

Some Problems of Reflexivity and Binding in Paston Letters

Naoko Kishida

1. Introduction.

In this article I examine the distribution of the pronouns and anaphors in Paston Letters; the collection of the letters written by and for the Paston family in the late ME period. In particular I discuss the problems of reflexivity in relation to Binding conditions. Let me cite some relevant examples from Paston Letters; henceforth PL. See (4). The anaphor *himself* is not bound in its governing category S; i. e., Condition A is apparently violated. See also (5). The pronominal *him* is bound in its governing category S. Condition B does not seem to work in PL. I analyze these examples in more detail in the following sections. Section 2 concerns the cases of the violation of Condition A, and Section 3 deals with the problems on Condition B.

(1) Binding Theory: (A) An anaphor is bound in its governing category (B) A pronominal is free in its governing category (C) An R-expression is free. (Chomsky '81:88)

(2) Governing Category: α is the governing category for β if and only if α is the minimal category containing β and a governor of β , where $\alpha = \text{NP or S}$. (Ibid.)

(3) Governor: a category governs its complements in a construction of which it is the head. (e. g. V governs its complements in VP). The potential governors are [+ N, - N, + V, - V] and INFL, which governs the sentence subject when it is tensed. The prep [- N, - V] governs its object. (Chomsky '81:50)

(4) and at Mydsomer I vnderstonde he had not payed Townesende, as hym-selffe tolde me. (PL263036)¹

(5) But that than the saide Sir John Paston grauntith and byndith him (= binds himself) by thise indentures and (PL250020)

2. Condition A.

It has been noted and adduced by various scholars² that in modern languages including presentday English, anaphors can be free in some structural contexts against Condition A. I demonstrate that the *-self* forms of PL which violate Condition A share essentially the same structural contexts with those found in presentday English. Therefore I think that the same principles should take care of these violations of Condition A not only in presentday English but also in PL, whether these principles may belong to grammar or to discourse. See below for relevant examples.

There are classes of predicates which allow their object *-self* forms to be free in their governing category. K. Safir (1992:3) calls these classes "contrastive predicates". See (6) and (7). See (8) ~ (10) for the corresponding examples in PL.

- (6) a. Similarity Predicates (*like, unlike, similar, different*) --I told Albert that physicists *like himself* were a godsend.
b. Comparatives (*more~ , less~ , ~ er than*)--These men believe that Mary would never consider marrying a man *less wealthy than themselves*.
c. Exclusion Predicates (*apart from, but, except, besides, in addition to*)--Milton warned Marsha that she shouldn't trust anyone *but himself*. (K. Safir '92:2-3)

(7) There were five tourists in the room *apart from myself*. vs. *Five tourists talked to myself in the room. Physicists *like yourself* are a godsend. vs. *A famous physicist has just looked at yourself. (Reinhart and Reuland '93:669)

(8) My lorde pulled hym oute of the seid gaole and made to kest hym opon an horse, and tyed an halter by his arme and so ledde hym furth like hym-selfff. (PL659005)

(9) but I am ryght sory that my wyff or eny other chyld or seruant of your shold be in bettyr (= better) favore or trist (= trust) wyth yow then (= than) my-sylff; (PL386024)

(10) And I besech 3owe that this bill be not seyn of non erthely creature safe (= save) only 3our-selfe, &c. (PL415021)

Reinhart and Reuland ('93:671) propose that Condition A applies only to anaphors in an argument position. Other uses are discourse-oriented. Thus in (11) ~ (14), the *-self* forms are not in

argument positions. In their opinion focus is one of the uses of discourse anaphors. As focus, a free *-self* anaphor can occur even in an argument position at S-Structure (Reinhart and Reuland '93:672). See (14). Notice that their proposal covers the cases of the “contrastive predicates” mentioned above.

(11) Max boasted that the queen invited Lucie and himself for a drink. vs. *Max boasted that the queen invited himself for a drink. (Reinhart and Reuland '93:370)

(12) Maxi put the book next to himi / himself. (Reinhart and Reuland '93:686)

(13) John himself would turn down the offer. (Zribi-Hertz '89:701)

(14) This letter was addressed only to myself. (Reinhart and Reuland '93:672)

See below for the corresponding examples in PL. (15) ~ (17) contain anaphors in non-argument positions, and (18) has an anaphor as focus. My conclusion is that the *-self* forms of PL obey the same principles that apply in presentday English.

