Dependency Theory in Korean

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Lim, Kihong. 1999. Dependency Theory in Korean. Studies in Modern Grammar 15, 43–53. Drawing on Fiengo and May (1995)'s claim that the conditions on bound variable anaphora are not coextensive with those on sloppy identity, I propose an account for the question of why only the monomorphemic reflexive caki, but not the pronoun ku in Korean can take a quantified expression as its antecedent, whereas both can be read sloppily under ellipsis. We will also see how Fiengo and May’s Dependency Theory together with my pragmatic reasoning explains some intriguing phenomena involving phrases with mace ‘even’ and man ‘only’ operators.

I. The Issue

It has often been reported that languages that have monomorphemic reflexives do not allow pronouns to be bound by quantified expressions. For instance, Sells (1987) shows that the reflexive sig, but not the pronoun hann, in Icelandic can be a variable. (Bold characters are used to express coindexing.)

(1) a. Enginn telur ad Maria elski sig.
    No one believes that Maria loves self

b. *Enginn telur ad Maria elski hann.
    No one believes that Maria loves him

In (1a), the monomorphemic reflexive sig is bound by the quantifier enginn. In contrast, (1b) is ungrammatical since the pronoun hann cannot be a variable.

Noguchi (1997) also reports that the Japanese personal pronoun kare cannot be a variable whereas the reflexive zibun can.

    everyone-Nom self-Nom head-Nom good Comp think-Prs
    ‘Everyone thinks that he is intelligent.’

This paper is based on my dissertation (Lim 1998). I would like to thank William O’Grady, who supervised my dissertation, and anonymous reviewers for their useful insights and comments.
   everyone-Nom he-Nom head-Nom good Comp think-Prs
   'Everyone thinks that he is intelligent.'

In (2a) the monomorphic reflexive zibun is bound by the quantifier daremo. In contrast, (2b) is ungrammatical because the pronoun kare cannot be a variable.

Korean seems to show the same pattern as illustrated by the Icelandic and Japanese examples.

(3) a. Nwukwuna-ga caki-uy emma-lul miweha-n-ta.
   everyone-Nom self-Gen mother-Acc hate-Prs-Dec
   'Everyone hates his mother.'

b. *Nwukwuna-ga ku-uy emma-lul miweha-n-ta.
   everyone-Nom he-Gen mother-Acc hate-Prs-Dec
   'Everyone hates his mother.'

Whereas in (3a) the monomorphic reflexive caki can be bound by the quantifier nwukwuna, in (3b) the pronoun ku cannot take the quantifier as its antecedent.

We also can see this contrast when the antecedent is a phrase with mace 'even' operator.

(4) a. Cheli-mace caki-uy emma-lul miweha-n-ta.
   Cheli-even self-Gen mother-Acc hate-Prs-Dec
   'Even Cheli hates his mother.'

b. Cheli-mace ku-uy emma-lul miweha-n-ta.
   Cheli-even he-Gen mother-Acc hate-Prs-Dec
   'Even Cheli hates his mother.'

(4a) can have only a variable construal. Hence, a presupposition for (4a) could be that Mini hates his own mother. In contrast, only a coreference construal is available to (4b). Therefore, a presupposition could be that Mini hates Cheli's mother.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Karttunen and Peters (1979) point out that the speaker of (i) commits himself to the presuppositions in (ii).

(i) Even Bill likes Mary.