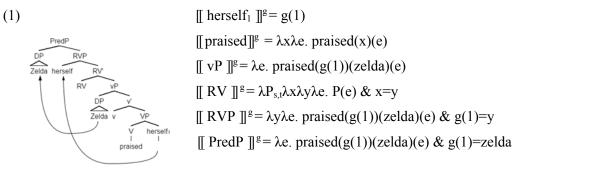# No designated Voice for English reflexive anaphors

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Recent literature has identified syntactic *Voice* as the locus of argument structure (AS) operations like passivization and anti-causativization. Ahn (2015) proposes to add reflexivization (as in English *Zelda praised herself*) to the set of operations associated with Voice. This talk argues against Ahn's analysis and defends an analysis that relates reflexivization to the lexical semantics of the anaphor.

Ahn's (2015) analysis is based on the following basic assumptions. Syntax: (i) a *Reflexive Voice* head (RV) is situated on top of *vP*. (ii) RV has an uninterpretable EPP feature that can only be checked by a reflexive anaphor, and (iii) the subject DP moves to a projection above *VoiceP*. Semantics: (i) the *v* head introduces the agent role, (ii) RV introduces a relation of identity between two arguments, and (iii) the reflexive anaphor is interpreted as a free variable. A simplified, partial derivation is provided in (1).

(1)

$[\![\text{herself}_1]\!]^g = g(1)$

$[\![\text{praised}]\!]^g = \lambda x \lambda e. \text{praised}(x)(e)$

$[\![vP]\!]^g = \lambda e. \text{praised}(g(1))(\text{zelda})(e)$

$[\![RV]\!]^g = \lambda P_{s,t} \lambda x \lambda y \lambda e. P(e) \ \& \ x=y$

$[\![RVP]\!]^g = \lambda y \lambda e. \text{praised}(g(1))(\text{zelda})(e) \ \& \ g(1)=y$

$[\![PredP]\!]^g = \lambda e. \text{praised}(g(1))(\text{zelda})(e) \ \& \ g(1)=\text{zelda}$

Not all instances of *herself* are reflexivizers (cf. [1]). Ahn uses the licensing of **Subject Alternatives** (as in [2]) as a diagnostic for true *reflexive* anaphors. Narrow focus on true reflexive anaphors licenses answers to subject *wh*-questions, as in (2); default focus, as in (3), is out.

(2)   Q: Who praised Zelda?   (3)   Q: Who praised Zelda?
       A: She praised herSELF.   A:[#]She PRAISED herself.

Ahn shows that Subject Alternatives are not licensed (a) if there exists an island boundary between the anaphor and its antecedent, as in (4), (b) if the anaphor is not linearized in its case position, as in (5), (c) if the antecedent of the anaphor is not a subject, as in (6) and (d) if the clause contains passive voice, as in (7). According to Ahn, restrictions (a) and (b) are derived because true reflexives require movement. Restrictions (c) and (d) are derived because a single Voice head is present in the clause.

(4)   Q: Who praised the king and Zelda?   (5)   Q: Who will look Zelda up?
       A:[#]She praised the king and herSELF.   A:[#]She will look up herSELF.
(6)   Q: Who did Oscar introduced to Zelda?   (7)   Q: Who was introduced to Zelda?
       A:[#]He introduced her to herSELF.   A:[#]She was introduced to herSELF.

Semantics. There are several issues with the semantics in Ahn's proposal. Here we restrict ourselves to the licensing of narrow focus. In Ahn's account focus on *herself* indicates focus on RV. In doing so, it generates alternatives to other relations between individuals, as in the Focus Semantic Value in (7).

(7) $\{\text{praised}(g(1))(\text{zelda}) \text{ and } R(g(1))(\text{zelda}) \mid R \text{ in } D_{eet}\}$

The problem is that the value in (7) does not license QA-Congruence in (2) (since the meaning of (2Q) is not a sub-set of (7), cf. [3]). To save the account, Ahn (2015: 182) proposes that the answer 'functions not as a direct answer to the question, but as a denial of its presupposition' that it was not Zelda that praised Zelda. However, since QA-Congruence is not operative, the account severs the connection between the preceding discourse (i.e. the question) and focus placement in the answer. It is, thus, not explained why narrow focus on the anaphor is necessary and, default prosody is excluded. In fact, the account predicts that any reflexivization strategy in any language should make a good answer in these contexts, since all of them could be used to 'deny the presupposition of the question'. We provide two counter-examples; English Naturally Reflexive Verbs in (8) and the German equivalent of (2) in (9).

(8)   Q: Who washed Zelda?   (9)   Q: Wer hat Zelda gelobt?
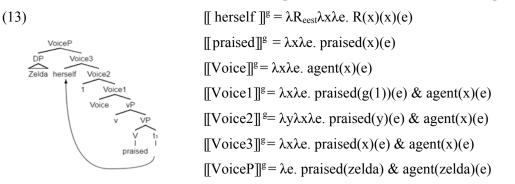   A:[#]She washed.   A:[#]Sie hat SICH gelobt.

