Some Syntax And Semantics Of Long Distance Reflexives In Turkish And Elsewhere[1]

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0. Introduction

In this short paper I briefly examine the syntactic and semantic behaviour of some anaphoric elements in Turkish and other languages. In section 1, for expository convenience, I give all the necessary preliminaries; in section 2, I outline some core properties of long distance reflexives crosslinguistically and explore the situation in Turkish.

1. Some Preliminaries

In this section I attempt to revise all the preliminaries essential for further discussion—the notion of (syntactic) binding and Binding Conditions, as well as data from Turkish illustrating how and to what extent Binding Theory works for this language.

The definition of syntactic binding is given in (1):

(1) DP_1 syntactically binds DP_2 iff DP_1 and DP_2 are coindexed and DP_1 c-commands DP_2.

Classical Binding Theory (hereafter BT) generalises over all cases of pronoun-antecedent relations in three conditions, known as Binding Conditions (called rather unimaginatively conditions A, B, and C):

(2) Binding Conditions
Condition A. An anaphor must be bound in its local domain.
Condition B. A pronominal must be free in its local domain.
Condition C. An R-expression must be free.

A pronoun's local, or binding, domain is usually assumed to be the minimal clause within which it is contained, so anaphors basically have to find an appropriate antecedent for themselves in their minimal clause.

Since in this paper I am supposed to be focusing on Turkish anaphora, I shall give the relevant examples to illustrate how the Binding Conditions work in this language. Turkish has several classes of pronouns that, on the first glance, seem to respect all the binding conditions (example from Enç (1989)):

(3) a. Ali   [Ayşe-nin   kendin-e   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.
     Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   self-DAT   be-angry-DAT was-surprised
     'Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at herself$_{j/*i/*k}$'

     b. Ali   [Ayşe-nin   on-a   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.
     Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   he/she-DAT   be-angry-DAT was-surprised

'Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at him/her$_{i/k/*j}$'

c. Ali   Aliy-e   kızdı.
Ali$_i$-NOM   Ali-DAT   was-angry
'Ali$_i$ was angry at Ali$_{j/*i}$'

So, from (3) we can see that the reflexive element *kendi* is locally bound, the pronominal *o* is free in its local domain, and the R-expression, *Ali,* is not bound either.

2. Long Distance Reflexives

One of the key issues addressed by BT is the **locality conditions**, i.e. the requirement that reflexives (and anaphors, in general) should have the closest antecedent available as opposed to non-locality when it comes to pronominals, the pattern that is claimed to be universal across languages (Reinhart (1999)). Over the last decades, however, typologists have shown that in some languages anaphors can find their antecedents not only in their local domain (usually associated with the minimal clause within which the anaphor is contained), but also elsewhere, i.e. be bound by an antecedent in a higher clause. Reflexives that can be bound non-locally are known as **long distance reflexives** (hereinafter LDRs, examples in (4) are from Icelandic (a), and Norwegian (b)):

(4) a. Jón segir að [María telji   að [Haraldur vilji að [Billi heimsæki sig]]].
    Jón   says   that María thinks   that Harald wants that Billi comes to self
    'Jón$_i$ says that María$_j$ thinks that Harald$_k$ wants Billi$_l$ to come to him$_i$/her$_j$/him$_k$/himself$_l$'

b. *Jon$_i$ hørte oss [snakke om seg$_i$// *seg selv]*
' *Jon$_i$* heard us talk about him (lit.: 'self'$_i$)// *seg selv' (Testelets & Toldova (1998))

2.1 Core Properties Of LDRs

According to Pica (1987), Cole & Hermon (1998), and Testelets & Toldova (1998), LDRs have the following core properties: first, they are, as a rule, morphologically simplex[2]

(5) single-morpheme reflexives *sebja* in Russian (as opposed to strictly local *sam sebja*), Norwegian *seg* (vs. *seg selv*), *ziji* vs. *taziji* in Mandarin Chinese etc.

Besides, in most languages, they are confined to strictly determined positions (e.g. infinitive clauses; Russian example from Padučeva (1983)):

(6) Ona$_i$ pozvoljala   emu$_j$ [PRO$_j$ sebja$_{i/j}$ obmanyvat'
    She   let-PAST   him   PRO self-ACC   deceive
    She$_i$ let him$_j$ deceive her$_i$/himself$_j$'

Furthermore, LDRs are usually non-locally bound; in some languages they are even LD-only:

(7) a.   Peter$_i$ hørte   Anne omtale   *sig$_i$*
          Peter   heard   Anne mention   self

    b.   *Peter$_i$ fortalte   Michael   om   *sig$_i$*
          Peter   told   Michael   about   self   (Testelets (2008))

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[2]In certain languages, though, LDRs are either necessarily inflected (Turkish is among them, see below), or even unrestricted in the choice of antecedent, or both. This undermines the fundamental assumption that any overt pronoun has to be subject to certain syntactic restrictions on its use. [Testelets, Toldova 1998: 26]..

