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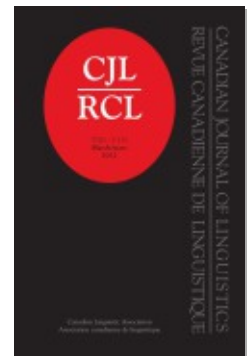
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## The syntax of Southern American English personal datives: An anti-locality account

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## *Squibs* *Notules*

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### *The syntax of Southern American English personal datives: An anti-locality account*

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#### 1. AN OVERVIEW

Southern American English licenses personal dative constructions (Horn 2008), also known as coreferential dative constructions (Al-Zahre and Boneh 2010). The sentences in (1) are a few examples; they contain nonsubcategorized pronominal arguments that are obligatorily coreferential with the subject. These unselected pronouns are dative case-marked in languages like Hebrew and Arabic — thus the name personal dative — but they are not overtly dative in Southern American English.

- (1) a. I'm gonna buy *me* a shot gun, just as long as I am tall.  
(Jimmie Rodgers, "T for Texas")
- b. I'm gonna grab/catch *me* a freight train. (various songs)
- c. When I was a young girl, I had *me* a cowboy.  
(John Prine, "Angel From Montgomery")  
(from Horn 2008:169–170, 2a–c)

Being unselected arguments means that personal datives (hereafter PDs) do not belong to the thematic grid of the predicate. Proof that this is the case comes from the fact that their deletion in (1) does not alter the truth conditions of the sentences. As Horn (2008:173) notes, PDs receive case but no theta role; in this sense "they do not represent true datives/receipients/goals". As (2) illustrates, a PD may be used in structures that already contain a recipient or a beneficiary.

- (2) He's gonna buy *him*/\**himself* a pickup for his son. (from Horn 2008:172, (9a))

On the other hand, PDs do make a non-truth-conditional contribution to the content. Weibelhuth and Dannenberg (2006) call them "pragmatic intensifiers [that] serve to underscore the agent's role in the action"; to the authors, the PDs in (3) (in original ex. 6) highlight the import of the accomplishments carried out by the subjects. Similarly, Horn (2008:181) holds that the use of PDs implies that "the speaker assumes

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that the action expressed has or would have a positive effect on the subject, typically satisfying the subject's perceived intention or goals".

- (3) a. She bought *her* a house.  
b. They cut *them* some logs.

What is important for the purpose of this squib is that the PDs in (1–3) seem to violate Condition B of Binding Theory by being realized in positions where reflexive pronouns are expected. This means that sentence (3a) should be realized as (4).

- (4) She bought *herself* a house.

Although (4) is grammatical, it does not mean the same as (3a). The reflexive pronoun in (4), unlike the PD in (3a), indicates that the subject is necessarily a beneficiary. This is why if a sentence already contains a recipient, only a PD but not a reflexive pronoun is grammatical, as (5) illustrates. Also, compare (6a) and (6b). Only (6a) indicates that selling some toothbrushes will solve a financial problem that the subject faces.

- (5) She bought *her/\*herself* a house for her son.  
(6) a. I only need to sell *me* a dozen more toothbrushes.  
b. I only need to sell *myself* a dozen more toothbrushes.

(from Conroy 2007:67, 13a–b)

The sentences in (3) through (6) seem to indicate that the distribution of PDs is different from the distribution of reflexive pronouns. In the following section, I explain why this is the case. More specifically, I explain why PDs are not realized as reflexive pronouns. The analysis is based on the movement approach to Binding Theory (Hornstein 2001, Kayne 2002, and Grohmann 2003) and Grohmann's (2003) Antilocality Hypothesis. The movement approach I adopt here argues that the suffix *-self* on reflexive pronouns is the result of movement and antilocality restrictions on the minimal distance an element must move. I show that PDs are not derivationally related to their antecedent via movement. Therefore, they are not subject to the same antilocality restrictions, which is why they may not surface as *-self* anaphors.

## 2. WHY PDS ARE NOT REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Condition B of Binding Theory states that a pronoun should be locally free. Therefore, by allowing a pronoun to be coreferential with a local, c-commanding antecedent, personal dative constructions violate Condition B. How can we account for this violation in a principled way?

A couple of answers have been provided in the literature regarding why PDs are not reflexive pronouns. Webelhuth and Dannenberg's (2006) is one account. The authors analyze Southern American English PD constructions in the framework of Construction Grammar (Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor 1988). They conclude that PD constructions are "the result of a cluster of syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and morphological information". They add that this information is so language-specific

and highly idiomatic that it cannot be accounted for by a syntactic theory that tries to capture universal rules like Principles and Parameters (Chomsky 1981) and its recent incarnation as the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995).

