Reflexivity and Anti-locality in Tamil*

Chonghyuck Kim

(National University of Singapore)

Kim, Chonghyuck. 2012. Reflexivity and Anti-locality in Tamil. *The Linguistic Association of Korean Journal.* 20(3). 59-71. Reinhart and Reuland (1993) divide anaphors into two types—SE-anaphors and SELF anaphors—based on their ability to reflexivize the predicates that they are arguments of. Lidz (1995, 2001a) presents anaphors from Kannada, a Dravidian language, as a clear case of evidence for Reinhart and Reuland's SE/SELF distinction. In this paper, I examine anaphors of Tamil, another Dravidian language, and show, contra Lidz, that they do not support but in fact falsify the SE/SELF distinction. The same conclusion is drawn for Kannada anaphors.

Key Words: Tamil, reflexivity, anaphors, locality

1. Introduction

Reinhart and Reuland (1993) (R&R henceforth) use the so-called anti-local anaphors found in Scandinavian languages as evidence to replace the syntactic binding theory (Chomsky 1981, 1986) with a predicate-based theory of reflexivity in which anaphors are divided into SE anaphors (anti-local anaphors) and SELF anaphors (local/anti-long distance anaphors). Later, Lidz (1995, 2001a) expands the scope of languages in which SE anaphors can be found by analyzing *taanu* in Kannada, a Dravidian language, as a SE anaphor.[1] Lidz's finding of SE

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1) In the two *LI* papers quoted in the text, Lidz discusses *taanu* and its relation to the reflexive marker *koL*: in the first paper, *taanu* and *koL* are analyzed as evidence for R&R's theory; in

anaphors in completely unrelated families of languages — Scandinavian and Dravidian — is significant in that it provides a strong support for the universal validity of R&R's division of anaphors and their theory of reflexivity. It is worthwhile at this point to examine whether the same finding can be made in other closely related Dravidian languages.

In this squib, I undertake such an examination in Tamil. In particular, I show that Tamil *taan*, a counterpart of Kannada *taanu*, is not a SE anaphor. While *taan* does exhibit anti-locality, this does not arise from the fact that it is a SE anaphor but from an independent source. The same conclusion is drawn for Kannada *taanu*. In a broader context, I take the Tamil facts to suggest that R&R's approach to reflexivity is mistaken and syntactic binding principles such as Chomsky's are necessary.

2. Reinhart and Reuland 1993

In R&R's theory of reflexivity, local binding (coindexation of arguments of a predicate) and reflexivization (of the predicate) are fused into a single concept.[2]

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the second paper, he departs from R&R and proposes a variant theory in which R&R's SE/SELF distinction is replaced with his semantic distinction of pure/near reflexives. Although the claims made in the papers are different, they share the same underlying view that the appearance of *koL* is linked to a lexical property unique to *taanu* (not other anaphoric expressions). Since my aim here is to argue for the invalidity of this underlying view and this can be done coherently by considering one of the papers, our discussion is targeted at the first paper. In an *NLLT* paper, Lidz (2001b) develops a sophisticated theory of *koL*, which departs from the approaches taken in the *LI* papers (it is not clear, to me, to what extent he rejects his claims in the *LI* papers). This paper has no direct relevance to what I have to say here as the relation of *koL* to an anaphoric form is not discussed in the paper. However, it should be noted that a significant part of the claims I make here are actually anticipated by brief remarks that he makes with regards to his approaches in the *LI* papers (see page 316 and footnote 15). I believe that the points of the remarks can be effectively and convincingly supported by comparing different anaphoric expressions in relation to *koL* in agentive and nonagentive constructions, and that is what I attempt to do in this squib.

2) Two notes on terminology: First, we use the term *local binding* in the sense of coargument binding. Second, to be precise, what is fused with reflexivization is not local binding but semantic reflexivity (lx. x pred x); local binding is one of the cases that give rise to semantic

Neither occurs without the other, as implemented by their conditions and definitions given below:

(1) Condition A: A reflexive-marked predicate is reflexive.
    Condition B: A reflexive predicate is reflexive-marked.
(2) a. A predicate is *reflexive* iff two of its arguments are coindexed.
    b. A predicate is *reflexive-marked* iff either the predicate is lexically reflexive or one of the predicate's arguments is a SELF anaphor.

