

Thai Anaphor Binding

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Thai anaphors show various behaviours that challenge traditional *Binding* accounts. This talk examines one, *Long-Distance Anaphors* (LDAs), showing how Reuland's (2011) *Feature-Determinacy Approach* can account for them, which motivates an analysis of Thai reflexives as morphologically complex.

The Thai reflexive, **tua.e:ŋ**, is underspecified for person, gender, and number. In (1), the reflexive is constant with varying antecedents.

- (1) p^hlɔj/tɕ^hǎn/p^huak.ràw_i tɕ^hɔ:p tua.e:ŋ_i
Ploy/1SG.F/1PL_i like REFL_i
'Ploy/I/we like(s) self'

The reflexive occurs in subject and object positions; this talk focuses on the latter. Embedded object **tua.e:ŋ** allows local and long-distance subject antecedents (2) (Chen 2021; Deen & Timyam 2018). Distant antecedents are blocked by intervening pronouns with different person specifications.

- (2) a. t^hɣ:_i k^hit wâ: k^hǎw_j bɔ:k wâ: t^hɣ:/man_k tɕ^hom
3SG.F_i think COMP 3SG.M_j say COMP 3SG.F/3SG_k praise
tua.e:ŋ_{i/j/k}
REFL_{i/j/k}
'She thinks he said they praises self'
- b. t^hɣ:_i k^hit wâ: tɕ^hǎn_j bɔ:k wâ: t^hɣ:/man_k tɕ^hom
3SG.F_i think COMP 3SG.M_j say COMP 3SG.F/3SG_k praise
tua.e:ŋ_{*i/*j/k}
REFL_{*i/*j/k}
'She thinks I said they praises self'

In (2b), intervening first person pronouns block long-distance interpretations.

Previous generative analyses (see Hoonchamlong 1991; Narahara 1995) propose multiple lexical entries for **tua.e:ŋ** or add new binding-specific features to Chomsky's (1981) *Binding Theory*. Specifically, [+anaphor], which requires antecedents within the nearest tensed clause, is supplemented with some feature allowing re-indexing higher antecedents.

Here, I demonstrate Reuland’s (2011) *Feature Determinacy Approach* fully accounts for Thai data, unlike previous analyses, without recourse to lexical ambiguity or binding-specific features. In this approach, anaphors can receive interpretations through φ -feature agreement in narrow-syntax (1).

$$(3) \quad \begin{array}{l} [T_{u\phi}^0 [P_{loy_{val\phi}} [v [V_{u\phi} \mathbf{tua.e:\eta}_{u\phi}]]]] \rightarrow \\ [T_{val\phi}^0 [P_{loy_{val\phi}} [v [V_{val\phi} \mathbf{tua.e:\eta}_{val\phi}]]]] \end{array}$$

In (3), T^0 probes *Ploy*, triggering agreement, valuing the features on T^0 . Then, shares its φ -features with V^0 , and V^0 with the anaphor. The $\langle P_{loy}, \mathbf{tua.e:\eta} \rangle$ Chain admits *Ploy* as an antecedent.

However, the Chain $\langle P_{loy}, \mathbf{tua.e:\eta} \rangle$ contains two θ -roles, motivating decomposition of $\mathbf{tua.e:\eta}$ into two morphemes, a simplex-anaphor and self-like element. This compound differentiates arguments for θ -role assignment, without blocking simplex-anaphor Chain formation (Reuland 2011).

Alone, the Chain in (3) cannot explain LDA behaviour in (2). By adapting similar work on Mandarin (Giblin 2015; Reuland, Wong & Everaert 2020), (2) will be accounted for by allowing Chain formation across C^0 .

$$(4) \quad \begin{array}{l} [C_{u\phi}^0 [E_{A_{val\phi}} [T_{u\phi}^0 \dots [C_{u\phi}^0 [E_{A_{val\phi}} [T_{u\phi}^0 \dots \mathbf{tua.e:\eta}_{u\phi}]]]]]] \rightarrow \\ [C_{val\phi}^0 [E_{A_{val\phi}} [T_{val\phi}^0 \dots [C_{val\phi}^0 [E_{A_{val\phi}} [T_{val\phi}^0 \dots \mathbf{tua.e:\eta}_{val\phi}]]]]]] \end{array}$$

In (4), C^0 has unvalued φ -features, and values these by entering the Chain in (3). Feature sharing continues until a differently valued element intercedes. In (4), if the embedded external argument has different person specification, embedded T^0 will share this specification, preventing long-distance Chain formation.

This account explains the behaviour of Thai anaphors and offers new insight into Thai anaphor morphology.

References

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