Another explanation, albeit a brief one, is offered by Joutiteau and Rezac (2007) and Horn (2008) who attribute the pronominal rather than anaphoric nature of PDs — and thus their exemption from Condition B — to their status as nonarguments. Following Pollard and Sag (1992) and Reinhart and Reuland (1993), Horn holds that only co-arguments are subject to Condition B.

Over the last decade, there have been proposals to reduce Binding Theory, mainly Conditions A and B, to movement (Hornstein 2001, Kayne 2002, Grohmann 2003). Sections 2.1 and 2.2 offer an overview of Binding Theory as movement and highlight the interaction between movement and the Anti-locality Hypothesis. Section 2.3 discusses the implications of the movement approach for PD constructions.

## 2.1 Reflexive pronouns as the outcome of movement

Binding Theory as proposed in Chomsky (1981, 1986) states that an anaphor must be locally bound, while a pronoun must be locally free. The former restriction is known as Condition A, and the latter as Condition B.

Hornstein (2001) dismisses Binding Theory on theoretical grounds and attributes the restrictions outlined in Conditions A and B to movement. The focus is on reflexive pronouns or *-self* anaphors. Consider sentence (7a), for example. Hornstein (2001:159–161) holds that (7a) has the derivation in (7b–c). *Sue* undergoes first merge with *-self*, and [[*Sue*] *self*] merges with *V loves*. *Sue* takes on the internal theta-role, while *-self* checks the accusative case feature. *Sue* copies out of the lower position and merges with Spec,vP, where it takes on the external theta-role. This is followed by the movement of *Sue* to Spec,IP, where it checks nominative case.

- (7) a. Sue loves herself.  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> Sue [<sub>VP</sub> Sue<sup>θ2-NOM</sup> [<sub>VP</sub> loves [[*Sue*<sup>θ1</sup>] *self*<sup>ACC</sup>]]]]

Note that the two copies of *Sue* are in a c-command relation. According to Nunes (2004), if both copies are pronounced, they induce a violation of Kayne's (1994:33) Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA) as stated in (8).

(8) *The Linear Correspondence Axiom:*

Let X, Y be nonterminals and x, y terminals such that X dominates x and Y dominates y. Then if X asymmetrically c-commands Y, x precedes y.

According to Kayne, linear order in a structure is a precedence relation that is regulated by hierarchical structure. If a non-terminal X c-commands a non-terminal Y, this means that X precedes Y. By the same token, every terminal that is dominated by X precedes the terminals that are dominated by Y. In (7b), the two copies of *Sue* are in a c-command relationship. This means that the same element precedes and follows itself. Therefore, if both copies are phonologically realized, the structure cannot be mapped into a linear order at PF. One way to salvage the derivation, according to Nunes, is through the deletion of the lower copy in (7b), assuming that this is the copy with fewer checked features. Thus, the lower copy of *Sue* is marked for

deletion, (9a). However, according to Hornstein, given that *-self* is a bound pronoun, *Sue* is substituted for by the pronoun *her*, and the outcome is the reflexive pronoun *herself* (9b).

- (9) a.  $[_{IP} \text{ Sue } [_{VP} \text{ Sue}^{\theta 2-NOM} [_{VP} \text{ loves } [ [_{Sue}^{\theta 1}] \text{ self}^{ACC} ] ] ] ] ] ]$   
 b.  $[_{IP} \text{ Sue } [_{VP} \text{ Sue} [_{VP} \text{ loves } [HER+self] ] ] ] ]$

If the derivation in (7) and (9) is correct, the question is: Why is (10a) ungrammatical? As the potential derivation in (10b–c) demonstrates, it could still be argued that *Sue* adjoins to *-self* before merging in the subordinate clause. *Sue* then moves to the matrix clause while *-self* is stranded. The lower copy of *Sue* is marked for deletion, and the pronoun *her* is inserted to satisfy the morphological requirement of *-self* as a bound morpheme.

- (10) a. \*Sue thinks that herself loves Tom.  
 b.  $[_{IP} \text{ Sue } [_{VP} \text{ thinks } [_{CP} \text{ that } [_{IP} [ [_{Sue}] \text{ self} ] [_{VP} [ \text{Sue-self} ] \text{ loves Tom} ] ] ] ] ] ] ] ]$   
 c.  $[_{IP} \text{ Sue } [_{VP} \text{ thinks } [_{CP} \text{ that } [_{IP} [HER+self] ] [_{VP} [ \text{Sue-self} ] \text{ loves Tom} ] ] ] ] ] ] ] ]$

According to Hornstein, sentence (10a) is ruled out by the locality conditions on movement: “Anaphors and their antecedents are proximate because conditions on movement forbid a more distant relation between the two” (Hornstein 2001:154). It is not clear, however, how to measure locality, proximity, and distant relations. Grohmann (2003) builds on Hornstein (2001) and provides more measurable means to explain these terms. The following section spells out the details. For yet another movement analysis of Binding Theory, see Kayne (2002).

