position (examples''). Which pronouns does your language use to code these two types of situations?

a'. The man saw himself. vs. a'' The man saw him.

b'. The woman criticized herself. vs. b'' The woman criticized her.

c'. He admired himself. vs. c'' He admired him.

Contrast between object and nominal adpossessor

20. Contrast the subject-coreferential pronoun in object position (examples') with the subject-coreferential pronouns in adnominal possessive position (examples''). Which pronouns does your language use to code these two types of situations?

a'. She_1 killed $herself_1$. vs. a'' She_1 killed $her_{1/2}$ lover.

b'. He_1 admires $himself_1$. vs. b'' He_1 admires $his_{1/2}$ boss.

c'. She_1 saw $herself_1$. vs. c'' She_1 saw $her_{1/2}$ sister.

Contrast between exact and inclusive coreference

21. Contrast exact coreference (examples') with inclusive coreference (examples"). Which pronouns does your language use to code these two types of situations?

    a'. She$_1$ admires herself$_1$. vs. a'' She$_1$ admires herself and the others$_{1+X}$.

    b'. He$_1$ criticized himself$_1$. vs. b'' He$_1$ criticized himself and the others$_{1+X}$.

    c'. He$_1$ defended himself$_1$. vs. c'' He$_1$ defended himself and the others$_{1+X}$.

Long-distance coreference

22. How is coreference of the subject across clauses expressed in your language? Translate (a–c) and indicate the form (if any) responsible for the coreference interpretation.

    a. She$_1$ thought that she$_1$ had enough money.

    b. The boy$_1$ said that he$_1$ must go home.

    c. We$_1$ said that we$_1$ worked the whole day.

References

Haiman, John. 1980. The iconicity of grammar. *Language* 56. 515–40.

König, Ekkehard & Peter Siemund. 2000. Intensifiers and reflexives: A typological perspective. In Zygmunt Frajzyngier & Traci S. Curl (eds.), *Reflexives: Forms and functions*, 41–74. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.