

Backward binding in Zapotec*

Black (1996)

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1 Introduction

Backward binding (BB) form: The subject is null and it is the possessor of the object, which can be *self* anaphors (1) or regular objects (2a- 2b).

- (1) Sees \emptyset_i self John $_i$.
- (2) a. Reads \emptyset_i book his $_i$.
b. Gave \emptyset_i broom the woman $_i$'s.

Why is this interesting/problematic?

- Zapotecan languages are not generally *pro-drop*. Unclear why we see it in this corner of the grammar.
- The preceding and c-commanding element is referentially dependent on the possessor of the object (contra canonical binding configurations).

2 BB in Zapotec: Data blitz

2.1 Yatzachi Zapotec (Northern group)

BB present in true reflexive (3), the reciprocal (4), and the reflexive of possession (5).

*The symbols R^w and R indicate uvular fricatives. N is an unspecified nasal which assimilates to the point of articulation of a following consonant. The following abbreviations are used in the morpheme glosses: C=Completive aspect; H=Habitual aspect; P=Potential aspect; 1IP1=first person plural inclusive pronoun; 1ExPl=first person plural exclusive pronoun; 1Sg=first person singular pronoun; 2Pl=second person plural pronoun; 3F=third person familiar pronoun; 3RS=third person respectful subject pronoun; Rep=repetitive; SPI=subject plural marker.

- The true reflexive construction is based on an intrinsically possessed noun k^wiN 'self of'.
- Portmanteau realization of the subject and the possessor of k^wiN.
- The possessor of the noun k^wiN may be a clitic pronoun (3a) or a full NP (3b).

(3) True reflexive

- a. B-čog kwiN-a?.
C-cut self.of-1Sg.
'I cut myself.'
- b. B-e-xot kwiN be-na?.
C-Rep-kill self.of person-that
'That person killed himself (suicide).'

- The reciprocal construction contains a portmanteau realization of the subject and the possessor of an item, which is the possessed noun IR^wezR 'fellow of' (4).

(4) J-e-Jala? gakalen IR^wezR-to. H-Rep-owe P-help fellow.of-1IP1 'We must help one another.'

- In the reflexive of possession construction, the possessed noun occurs with a portmanteau realization of the subject (5a).
- However, the subject and possessor of the object are expressed separately in the non-reflexive constructions (5b).

- (5) a. Cin xicR-a?.
P:comb head-1Sg
'I will comb my hair.'
- b. Cin-a? xicR-bo?.
P:comb-1Sg head-3F
'I will comb his hair.'

2.2 Quiébolani Zapotec (Southern group)

- Quiébolani Zapotec and other Southern Zapotecan languages do not have forms corresponding to reflexive or reciprocal pronouns (Piper 1993).

“In fact, there is no morphological distinction at all between pronouns and reflexives. The regular pronouns are used in both subject and object position ... There is no way to distinguish coreference from noncoreference with third person pronouns. Because of the ambiguity caused by this lack of distinction between anaphors and pronominals, speakers of these languages prefer to use proper names or common nouns rather than third person pronouns.”

- But, Quiegolani Zapotec does have a reflexive of possession construction, where the subject may be null if it is coindexed with the possessor of the object (6).

- (6) a. R-dxiin-t x-ten men.
 H-arrive-Neg Pos-ranch 3
 They_i didn't arrive at their_i ranch.

3 Analysis (but not really)

Puzzle: The bindee precedes and c-commands the binder¹.

Q: What licenses the null subject and the possessor of the object and further, how is the null subject identified?

Sanity check: The final element is indeed the possessor and not the (displaced) subject (i.e., not VOS, for instance).

- The object and its possessor can be focused together.
- (7) Lis Bed-en? ba-j-gwia-bo?
 paper Peter-the already-H-look.at-3F
 Peter_i's paper, he_i is already looking at.
- A coindexed pronoun must overtly mark the subject on the verb when this focusing occurs.
 - Since these languages don't mark case, strict VSO is required.

Noun incorporation? No.

Proposal: Woolford (1991) argues that Jacalteco (VSO) avoids this problem by incorporating the reflexive into the verb instead of leaving it as object

¹This holds true whether one assumes a flat structure for VSO (à la Woolford 1990) or a structure involving verb movement to Infl (Black 1994, Chung 1990).

position, making it VOS on the surface.

BUT!

