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ALBANIAN REFLEXIVES: VIOLATIONS OF PROPOSED UNIVERSALS

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Much of the recent work in syntactic theory has focused on universals, particularly on universal conditions and constraints on rules that seek to restrict the range of possible rules within universal grammar. One area in which such universals have been proposed concerns the treatment of reflexives and other anaphors. In this paper, I will discuss the behavior of the Albanian reflexive pronoun vete and show that its distribution and interpretation do not fully conform to two proposed universals: the Clausemate Controller Constraint (Johnson, 1977) and the Nominative Island Condition (Chomsky, 1980).

Anaphoric Characteristics of vete

The reflexive vete acts like other nominals with respect to inflectional rules. It normally occurs in a definite form, varying its case ending as a singular feminine noun, even if its antecedent is plural and masculine.¹ However, vete is clearly not a free lexical item. For example, it cannot occur as the subject of an active sentence.

- 1) *Vetja ecen në shkollë çdo ditë.
N walk to school every day
3sPrAct Ac N
'Himself walks to school every day'

This is true even if the discourse provides a logical antecedent.

- 2) E pashë Halitin dje. *Vetja po punonte me polizine".
C1 see Ac yesterday N Prog work with police-the
3sAc 1sPDAct 3sPIAct Ac
'I saw Halit yesterday. Himself was working with the police'

Finally, vete cannot occur in an embedded tensed clause with its antecedent in the main clause.

- 3) *Agimi më tha se vetja është i sëmurë.
 N Cl tell that N be sick
 1sD 3sPDAct 3sPR
 'Agimi told me that himself/myself is sick'

In the following sections I will give the other conditions that determine the distribution and interpretation of *vete*, but from the above data, it seems clear that the Albanian reflexive *shares* a significant property with other anaphora in that *vete* cannot be anteceded by a nominal outside of the tensed clause in which it appears.

Reflexives in Active Clauses and the Clausemate Controller Constraint

Johnson (1977), working in a relational grammar framework, proposes the Clausemate Controller Constraint (CCC) to restrict the number of possible controller-victim (=antecedent-reflexive) pairs in reflexivization universally. For ease of exposition, I will use the relational grammar framework of Perlmutter and Postal (1977) in the discussion that follows. The CCC crucially makes reference to the following hierarchy of grammatical relations:

- 4) 1 < 2 < 3 < ObI (=Subject < Direct Object < Indirect Object < Oblique Object)

where if A < B then A is said to "outrank" B. The CCC restricts reflexivization in the following way:

- 5) The Clausemate Controller Constraint: If A controls B in a clausemate reflexivization rule, then A < B.

Thus although individual languages may make further restrictions, obliques are universally restricted from anteceding reflexives, indirect objects can only antecede oblique reflexives, direct objects can antecede both indirect objects and obliques, and subjects can antecede all three of the other members of the hierarchy.

The data from Albanian with the subject as antecedent follows the predictions of the CCC, as shown in (6).

- 6) a. Agimi pa veten në pasqyrë.
 N see Ac in mirror
 3sPDAct
 'Agim saw himself in the mirror'
- b. Murati i flet vetes.
 N Cl talk D
 3sD 3sPrAct
 'Murat talks to himself'

- c. Agimi vuri çupën afër vetes.
 N place girl-the near D
 3sPDAct Ac
 'Agim placed the girl near himself'

Being highly inflected, Albanian has relatively free word order. The surface order of the antecedent and reflexive can be changed and the sentences remain grammatical, as in (7).

- 7) a. Vetën e pa Agimi në pasqyrë.
 b. Vetes i flet Murati.
 c. Afër vetes Agimi vuri çupën.

The sentences in (6) and (7) show that a 1 can antecede a reflexive 2, 3, or oblique.

The CCC also predicts that a subject cannot be reflexive, and here too Albanian follows the constraint, as shown in (8).²

- 8) a. *Vetja pa Agimin në pasqyrë.
 N Ac
 'Himself saw Agim in the mirror'
 b. *Vetja i flet Muratit.
 'Himself talks to Murat'

Neither the 2 in (8a) nor the 3 in (8b) can antecede the reflexive 1. As (9) shows, shifting the word order does not change the ungrammaticality.

- 9) a. *Agimin e pa vetja në pasqyrë.
 b. *Muratit i flet vetja.

What the CCC wrongly predicts is that no language can have a 3 anteceding a reflexive 2. Albanian allows such sentences, as in (10).