In most languages they are subject-oriented:

(8) On   ne   razrešaet mne PRO   proizvodit   opyty   nad   soboj
    He-NOM   not   permit me-DAT   to-perform   experiments on   self
    'He doesn't allow me to perform experiments on himself/myself'   (Rappaport (1983))

Finally, there is no complementary distribution between either local and long distance reflexives or LDRs and plain pronouns:

(9) On$_i$ vidit   sebja$_i$// sam sebja$_i$ //*ego$_i$
    He   sees   himself//him
    *'He$_i$ sees himself/*him$_i$'*

2.2 Turkish

In this subsection, I would like to introduce some interesting data from Turkish—a language that has (allegedly) two anaphors—a local reflexive *kendi* (10), and a long distance one, *kendisi* (11). For the purposes of this paper, I shall put aside the discussion of the syntactic and semantic properties of the local reflexive (I will just say that its behaviour is more or less consistent with BT and principles of semantic binding), concentrating instead on those of the long distance anaphor.

(10)   Ali   [Ayşe-nin   kendin-e   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.
        Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   self-DAT   be-angry-DAT   was-surprised
        'Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at herself$_{j/*i/*k}$'

(11)   Ali   [Ayşe-nin   kendisin-e   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.
        Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   self-DAT   be-angry-DAT   was-surprised
        'Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at him$_i$/herself$_j$/him/her$_k$'

I would like to point out certain properties of *kendisi* that make it significantly different from 'canonical' LDRs. First and foremost, it is not morphologically simplex but inflected, thus different from similar elements in other languages:

(12)   a.   kendi-si
              self-3.sg.

        b.   kendiler-i
              self-3.pl.

Second, unlike 'canonical' LDRs, *kendisi* can appear in local contexts, just like its local counterpart *kendi* (13), or even stand in complementary distribution and free variation with the plain pronoun, which looks weird since it can behave both as an anaphor (i.e. require a sentence-internal antecedent) and pronominal (i.e. not require a sentence-internal antecedent):

(13)   Ali   kendisine kızdı.
        'Ali got angry at himself'
(14)   a. O   geldi
        he/she-NOM   came
        'He/she came'
        b. Kendisi   geldi[3]

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[3]   One might argue that *kendisi* in this sentence is used in an emphatic sense, i.e. to express something like 'It was he

Self-NOM   came

'He/she   came'

c. Ali   [Ayşe-nin   on-a   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.

Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   he/she-DAT   be-angry-DAT was-surprised

'*Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at him/her$_{i/k/*j}$*'

d. Ali   [Ayşe-nin   kendisin-e   kızmasın-a]   şaştı.

Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   self-DAT   be-angry-DAT was-surprised

'*Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at him$_i$/herself$_j$/him/her$_k$*'

From (14) we see that *kendisi* is in complementary distribution with the personal pronoun *o* in local contexts but is in free variation with it in non-local contexts

The third point where *kendisi* differs substantially from 'canonical' LDRs is subject-orientation, or, to be more precise, lack thereof. Imagine the following dialogue (example taken from Kornfilt (2001), pp. 200, 205):

(15)   **A.** Ali$_j$ hakkında   Ahmet   ne   düşün-üyor?

            Ali   about   Ahmet   what   think-Progr.

            'What does Ahmet think of Ali?'

            B. Ahmet   kendisin-i$_j$ çok   beğen-iyor-muş

            Ahmet   self-ACC   very   admire-Progr.Rep.Past.

            '(They say that) Ahmet admires him (i.e., Ali) very much'

In this dialogue, *kendisi* does not have any syntactic antecedent at all—the antecedent is contained in the discourse. However, even if the antecedent is syntactic, the pronoun is not subject-oriented either:

(16) Ali$_i$ Ahmed-e$_j$ [Selim-in$_k$ kendisin-i$_{i/j/k}$ çok   beğen-diğ-in]-i

      Ali   Ahmet-DAT Selim-GEN   self-ACC   very admire-GER-3.sg.-ACC

      söyle-di

      say-PAST

      'Ali$_i$ told Ahmet$_j$ that Selim$_k$ admires him(self)$_{i/j/k}$ very much'

The situation seems somewhat similar to that observed in Modern Greek (17), where the LD-only reflexive is not necessarily subject-oriented either. It definitely looks like the relation between LDRs and their antecedent in either one of these languages is not binding but rather coreference (the anaphor is not c-commanded by its antecedent, and c-command is essential for (syntactic) binding which, in turn, is necessary for semantic binding). It should be pointed out, however, that neither coreference nor binding is obligatory here, that is the situation reminds of that in English where ordinary pronouns can be bound but do not have to:

(17)   O Yanis$_i$ ipe   ston   Kosta$_j$ [oti   i Maria$_k$ aghapa to idhio$_{i/j/*k/*l}$]

         the Yanis   said   to-the   Kosta   that the Maria loves himself

         'Yanis told Kosta that Maria loves him'   (Testelets 2008: 7)

This lack of subject-orientation, conceived as being crucial for the phenomenon of LDRs, together with minor issues such as morphological complexity, has led certain linguists (e.g. Jaklin Kornfilt) to propose that this anaphoric element does not belong to the class of LDRs at all. Indeed, this

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     himself who came'. However, **'kendisi** and its plural **kendileri** are commonly employed as simple third-person pronouns with no reflexive or emphatic sense: **kendisi evde** 'he is at home*'*; **kendileri gördünüz mü?** 'have you seen them?' (Kornfilt 1997: 201)

inflected reflexive has both anaphoric properties and those of a personal pronoun. Several analyses have been proposed (including Enç (1989) and Kornfilt (2001)), but I will not go into detail here. To get a better understanding of the phenomenon, a closer look at the semantics is essential, which I attempt in the next section.