Moreover, the moment we look outside the domain of QA-pairs, we can show that (7) is simply the wrong set of alternatives generated under focus on *herself*. E.g., consider the focus sensitive adverb

always in (10). In this case, the set of alternatives restricts the domain of quantification of the adverb. Given (7), the meaning we get is roughly the one in (11). The problem with (11) is that it only considers events of Zelda praising $g(1)$, i.e. Zelda. So, in a context in which Zelda praises Zelda and Lucie, (10) should come out true, since the event of praising Lucie is not in the domain of the adverb, and, hence, irrelevant for the truth of falsity of (10). This is clearly the wrong prediction. In case we allow the anaphor to be bound by the subject, (10) reduces to the tautology in (12), also the wrong result.

(10)   Zelda always praises herSELF.

(11)   'Every time Zelda praises $g(1)$ and there is a relation between Zelda and $g(1)$, Zelda praises $g(1)$ and Zelda is identical to $g(1)$.'

(12)   'Every time Zelda praises Zelda and there is a relation between Zelda and Zelda, Zelda praises Zelda and Zelda is identical to Zelda.'

On 'deriving Principle A'. The first thing to point out on the syntactic side is that Ahn links reflexive anaphors to obligatory reflexivization by a syntactic co-occurrence restriction (his syntactic assumption (ii) above that forces the presence of *herself* in the presence of RV). Like previous incarnations of 'Principle A', this is a brute force assumption that does not help us understand why a *reflexive anaphor* (instead of, e.g. a pronoun) is required in order to derive a reflexive interpretation.

Ditransitives. Although Ahn is right that movement explains restrictions (a) and (b) on Subject Alternatives, an RV account does not improve on our understanding of the facts in (6) and (7). In both cases, an AS operation is required to apply at a very local domain affecting the verb's two internal arguments. We know already from passivization (cf. [4]) that no AS operation can apply at that level; e.g. *Oscar was introduced to Zelda* can never mean 'Oscar introduced someone to Zelda' or anything similar. As far I am aware, no theory of AS operations successfully derives this fact in its generality. Ahn's account does no better; at best, it reformulates the relevant question in terms of syntactic *Voice* heads: why cannot *Voice* attach at the local domain introducing a verbs internal arguments?

Arity reducers. We defend an alternative account that treats reflexive anaphors as arity reducers, as in (13). The head *v* is verbalizer and agentive *Voice* introduces the external argument. If so, the reflexive cannot be interpreted in its base position and movement (QR) to a constituent denoting a property of individuals is required to solve the type mismatch (cf. [5]). The first available landing side is *Voice1*. Movement leads to the introduction of a binder prefix and the creation of a derived predicate.

(13)

$[\![$ herself $]\!]^g = \lambda R_{eest}\lambda x\lambda e.\ R(x)(x)(e)$

$[\![$ praised $]\!]^g = \lambda x\lambda e.\ praised(x)(e)$

$[\![Voice]\!]^g = \lambda x\lambda e.\ agent(x)(e)$

$[\![Voice1]\!]^g = \lambda x\lambda e.\ praised(g(1))(e)\ \&\ agent(x)(e)$

$[\![Voice2]\!]^g = \lambda y\lambda x\lambda e.\ praised(y)(e)\ \&\ agent(x)(e)$

$[\![Voice3]\!]^g = \lambda x\lambda e.\ praised(x)(e)\ \&\ agent(x)(e)$

$[\![VoiceP]\!]^g = \lambda e.\ praised(zelda)\ \&\ agent(zelda)(e)$

Movement of the anaphor explains restrictions (a) and (b) on Subject Alternatives. For restrictions (c) and (d) we refer, like Ahn, to the locality restrictions of AS operations (whatever their explanation). Narrow focus on *herself* generates the set of alternatives in (14), which satisfies QA-Congruence ([2]). For (10) the analysis derives the intuitively correct meaning in (15).

(14) $\{(Q(praised))(zelda) \mid Q\ in\ D_{eest,\ est}\}$

(15)   'Every time Zelda participates in some type of praising, she participates in self-praising '

Conclusions. We argued that the semantic assumptions in Ahn (2015) are incorrect and that the syntactic assumptions are ad hoc and unnecessary. An account of English *herself* as an arity reducer that QRs is empirically superior. Moreover, it 'derives Principle A' without reference to any syntactic stipulation; both the reflexivizing function of *herself* and its locality are derived by its lexical meaning.

Ahn, B. 2015. Giving reflexivity a voice: twin reflexives in English. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles. [1] Reinhart, T. and E.Reuland. 1993. Reflexivity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 24. [2] Spathas, G. 2010. Focus on anaphora. PhD dissertation, University of Utrecht. [3] Rooth, M. 1992. A theory of focus interpretation.

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