Condition A says that a reflexivized predicate is required to have a locally bound anaphor as argument. Condition B says the converse: a predicate that has a locally bound anaphor as argument must be reflexivized. A predicate is reflexivized in one of the two ways – either by having undergone a lexical operation of reflexivization or by having an anaphor bearing a *self*-morpheme as argument, where the *self*-morpheme has the same function as a verbal reflexive marker that reflexivizes predicates. Not all anaphors have the *self*-morpheme as they come in two types: SELF anaphors and SE anaphors. SELF anaphors are morphologically complex anaphors with the *self*-morpheme, and SE anaphors are morphologically simplex anaphors without the morpheme. It follows from this division of anaphors and the tight connection between local binding and reflexivization that the (anti-)locality of an anaphor correlates with the appearance of lexical reflexivization. A SE anaphor used as an argument of a predicate does not reflexivize the predicate and hence is predicted to be anti-local; it can only have a long distance antecedent because it violates Condition B when locally bound. For the SE anaphor to be locally bound, its predicate must be reflexivized by an independent means, that is, lexical reflexivization. In contrast to a SE anaphor, a SELF anaphor reflexivizes a predicate. It is, therefore, predicted to be locally bound (and anti-long distance) in accordance with Condition A and incompatible with lexical reflexivization. In a nutshell, SE anaphors are anti-local anaphors that can only have long distance antecedents except in the context of lexically reflexivized predicates and SELF anaphors are strictly local, anti-long distance anaphors that are incompatible

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reflexivity. Since our discussion is limited to local binding, we use the term *local binding* in place of semantic reflexivity.

with lexical reflexiviation.

The simplex anaphor *taanu* in Kannada has been argued to be a SE anaphor behaving as predicted by R&R's theory. We examine its counterpart *taan* in Tamil and show that it is not a SE anaphor despite the fact that it behaves on a par with *taanu*.

3. Tamil

Taan is a third person nonplural monomorphemic anaphor without gender specification (Lehmann 1989, Annamalai 1999). As an anaphor, it does not refer to a discourse entity but must find an antecedent. The distance of its antecedent is determined by the occurrence of the verbal reflexive marker *koL*. When *koL* appears on a predicate that takes *taan* as argument, *taan* can only have a local antecedent (3b).[3] In the absence of *koL*, it is barred from having a local antecedent and must have a long distance antecedent (3a).

(3) a. somu$_i$ maaren$_j$ tann-ei$_{i/*j/*k}$ aDi-t-aan enru co-nn-aan.
    Somu Maran self-ACC beat-PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
    'Somu said that Maran beat him.'

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3) As a reviewer points out, *koL* can even be used in a sentence where the co-arguments are not co-referent, as shown below:

(i) a. Maaren   Kathav-ei   moodi-ko-nd-aan.
       Maran.Nom   door-Acc   close-koL-past-3sgm
       'Maran closed the door.'

    b. Maaren   naak-ei   niiti-ko-nd-aan.
       Maran.Nom   tongue-Acc   stick.out-koL-past-3sgm
       'Maran stuck out his tongue.'   (Selvanathan 2009: 43)

This raises the question of what is the underlying meaning of *koL* that accounts for its different uses (reflexivizer or non-reflexivizer), as the same reviewer notes. This question, however, though it is important, seems independent of the question that is addressed in this paper. Since we are concerned with only one aspect of the meaning of *koL* (reflexivizing meaning), we can take *koL* to perform the reflexivizing function where the two arguments of the same predicate become bound by the same lambda operator as in *λx pred x*. For a unified meaning of koL, refer to Selvanathan (2009).

b. somu_i maaren_j tann-ei _*i/j/*k aDiti-koND-aan enru co-nn-aan.
   Somu Maran self-ACC beat-REFL.PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
   'Somu said that Maran beat himself.'

Simply put, *taan* is a monomorphemic anaphor that exhibits anti-locality, which disappears in the context of a lexically reflexivized predicate marked by *koL*. Given that monomorphemecity and anti-locality are the two defining properties of a SE anaphor, and *taan* has both of them, one could conclude that *taan* is a SE anaphor. In fact, Kannada *taanu* has been argued to be a SE anaphor by virtue of having the same properties. It therefore holds that if Kannada *taanu* is a SE anaphor, so is Tamil *taan*.

Taan's anti-locality that makes it a SE anaphor is solely based on the observation of its coreferential possibilities in relation to *koL*. However, if we consider *koL* in a broader context, looking at how it correlates with other anaphoric expressions, the conclusion that *taan* is a SE anaphor turns out to be unfounded. Consider the following examples where *taan* in (3) is replaced by a complex anaphor *tann-ei-taane*:

(4) a. *somu maaren tann-ei-taane aDi-t-aan enru co-nn-aan.
       Somu Maran self-acc-self beat-PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
       'Somu said that Maran beat him.'
    b. somu_i maaren_j tanne-ei-taane_*i/ j aDiti-koND-aan enru co-nn-aan.
       Somu Maran self-ACC-self beat-REFL.PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
       'Somu said that Maran beat himself.'