- 10) a. Artisti i a tregoi veten Dritës.
 artist-the Cl Cl show Ac D
 N 3sD 3sAc 3sPDAct
 'The artist_i showed himself_i to Drita' (1 antecedes 2)
 'The artist_i showed herself_i to Drita_i' (3 antecedes 2)
 b. Gruaja i a përshkroi veten Agimit.
 woman-the Cl Cl describe Ac D
 N 3sD 3sAc 3sPDAct
 'The woman described herself to Agim' (1 antecedes 2)
 'The woman described himself to Agim' (3 antecedes 2)

Again, shifting the order of the reflexive and antecedent has no effect on grammaticality or on the range of interpretations.

- 11) a. Artisti ia tregoi Dritës veten.
 b. Gruaja ia përshkroi Agimit veten.

Although a 3 can antecede a reflexive 2, a 2 cannot antecede a reflexive 3.

- 12) a. Artisti ia tregoi Dritën vetes.
 Ac D
 'The artist showed Drita to himself'
 *'The artist showed Drita to herself'
- b. Gruaja ia përshkroi Agimin vetes.
 'The woman described Agim to herself'
 *'The woman described Agim to himself'

The readings in (12) where the 2 antecedes the 3 are unacceptable.

The data above shows that the correct hierarchy for Albanian reflexives is $1 < 3 < 2 < \text{Obl}$ rather than the $1 < 2 < 3 < \text{Obl}$ hierarchy predicted by the CCC. On the basis of this data, then, the CCC does not appear to be correct as a universal statement governing conditions on reflexivization.

There are two ways in which the CCC could be modified to accommodate the Albanian data. One option would be to change its status from that of an absolute universal to a universal tendency (or relative universal) with the Albanian reflexive rule as a marked case. A second option would be to leave the CCC as an absolute universal but collapse the direct object and indirect object into a single category "Object" on the hierarchy, which would then be stated as $\text{Subject} < \text{Object} < \text{Oblique}$. The markedness of the Albanian order within the Object category could perhaps be accounted for in a separate statement. I will not defend either of these proposals over the other. However, it should be noted that the first option leaves open the possibility for other types of violations (such as an Oblique anteceding a 3, for example), while the second only allows violations of the CCC of the type found in Albanian.

Reflexives in Non-Active Clauses and the Nominative Island Condition

Chomsky (1980) working in the framework of the Revised Extended Standard Theory provides the following formulation of the Nominative Island Condition (NIC):³

- 13) Nominative Island Condition: A nominative anaphor cannot be free in \bar{S} .

A nominative anaphor, then must be bound in \bar{S} , which requires it to be c-commanded by its antecedent. Since a subject (marked with nominative case) cannot be c-commanded by another nominal in \bar{S} , it follows that the subject of \bar{S} cannot be an anaphor. Assuming reflexives are anaphors in Albanian, based on the data in (1)-(3), the NIC predicts that Albanian will not allow a reflexive to appear as the subject in a tensed clause.

However, there are two constructions in Albanian which do allow a reflexive to appear as the (S-structure) subject: passives and inversions, both of which occur with the verb in a non-active form. The passive forms of the sentences in (10) show that the passive subject can occur as a reflexive, anteceded by the indirect object.⁴

- 14) a. Vetja i u tregua Dritës prej artistit.⁵
 N Cl u show D by
 3sD 3sPDNAct
 'Herself was shown to Drita by the artist'
- b. Vetja i u përshkrua Agimit prej gruasë.
 N Cl describe D
 3sD 3sPDNAct
 'Himself was described to Agim by the woman'⁶

The same sentences with the passive subject anteceding the indirect object are ungrammatical.

- 15) a. *Drita i u tregua vetes prej artistit.
 N D
 'Drita was shown to herself by the artist'
- b. *Agimi i u përshkrua vetes prej gruasë.
 N
 'Agim was described to himself by the woman'⁷

The inversion construction in Albanian is restricted to a relatively small set of verbs, unlike the passive which can occur with most transitive verbs. In this construction the logical subject occurs as the indirect object on the surface and the logical direct object occurs as the surface subject.⁸ Thus, synonymous pairs such as those in (16) can occur in Albanian.

- 16) a. Unë nuk e besoj ngjarjen.
 I not Cl believe story-the
 N 3sAc 1sPrAct Ac
 'I don't believe the story'

- b. Ngjarja nuk më besohet.
 N C1 3sPrNAct
 1sD
 'I don't believe the story'
 (lit. 'The story isn't believed by me')

For some verbs in this class, such as besoj 'I believe' inversion is optional, while for others, such as dhimset 'feel for' it is obligatory.⁹

Like passive sentences, inversion sentences can occur with a reflexive subject anteceded by the indirect object, as in (17b), the inversion counterpart of (17a).