- The object is a noun requiring a possessor.
- Alienably possessed nouns require some special marking when they are possessed.
- In a regular incorporation construction the object appears inside the negative marker but negation is marked before the object in a reflexive of possession.

Black's Proposal

- Binding direction is parameterized.
- In the case of BB, the tail of a chain can bind the head.

Let's consider the Deal (2017) and think about what a more satisfying explaining might look like.

4 Deal (2017)

Summary

- Two puzzles for analyses of external possession
 1. Syntax-semantics interactions and the nature of the interface
 2. Cross-linguistic variance in the syntax and semantics of the construction
- The classic analysis
 1. Early generative approach: transformational analysis
 - External possession derived from internal possession via a rule
 - External possession and internal possession semantically equivalent
 2. Possessor Government (Massam 1985, Baker 1988)
 - Possessors behave as arguments because they are governed by V.
 - Doesn't directly reference grammatical functions but still involves some relationship between possessor and V.

- * Massam: NP-internal ECM (possessor raises in NP, gets case from V)
- * Baker: NP incorporates into V (in Mohawk, Oneida, WGe)

3. The semantic awakening: non-derivational accounts

- European possessor datives sensitive to semantic notions of affectedness (Tuggy 1980 for Spanish, Barnes 1985 for French, Berman 1981 for Hebrew)
 - (a) Possessor must be living (Barnes 1985, Cuervo 2003, Berman 1981)
 - (b) Possessor must be affected by action on the possessum (Berman 1981, Tuggy 1980, Kayne 1975, Guéron 1985)
 - (c) French: Verb must describe an action, not a state (Barnes 1985)
- The theta-criterion (Chomsky 1981) then rules out a movement analysis.
 - * The affectedness stuff comes from the verb, not the possessum, so that must involve some sort of thematic role assigned as an argument of the verb
 - * Given the theta-criterion, there's no movement into such a position, which means there can't be a derivational relationship between the internal and external possessors.
- Thus: binding analyses
 - * "In the GB literature, the crucial anaphoric element is identified variously as a PRO determiner (Guéron 1985; Borer and Grodzinsky 1986), a null operator (Tellier 1991), pro (Authier 1991), an unsaturated argument variable (Yoon 1990; Vergnaud and Zubizarreta 1992), or a base-generated NP trace (Kempchinsky 1992). Later approaches carry over these essential ideas, translating the analysis into HPSG (Koenig 1999), Mapping Theory (Gerdtz 1999), and a neo-Davidsonian event semantics (Hole 2005) with the help of a variety of anaphoric devices" (Deal; p.12)
- Classical analyses reborn: the death of the theta-criterion.
 - * External possession derived from internal possession via movement:
 - (a) Keach and Rochemont (1994) on Swahili:

- possessor raising structures don't behave like underlyingly tritransitive verbs
- (b) Landau (1999) on Hebrew:
 - possessor raising ok from non-island PPs; banned from island PPs

— The Control Extension: a Hornsteinian typology

1. Rejecting the theta-criterion and allowing movement into theta-positions:
2. Typology of Possessor-Raising Structures: The full paradigm.
 - (a) Rodrigues (2010) for a movement analysis in Brazilian Portuguese
 - (b) Deal (2013) for Nez Perce: raising without an additional theta-role
 - (c) Assmann et al. (2014) for Udmurt: possessor in-situ, doesn't move, doesn't receive a new theta role, but gets targeted for agree: = ECM.

— The A/A'-Distinction and Food for Thought

- Three distinctions between Type-A Possessor Raising and Raising/ECM:
 1. Position: raising/ECM impossible from subject TPs, but possessor-raising often only ok with nominals in subject position (e.g. Japanese; Ura 1996)
 2. Case motivation: ECM, Raising for K, but possessor-raising can't be.
 3. Discourse-conditioning: possessor raising often driven by information-structural properties which aren't the motivation for ECM and raising.
- Two types of Possessor-Raising Construction
 1. Type-A languages: if possessor-movement, A-movement.
 2. Type-B languages: PR blurs lines between A and A'-movement
 - * Japanese: possessor-raising as attract by a higher head H.
 - * H behaves as part of the A-system, assigning K and so on...
 - * but also as part of the A'-system with information-structural import,

References

Black, C. A. (1996). A backwards binding construction in zapotec. *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*, 40(1), 1.