The complex anaphor can have a local antecedent with the co-occurrence of *koL* on the embedded predicate (4b). Without *koL*, it displays anti-locality (4a). In these respects, it is like a SE anaphor. However, it also exhibits properties of a SELF anaphor − anti-long distance (4a) and polymorphemic. Observe also that the reciprocal *oruthar-ei-oruthar* behaves exactly the same.

(5) a. *pilleigal periyorgal oruthar-ei-oruthar aDi-th-aargal enru co-nn-aargal.
       Children Adults one-ACC-one beat-PST-3PL COMP say-PST-3PL
       'The children said that the adults beat each other.'

b. pilleigal_i periyorgal_j oruthar-ei-oruthar*_{i/j} aDithi-koND-aargal enru co-nn-aargal

Children Adults one-ACC-one beat-REFL.PST-3PL COMP say-PST-3PL

'The children said that the adults beat each other.'

There are two views one can have about these complex anaphors based on their mixed properties within R&R's system. One can take the complex anaphors to be SE anaphors, leaving their SELF anaphor-like properties as yet-to-be-solved issues. Or, one can take the opposite view that they are SELF anaphors. The first view seems to be what Lidz has in mind for Kannada when he (1995: 706) states that "Kannada does not have a SELF anaphor." However, there is no a priori reason favoring this view. So, I pursue the second view and its consequences instead, which will be supported by the data to be presented below.

Once we accept that the complex anaphors are SELF anaphors, two conclusions immediately follow from (4) and (5). First, SELF anaphors are compatible with a verbal reflexive marker. Second, SELF anaphors exhibit anti-locality. The second conclusion is particularly pertinent to our earlier analysis of *taan* as a SE anaphor, because we cannot attribute the anti-locality of the complex anaphors to their own lexical properties in the same way we attribute it to *taan* that makes it a SE anaphor. We take this to mean that in Tamil there is a principle that forces *koL* to occur whenever an anaphor has a local antecedent regardless of the type of anaphoric expression used. Let us state the principle roughly as follows:

(6) A reflexive predicate must be marked by the verbal reflexive marker *koL*.

According to (6), the complex anaphors in (4) and (5) exhibit anti-locality simply because the reflexive predicates are not marked by *koL*. The anti-locality and the appearance of *koL* have nothing to do with the properties of the anaphoric expressions. No matter what anaphoric expression is used, *koL* must occur if a reflexive predicate is to be formed. This conclusion is supported by the fact that even the pronoun *avan* in (7) can be used to form a reflexive predicate with *koL*.

(7) maaren$_i$ avan-ei$_i$ aDiti-*(koND)-aan.
    Maran   3SM-ACC   beat-REFL.PST-3SM
    'Maran beat himself'.

With the principle in (6) being in force, we lose the ground to claim *taan* as a SE anaphor. The anti-locality observed with respect to *taan* can no longer be taken to define it as a SE anaphor, because there is a possibility that the anti-locality displayed by *taan* is due to the principle in (6) just like what it does to complex anaphors. However, this does not necessarily dispel the validity of *taan* being a SE anaphor. It could indeed be a SE anaphor, with its true character obscured by the principle in (6). In order to prove or disprove *taan's* status of SE anaphor, we need to find a context in which the principle in (6) is not in force to reveal its true nature. In fact, there exists such a context in Tamil, where a predicate can be reflexive without *koL*. Before looking at the context, however, given the existence of bare reflexive predicates (to be shown below), we need to revise the principle in (6) into a weaker form in (8).

(8) If a reflexive predicate can be marked by the verbal reflexive marker *koL*, it must.[4]

Reinhart and Siloni (2005) make a generalization, based on all the languages they examine, that lexical reflexivization is universally disallowed with predicates such as *love*. Their generalization also holds in Tamil. While typical transitive verbs denoting agent-theme relations are marked by *koL*, predicates such as *like, hate, know, forget*, are incompatible with *koL* and appear bare. These predicates are part of a larger class of predicates that generally appear without any agreement marking and whose subjects are realized in dative case. Examples are given below:

(9) a. *somu   maaren-iki tann-ei piDi-koN-um   enru   co-nn-aan.
       Somu   Maran-DAT self-ACC like-REFL-NPST   COMP   say-PST-3SM
       For: 'Somu said that Maran likes himself/him.'

