

The Reflexive and Pronominal System of Kuching Malay

It is typologically observed that there are at least three different types of pronominal and reflexive system in languages; (i) a type of system using pronouns and (bound) reflexive anaphors (e.g. English), (ii) another type using pronouns, reflexive anaphors and long-distance reflexives (e.g. Chinese), and (iii) the other type using pronouns, reflexive anaphors and so-called pseudo-reflexives (e.g. Singapore Malay). Kuching Malay is a dialect of Malay spoken in Sarawak, Borneo. The linguistic literature on this language is extremely sparse. In an effort to add to this small pool of resources, this paper outlines the pronominal and reflexive system in this language. We also show that, while it seems that Kuching Malay has a three-way system of pronouns, reflexive anaphors and pseudo-reflexives, in reality it is only a two-way system consisting of only pronouns and pseudo-reflexives. In this way, true reflexives are analyzed as being composed of pseudo-reflexive and *sEndiri* ‘alone’, and their behavior is deduced to the properties of pseudo-reflexives and the emphatic marker *sEndiri*.

Pronouns in Kuching Malay are similar to English pronouns in that they obey condition B of the binding theory, and trigger condition C effects. (1a) shows condition B effect, as the pronoun is not free in its local domain. (1b), on the other hand, shows a violation of condition C, as the referential DP *Diloq* is not free in its local domain (roughly the clause containing the DP). The basic form of the true reflexive in Kuching Malay is *diri*+pronoun+*sEndiri*. It is subject to condition A of the binding theory, in that they must be locally bound by the subject, as shown in (2). In (2a), the reflexive anaphor is in the subject position and is not bound by anything, which makes the sentence ungrammatical. In (2b), on the other hand, the reflexive pronoun is in the object position and locally bound by the subject *Dayang*. There is yet another type of “reflexive” expression, namely pseudo-reflexives. These reflexives are of the form *diri*+pronoun and seem to have properties of both pronouns and reflexives. As shown in (3), they can be bound by a long-distant antecedent, as well as by a local subject. At first glance, they appear to be long distance reflexives in that they can take any, indefinitely far away, c-commanding subject. However, pseudo-reflexives do not act like LD reflexives.

To give an account for the differences of the three types of pronouns, we argue that Kuching Malay has two types of pronominal systems, pronouns and pseudo-reflexives, and that true reflexives are composed of the pseudo-reflexive form ‘*diri*+pronoun’ modified by *sEndiri* ‘alone’, which is required to refer to the subject of VP including *diri*+pronoun. That is, we claim that Kuching Malay has no true reflexive form, contra Cole et al.’s (2005) claim on other Malay/Indonesian dialects. *sEndiri* is originally an emphatic adverbial modifier, meaning ‘alone’, and attaches to the whole VP as shown in (4a-c). When *sEndiri* attaches to pseudo-reflexives and makes reflexives, however, it forms a constituent with *diri nya* as shown in (5). We analyze that, although *sEndiri* behaves as a part of reflexives syntactically, it modifies VP and defines the subject of the modified VP as what is *sEndiri* ‘alone’ semantically. In this mechanism, *sEndiri* in (6), for example, overtly behaves as a part of DP, $[[diri\ nya]\ sEndiri]$, but covertly modifies the embedded VP *madah Diloq dEntang diri nya*, the subject of which is the embedded subject *Siti*. This makes the reflexive *diri nya sEndiri* refer to the embedded subject only, no matter what the pseudo-reflexive *diri nya* can refer. That is, the locality of true reflexives is due to the property of *sEndiri*, not the reflexive form itself. This analysis correctly predicts the subject orientation of this form. In (6), the embedded object *Diloq* is contained in the VP and not accessible to *sEndiri*. This fact is not predictable by the analysis that treats the relevant form as a normal reflexive anaphor.

This analysis not only gives an account for the overlapping distribution among the three types of pronominal expression but also adds an alternative view to the previous analysis that treats pseudo-reflexives as a problematic case to the binding theory. Moreover, this analysis also applies to other languages seeming to have three-way system and Pribumi Javanese, which is reported by Cole et al. (forthcoming) to have two-way system: pronoun and pseudo-reflexive-like element.

- (1) a. Dilo_i suka**h** **nya***_{i/j}
 Dilo like 3sg
 ‘Dilo likes him/her’
- b. **Nya***_{i/j} suka**h** Dilo_i
 3sg like Dilo
 ‘He/she likes Dilo’
- (2) a. ***diri nya sEndiri** suka**h** Min
 self 3sg alone like Min
 ‘(lit.) herself/himself likes Min’
- b. Dilo_i rasa Dayang_j suka**h** **diri nya sEndiri***_{i/j/*k}
 Dilo think Dayang like self 3sg alone
 ‘Dilo thinks Dayang likes herself’
- (3) Dilo_i rasa Dayang_j nangka **diri nya**_{i/j/k}
 Dilo think Dayang see self 3sg
 ‘Dilo thinks Dayang saw himself/herself/him/her’
- (4) a. Dayang [[_{VP} bEsakang Dilo_q] sEndiri]
 Dayang raise Dilo alone
 ‘Dayang raised Dilo alone/by herself.’
- b. *[Dilo_q sEndiri], Dayang bEsakang —
 Dilo alone Dayang raise
- c. [bEsakang Dilo_q sEndiri], Dayang —
 raise Dilo alone Dayang
- (5) Siti sayang [_{DP} diri nya sEndiri] ngang [_{DP} Dilo_q]
 Siti love self 3sg alone and Dilo
 ‘Siti loves herself and Dilo.’
- (6) Dayang_i rasa [Siti_j [[_{VP} madah Dilo_{qk} dEntang diri nya] sEndiri*_{i/j/*k}]]
 Dayang thinks Siti tell Dilo about self 3sg alone
 ‘Dayang thinks that Siti told Dilo about herself.’

References

- Peter Cole, Gabriella Hermon, Chonghyuck Kim, Chang-Yong Sim, Yaping Tsai. 2005. Anaphoric Expressions in Javanese. *Proceedings of AFLA VIII*, MITWPL44, Andrea Rakowski and Norvin Richards (eds.)
- Peter Cole, Gabriella Hermon, Yassir Tjung, Chang-Yong Sim, and Chonghyuck Kim. (Forthcoming.) Anaphoric Expressions in the Peranakan Javanese of Semarang.