



# White Hmong Reciprocals and Reflexives

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## Introduction

In this project, I provide data from two native speakers to show how reciprocals and reflexives are constructed and bound in White Hmong. I argue that White Hmong follows the 'traditional' binding theory ([1]; [2]) and supports that vP and CP are phases in Hmong. I also show that the true reciprocal is a Voice head (not a DP) in Hmong and the 'false' reciprocal is a reflexive construction with dual or plural pronouns.

Empirically, Hmong has been understudied and most literature of the language are from the 1900s, so this project is a more modern view of how the language is used by immigrant communities and their children in the United States today.

## Facts

- **Fact 1:** The standard structure of reflexive DPs in Hmong is [Pro + Clf + kheej] (1-2)
  - **Fact 2:** kheej 'self' can occur alone as the object of a clause and bind to the subject (3).
  - **Fact 3:** There are two ways to translate reciprocal meanings into Hmong.
- A. Method 1 is another kheej-reflexive construction using a dual pronoun (5).
- B. Method 2 is a 'true reciprocal' where the reciprocal sib is a Voice morpheme and not a nominal (4,6)

## Data

- (1) kuv pom kuv tus kheej  
1SG see 1SG CLF self  
*"I see myself."*
- (2) nws pom nws tus kheej  
3SG see 3SG CLF self  
*"He sees himself"*
- (3) kuv pom kheej  
1SG see self  
*"I see myself."*
- (4) lawv sib txawb pob zeb  
3PL RECIP throw CLF rock  
*"They threw rocks at each other."*
- (5) nkawm tham txog nkawm tus kheej  
3DU talk about 3DU CLF self  
*"They (du.) are talking about each other."*
- (6) nkawm sib tham  
3DU RECIP talk  
*"They (du.) are talking to each other."*

## Proposal for Reflexives

- The clausal projection in Hmong is AspP instead of IP or TP since it doesn't mark tense and is an analytic language (see [3] for Mandarin)
- The subject raises from Spec,vP to Spec,AspP due to a strong EPP on Asp [4].
- Binding domains are synonymous with phases [5], so binding between the antecedent (in Spec,vP) and the reflexive (the sister of V) happens at the vP phase (7). The reflexive can either be kheej or a full reflexive DP.

## Proposal for Reflexives

- (7) ???insert tree (7)
- I argue that the word sib is a Voice head and not an anaphoric DP
- The word order poses no issues for the SVO word order's syntax.
- It's not novel to associate Voice with reciprocity [6], although this has never been discussed with Hmong data.
- (8) ???insert tree (8)

## Proposal for reciprocals

- The final structure, (9), shows that the SVO word order truly is maintained when we have both sib and a DP object
- (9) ???insert tree (9)
- The domain of the reciprocal meaning is the phase.
- Before the subject raises out of the vP structure, it is established as the agent of the reciprocal action.
- Not only is the domain of the reciprocal clear, but the timing of the reciprocal mapping is also clear

## Conclusion

- fill in???

## Selected references

- [1] T. Reinhart. Coreference and bound anaphora: A restatement of the anaphora questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 6:47–88, 1983.
- [2] N Chomsky. *Barriers*. MIT Press.
- [3] Lin, J. Time in a language without tense: The case of Chinese. *Journal of Semantics*, 23, 2006.
- [4] N. Chomsky. *Some concepts and consequences of the theory of government and binding*. MIT Press.
- [5] N Chomsky. *The Minimalist Program*. MIT Press.
- [6] Kratzer, A. Severing the External Argument from Its Verb. *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, 1996.

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