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4) Similar generalizations have been noted elsewhere; by Lidz (2001b: footnote 15) for Kannada and by Sim and Kim (2003) for Telugu.

  b. somu$_i$ maaren-iki$_j$ tann-ei$_{i/j}$ piDik-um enru co-nn-aan.
   Somu Maran-DAT self-ACC like-NPST   COMP say-PST-3SM
   'Somu said that Maran likes himself/him.'

Crucially, in this nonagentive construction where *koL* is blocked by an unknown universal constraint (9a), *taan* can have a local or a long distance antecedent (9b). One might take the lack of agreement or the subject in dative case to be a sufficient reason to treat this construction exceptionally. For instance, if *koL* is treated as being realized as a zero morpheme along with agreement or the dative case marker as a preposition, the behavior of *taan* can be captured. But these treatments are not feasible. Words such as *like, forget,* and *hate* have alternative forms that are fully specified with agreement and realize their subjects in nominative case. *KoL* is not allowed even in these alternative forms (10a), and *taan* behaves the same as in (9b), as illustrated in (10b).

 (10) a. * somu maaren tann-ei virumbi-koND-aan enru co-nn-aan.
     Somu Maran self-ACC like- REFL.PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
     For: 'Somu said that Maran likes him/ himself.
   b. somu$_i$ maaren$_j$ tann-ei$_{i/j}$ virumbi-n-aan enru co-nn-aan.
     Somu Maran self-ACC like- PST-3SM COMP say-PST-3SM
     'Somu said that Maran likes him/himself.'

I conclude that *taan* is not a SE anaphor. Rather, it is an anaphor of Chinese *ziji* type, which has long been considered problematic for R&R's theory. The anti-locality it exhibits with an agentive predicate is simply an illusion created by the principle in (6) that forces a reflexive predicate to be formed by *koL* whenever possible. Only in nonagentive sentences such as (9b) and (10b), where the illusion is not at work, can we observe *taan*'s true nature. Furthermore, just like *taan*, the complex anaphor and the pronoun also reveal their true natures in the nonagentive construction. The complex anaphor can (and must) have a local antecedent (11a) but the pronoun can't (11b).

(11) a. somu$_i$ maaren-iki$_j$ tann-ei-taane$_{*i/\ j}$ piDik-um   enru   co-nn-aan.
         Somu   Maran-DAT   self-ACC-self   like-NPST   COMP   say-PST-3SM
         'Somu said that Maran likes himself.'
     b. somu$_i$ maaren-iki$_j$ avan-ei$_{i/*j}$ piDik-um   enru   co-nn-aan.
         Somu   Maran-DAT 3SM-ACC   like-NPST   COMP   say-PST-3SM
         'Somu said that Maran likes him.'

4. Kannada

Kannada *taanu* behaves similarly to Tamil *taan*. With an agentive verb, it displays anti-locality (12a), but such anti-locality disappears in the presence of *koL* (12b).

(12) a. * avanu$_i$ tanne-annu$_i$ hoDe-d-a.
            He   SE-ACC   hit-PST-3SM
            'He hit himself.' (Lidz 1995: 706)
     b. shyaamu$_j$ raamu$_i$ tann-annu$_{i/*j}$ hoDe-du-koND-a anta   heel-id-a.
         Shyamu   Raamu   SE-ACC   hit-PP-RELF.PST-3SM   that say-PST-3SM
         'Shyamu said that Raamu hit himself.' (Lidz 1995: 707)

In a nonagentive construction where *koL* is not allowed (13a), *taanu* does not display anti-locality and can have a local antecedent (13b).

(13) a. *rashmi-ge   tannu   ishta-aad-du-koND-aLu.
            Rashimi-DAT self-NOM   liking-becomes-PP-REFL.PST-3SF
     b. rashimi-ge tannu   ishta-aada.
         Rashmi-DAT self-NOM   li[ɳ]king-becomes
         'Rashimi likes herself.' (Lidz 2001b: 316)

Just like Tamil, Kannada allows a pronoun to be local in the context of *koL*.

(14) hari   avan-annu huDe-du-koND-a.
     Hari   him-ACC   hit-PP-RELF.PST-3SM
     'Hari hit himself.' (Lidz 1996: 2)

I conclude, on a par with Tamil *taan*, that Kannada *taanu* is not a SE anaphor.

Unlike Tamil, however, Kannada seems to allow a complex anaphor to have a local antecedent in the absence of *koL*.