3. Semantics of *kendisi*

Throughout this section I will be trying to find out whether *kendisi* has the same semantic properties as 'canonical' LDRs. In doing so, I will try to test a version of the following generalisation (from Reinhart (1983a: 150) via Büring (2003: 137)): *'In fact, all [syntactically bound: DB] pronouns can be interpreted as bound variables, regardless of whether the antecedent is a quantified NP or not'*. To be more precise, I will try to demonstrate that Turkish *kendisi* can be interpreted either as bound variable or as coreferential.

To do so, we shall have to recall that evidence for bound variable reading can come from several sources—quantified antecedents, ellipsis and *only*-clefts, and I will apply the ellipsis-test here in order to see what interpretations are available. I show the mechanism in (18):

(18) John loves his wife and so does Bill [~~love his wife~~]. Possible interpretations:
    (i) John loves Max's wife, and Bill loves Max's wife.   ("strict identity", coreference)
    (ii) John loves John's wife, and Bill loves John's wife.   ("strict identity", coreference)
    (iii) John loves John's wife, and Bill loves Bill's wife.   ("sloppy identity", binding)

Now, let us recall (11), repeated here as (19) for expository convenience:

(19)   Ali   [Ayşe-nin   kendisin-e   kızmasın-a]   şaştı,
              Ali-NOM   Ayşe-GEN   self-DAT   be-angry-DAT   was-surprised
              Mustafa   da.
              Mustafa-NOM   too.
              'Ali$_i$ was surprised that Ayşe$_j$ was angry at him$_i$/herself$_j$/him/her$_k$, and so was Mustafa'.

Possible interpretations:

(i) Ali was surprised that Ayşe was angry at him (=Ali), and Mustafa also was surprised that Ayşe was angry at him (=Ali).   ("strict identity", coreference)
(ii) Ali was surprised that Ayşe was angry at him (=Ali), and Mustafa also was surprised that Ayşe got mad at him (=Mustafa).   ("sloppy identity", binding)
(iii) Ali was surprised that Ayşe was angry at some other person (3.sg., e.g. Oya) talked about in the discourse, and Mustafa, too, was surprised that Ayşe was angry at Oya.   ("strict identity", coreference)

Here we see something unexpected—*kendisi* in the 'ellipsed' sentence does not yield a reading whereby Ayşe got angry at herself (for such a reading, the form *kendi* should have been used) while normally it is possible for the LDR to be locally bound (see (13))—a fact for which I have no explanation at the moment. It is quite straightforward that the generalisation at the beginning of this section seems to hold for Turkish, at least so far. Needless to say, the local reflexive *kendi* can receive only bound variable interpretation, as in (20).

(20) Ali   kendin-e   kızdı,   Mustafa   da.
          Ali-NOM   self-DAT   was-angry   Mustafa-NOM   too

'*Ali$_i$ was angry at himself$_i$, and Mustafa$_j$ was angry at himself$_j$'* ("sloppy identity" only).

In some other languages with LDRs, however, (19) apparently is not the case:

(21) Mahtte$_i$ havskkuha Bireha$_j$ [alccesis$_{i/*j}$ varrejuvvon lanjas]
M-NOM entertains B-ACC self-3.sg. reserve-PASS room-LOC
ja nu dahka Piera$_k$ ge.
and so do-3.sg. P-NOM too (Outakoski 2003)
*'Mahtte entertains Biret in a room (that is) reserved for him(self)/*herself, and so does Piera (too)'* ("sloppy identity" only)

Ellipsis tests give results similar to (21) for a number of other languages, e.g. Japanese and Korean. Thus, we see that if an anaphor is bound, even non-locally, it should be interpreted as bound variable (i.e. allow only for "sloppy identity" under identity tests). Turkish *kendisi*, however, displays different properties—since there is no requirement that it should necessarily have a sentence-internal antecedent, coreferential interpretation is also available.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have been examining the syntactic and semantic behaviour of long distance anaphora, in Turkish and other languages. I hope to have presented the core properties of LDRs as well as arguments in favour and against including *kendisi* into that class of anaphoric elements. The issue still remains open since almost no research on the semantics of Turkish anaphora has been done. In conclusion, I would like to outline areas for future research on the topic. One of them is that (non)-complementarity issues can shed light on the nature of Turkish anaphoric elements. Another interesting question to ask is the interaction of linear precedence and c-command, and the impact it has on semantic interpretation of anaphors, pronominals and unrestricted pronouns

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