- 17) a. Mësuesi nuk e duroi më veten.
 teacher-the not C1 endure more Ac
 N 3sAc 3sPDAct
 'The teacher couldn't endure himself any longer'
- b. Vetja nuk i u durua më mësuesit.
 N C1 3sPDNAct D
 3sD
 'The teacher couldn't endure himself any longer'

In (18) the reflexive once again occurs as the subject, although this time no non-inversion form is possible, since dhimset obligatorily undergoes inversion.

- 18) Vetja më dhimset.
 N C1 feel for
 1sD 3sPrNAct
 'I feel for myself'

As (19) shows, neither (17b) nor (18) can occur with the inversion subject anteceding the indirect object.

- 19) a. *Mësuesi nuk i u durua më vetes.
 N D
- b. *Unë i dhimsem vetes.
 I C1 1sPrNAct D
 N 3sD

The sentences in (14), (17b), and (18) all represent violations of the NIC in allowing reflexive subjects. Such violations are not exclusive to Albanian. For example, Bell (1976) discusses passive sentences in Cebuano which allow reflexive subjects. Chomsky himself (1979) mentions Polish, Japanese, and perhaps classical Greek as languages in

which "the reflexive must be bound to something in the same sentence, it appears, but not under the restrictive conditions governing English reflexive--rather, some very general conditions on anaphora, involving domination, grammatical relation, and perhaps linear precedence apply."¹⁰

It is interesting that most putative violations of the NIC seem to be in reflexivization, both in Albanian and in the languages above.¹¹ Perhaps what is needed for Albanian and these languages is some characterization of reflexive as a "semi-anaphor" that is universally clause bounded but subject to some less restrictive condition than the NIC.¹²

NOTES

*I would like to thank Dick McGinn for commenting on a preliminary version of this paper.

1 There is also a reflexive variant vetvete which appears to have the same distribution as vete. According to my informant, it is most commonly used when referring to the psychological self, as in Agimi pëlqen vetveten 'Agim likes himself', although vete can occur in such sentences as well.

It should also be noted that vete can occur with a possessive pronoun specifying the gender and number of the referent, e.g. vetja e tij 'hisself'. These forms will not be discussed, although they appear to have the same conditions on their interpretation as the bare vete.

2 As will be seen in the next section, reflexive subjects can occur in passive and inversion sentences.

3 Chomsky (1980), p. 36.

4 The passive subject behaves like the active subject with respect to case marking, verb agreement, and intensifier float (see Hubbard (1980)).

5 The u clitic in this and other sentences is part of the non-active morphology marking past definite.

6 These sentences do not violate Johnson's CCC because within the relational grammar framework more than one syntactic level can be referenced by rules. In Hubbard (1980) the following generalization was proposed to account for the behavior of reflexives in sentences such as those present here:

Final term reflexivization

A nominal A heading a final term arc with tail c may antecede a reflexive nominal B heading a final term arc with tail c only if the R-sign of the arc headed by A outranks the R-sign of the arc headed by B on the hierarchy $\bar{1}$ -3-2 at the initial level. (p. 52)

7 A purely semantic treatment of Albanian reflexives is impossible because the object of the prej 'by' phrase cannot antecede the passive subject, although the same nominal can in the active versions of these sentences.

8 Within the relational grammar framework, the somewhat vague term "logical subject" would be replaced by the more precise and purely syntactic term "initial subject." The same is true for "logical direct object."

9 See Hubbard (1980) for a partial list of inversion verbs, all of which seem to have Experiencer initial subjects.

10 Chomsky (1979), p. 186.

11 Some preliminary data on reciprocals suggests that they follow the 1-3-2 hierarchy like reflexives. They seem to obey the NIC in passive sentences, though, allowing the passive subject to antecede the indirect object but not vice versa.

- i) Burrat iu përshkruan njeri-tjetrit prej gazetarit.
'The men were described to one another by the reporter'
- ii) *Njeri-tjetri u përshkrua burrave prej gazetarit.
'One another were described to the men by the reporter'

For inversion sentences however, it appears that word order may be crucial.

- iii) Burrat i pëlqen njeri-tjetrit.
N D
'The men like (to) one another'
- iv) Burrave u pëlqen njeri-tjetri.
D N
(lit. 'To the men like one another')

(iv) appears to violate the NIC on the basis of case marking. Further research in this area is in progress, so it is a bit premature to claim violations of the NIC by the Albanian reciprocal as of now. It is interesting, though, that word order does not seem to affect the distribution or interpretation of reflexives.

12 Such a condition would presumably have to make reference to something analogous to the notion "initial grammatical relation" in the relational grammar framework, though I am not sure how such a notion would be incorporated into the government and binding framework.

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