(15) hari   tann-annu-taane   hoDe-d-a.
    Hari   self-ACC-self   hit-PST-3SM
    'He hit himself.' (Lidz 2001a: 127)

The Tamil counterpart to (15), shown in (4a), is ungrammatical because the agentive reflexive predicate has no *koL*, violating the principle in (6/8). Does the grammaticality of (15) mean that Kannada does not have the principle? Lidz (2001a) reports in footnote 6, "there are many speakers of Kannada for whom the morphologically complex anaphor is not allowed in the absence of the verbal reflexive." This means that for many speakers of Kannada the principle is in force just as it is for Tamil speakers. The only difference is that some Kannada speakers optionally use *koL* with the complex anaphor. While it is unclear why the principle is lenient with the complex anaphor for these speakers, this does not seem to do a justice to the claim that *taanu* is a SE anaphor.

5. Conclusion

I have compared *taan* with other Tamil anaphoric expressions in agentive and nonagentive constructions and, based on the comparisons, concluded that it is not a SE anaphor. If our interpretation of the facts is correct, it falsifies R&R's two major claims: (i) local binding is fused with reflexivization, ; and (ii) the *self*-morpheme has the same function as a lexical reflexive marker. The first claim is falsified because the alleged SE-anaphor can be bound locally without verbal reflexivization (in dative sentences). The second claim is falsified because the complex anaphor does not reflexivize its predicate.

In a nonagentive construction that has the simplex anaphor *taan* or the pronoun *avan* as argument, neither *koL* nor the *self*-morpheme is available. Despite the lack of reflexivization, *taan* and *avan* behave differently: while the

former can have a local antecedent, the latter can't. The (anti-)locality of the anaphoric expressions, therefore, cannot be stated in terms of principles governing reflexivization but must be stated in terms of principles governing the anaphoric expressions themselves, that is, syntactic binding principles. R&R's attempt to tie local binding with reflexivization is mistaken and syntactic binding is a process that exists independently of reflexivization.

It is true, as R&R claim, that the *self*-morpheme forces a complex anaphor to be local. It is not true, however, that the strict locality is derived from the anaphor's function of reflexivizing the predicate that it is an argument of. Its compatibility with *koL* in an agentive construction shows that whatever function the *self*-morpheme has is not identical to that of *koL*. This finding corroborates Bruening's (2006) claim that English complex anaphors do not reflexivize predicates and their distribution needs to be captured by a syntactic binding principle.

Reflexivization and local binding are related. From the perspective I have, however, they are not in a licensing relation but in a competing relation in such a way that when they are both available, reflexivization overrides local binding, and this is what is responsible for the anti-locality of an anaphor in an agentive construction.

While it is not my aim to propose and defend an explanation for the Tamil facts, let me suggest a set of assumptions that offers a way of accounting for them, by way of concluding our discussion on a concrete level. The assumptions are as follows:

(16) Assumption 1: An anaphoric expression is assigned an index optionally.
    Assumption 2: (i) An indexed anaphoric expression is linked to an antecedent via coindexation,
              (ii) An indexless anaphoric expression is linked to its antecedent by *koL* via a thematic operation (e.g., bundling of q-roles (Reinhart and Siloni 2005[5])).
    Assumption 3: Index assignment is a costly process. Hence, an indexed anaphoric expression is blocked by an indexless one.

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5) Theta bundling is a lexical process that takes two theta roles of a predicate (e.g., verb) and forms one complex theta role, which is in turn assigned to the external argument in syntax. For details of the operation, see Reinhart & Siloni (2005).

Under these assumptions, a simple Tamil sentence with coreferring expressions would roughly have the following schematic representations, illustrated in English word order:

(16) a. Sub$_i$ V   Anaphor$_i$/Pronoun$_i$.
    b. Sub$_i$ V-*koL*   Anaphor$_i$/Pronoun$_i$.
    c. Sub   V   Anaphor/Pronoun.
    d. Sub   V-*koL*   Anaphor/Pronoun.

Of the four representations, (d) is the only one that survives in an agentive construction. The indexed anaphoric expressions in (a) and (b) are blocked by the indexless counterparts in (d) (Assumption 3). The indexless anaphoric expressions in (c) fail to be linked to the subject due to the lack of *koL* (Assumption 2–ii). Notice that since the anaphoric expressions are indexless in the legitimate representation, syntactic binding principles are irrelevant and thus the pronoun as well as the anaphors is licensed in the presence of *koL*. In a nonagentive construction, however, the representation in (a) is the one that survives. Recall that *koL* is blocked by a universal constraint in this context, and (b) and (d) are ruled out by the constraint. The anaphoric expressions in (c) are illegitimate because of the lack of *koL*. As the anaphoric expressions in the legitimate representation are indexed, syntactic binding principles are in full swing. Therefore, while anaphors can have a local antecedent, a pronoun can't.

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Chonghyuck Kim
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Block AS5
7 Arts Link, Singapore 117570
Phone: 65-5616-6936
Email: ellkc@nus.edu.sg