(15) seyng if hys sone had ben of age, and all the seruauntis he hathe myght be in eny wyse acceptabell to your lordshepp, that they all, and hym-silff in lyek wyse (= like wise), shall be at your comandment whyll he leveh. (PL370022)

(16) If my lord Chaunceler hath lost my bille that I delyuered hym, wherof I sende yow a copie, that thanne ye put up to hym an othir of the same, takyng a copie to your-self. (PL039055)

(17) and specially whether ye your-self deliuered seison in Rutland or noo. (PL062016)

(18) Skypwyth shall telle you suche tydyngys as bethe in this contre, and of Thomas Gorney and of hys man: hym-self is clerk convicte and hys man is hangyn. (PL172029)

3. Condition B.

Condition B asserts that pronouns must be free in some environment; i. e., in its governing category. Reinhart and Reuland (1993:661) says that the environments where pronouns must be free do not appear to vary in languages. They define this environment to be coarguments of the same predicate. Thus see (19)~(21) below. Notice in (20) 'speak with' forms a complex unit to select its argument.

(19) Maxi criticized himselfi / *himi.

(20) Maxi speaks with himselfi / *himi.

(21) Maxi saw a gun near himselfi / *himi.

(Reinhart and Reuland '93:661)

As noted above in Section 1, PL offer lots of examples where simple pronouns are bound in its governing category in violation of Condition

B. They can be classified into those in argument positions and in nonargument positions. The most serious challenge to Condition B seems to be the former cases; i. e., the cases of coarguments (22) ~ (24) and the subject of the infinitives and small clauses (25) ~ (27).

(22) but I was never so well armyd for the werre as I haue now
armyd (= armed) **me** for cold. (PL365021)

(23) Do Gerald of Marlingford com to me, and know were he ys
be-come; in qwat (= what) place he hydyt (= hideth) **hym** (=
himself) he dothe but distroyh **hym-selfff**. do on steward of
Colton, a tenaunte of Marlingford, com to me. (PL102001)

(24) Iff ye be cleer owt off Doctore Aleyn danger, kepe **yow** ther
(PL263057)

(25) John Wortes, that namyth **hym-self** Paston and affermith
(= affirmth) **hym** (= himself) vntrewely to be my cousyn.
(PL002003)

(26) and I agree **me** to hald (= hold) ferme and stable that ye
wryte to my frendys and seruauntys there (PL520013)

(27) wyth weche pepill he help **hym** wele content. (PL189030)

We find in PL what may be regarded as inherently reflexive verbs, probably specified as such in the lexicon. See (28). I think that the pronouns in (29) ~ (31) have inherently assigned dative Case. See K.

Fujita ('93:386).

- (28) a. Psychological Predicates (*fear, doubt, sport, think, etc.*)-Wherefore I fere me sore that Flaundrez will be lost,
(PL777043)
- b. Behavior, Motion (*hie, haste, behave, etc.*)-Item, I wold
3e schuld do Rychard Calle hye (= hie) hym (= himself) of
makeng of alle the acountys, and 3yf nede lete hym gete help;
and kepe Thomas Hunworth stille wyth yow, and be war of
pykyng. (PL187024)
- (29) and, syr, my mayster counceyllid yow that 3e shuld not
spare but gete yow hese goodlordshep. (PL460043)
- (30) for and (= if) he hadnot trustyd thervppon he wold haue
purveyd hym in a nothere place, &c. (PL742012)
- (31) And yf he woll not, lete hym verely vndyrstonde that he shall
be compellyd to fynd hym suerte of the pes, (PL058004)

These facts makes me wonder whether Condition B is really a part of Universal Grammar or only a parameter of UG. There may be ad-hoc solutions such as positing a bound anaphor homophonous with a simple pronoun, but it lacks independent motivations.

Footnotes

1. The first three numbers denote the letter number, and the rest, the line number.

2. See Zribi-Hertz '89 and the reference cited there.

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