## 2.2 Binding, movement, and the Anti-locality Hypothesis

Grohmann (2003) argues that there are restrictions, not only on the maximum distance a syntactic object may move (locality constraints), but also on the minimal distance it is allowed to move (anti-locality constraints). He divides the clause into three domains:

- (i) the  $\Theta$ -Domain, which is responsible for thematic relations;
- (ii) the  $\Phi$ -Domain, which is responsible for agreement information; and
- (iii) the  $\Omega$ -Domain, which is in charge of discourse information.

These domains correspond to vP, IP, and CP, respectively. The anti-locality hypothesis which Grohmann proposes holds that movement within a single Prolific Domain is not allowed, thus positing a measurable method for determining the minimal distance for movement. Grohmann calls this restriction the Condition on Domain Exclusivity (CDE).

Does this mean that movement within a Prolific Domain is prohibited across the board? According to Grohmann, this type of movement is allowed—or probably overlooked—by the CDE only if “it spells out the lower copy” (2003:108). One problem is that, as we saw above, the LCA and the conditions on linearization as proposed in Nunes (2004) disallow two identical copies in a precedence relation derived

through movement to be pronounced in the same structure. According to Grohmann, the computational system may circumvent this problem by replacing the lower copy by “an item from the inventory” of the language — “a (default) filler” — that looks phonologically different but is interpreted as the original copy. Reflexive pronouns, Grohmann suggests, are such fillers; “they are treated as the Copy Spell Out of the moving element ... repair[ing] an otherwise illicit movement,” thus satisfying the CDE (2003:107–112).

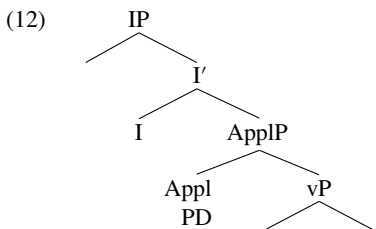
Therefore, according to Grohmann, sentence (7a) has the derivation in (11). The derivation starts with the numeration in (11a). *Sue* and *love* undergo first merge (11b). In (11c), vP projects, but there is no item in the numeration that can merge in Spec,vP. This is why *Sue* moves to Spec,vP and the lower copy is marked for deletion. Notice that this movement violates the CDE because it takes place within the same Prolific Domain — in this case, the  $\Theta$ -Domain. This is when the *-self* anaphor is inserted as a default filler in order to repair an otherwise illicit movement (11d). The structure converges as (11e).

- (11) a. LA = {*Sue*, *love*, *v*, *V*, *I*}  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> loves Sue]  
 c. [<sub>VP</sub> Sue [<sub>VP</sub> loves ~~Sue~~ ]]  
 d. [<sub>VP</sub> Sue [<sub>VP</sub> loves herself ]]  
 e. [<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>IP</sub> Sue [<sub>VP</sub> ~~Sue~~ [<sub>VP</sub> loves herself ] ] ]]

Admittedly, this approach is not without problems. For example, as Grohmann (2003:296) points out, it may be taken to violate the Inclusiveness Condition (Chomsky 2000:113), which indicates that no new features or items other than those in the numeration may be introduced during the derivation. Beyond Grohmann’s suggestions for a way out, I would like to suggest that one way to circumvent this problem is to consider *-self* anaphors on a par with dummy *do*, which is inserted as a default filler to save the derivation — arguably in line with Hornstein’s (2001) and Grohmann’s (2003) conception of “grammatical formatives”.

### 2.3 Movement, anti-locality, and personal datives

We saw in the introduction that PDs are nonsubcategorized arguments since they do not belong to the thematic grid of the predicate. In this sense, they fall outside the  $\Theta$ -Domain or vP. Boneh and Nash (2010), building on Pylkkänen (2002/2008), argue that PDs merge as high applicatives above vP, as (12) illustrates. See also Roberge and Troberg (2009:251).

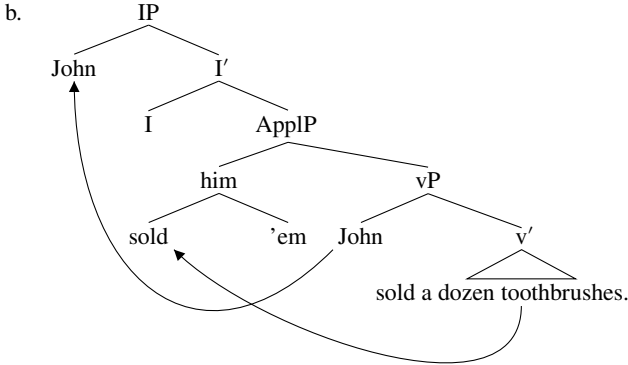


In addition, given that PDs are related to the whole event depicted by vP rather than to an object inside vP, it is reasonable to assume that ApplP takes vP as a complement. Proof comes from the following observation (based on Cuervo 2003): PDs may be used in double-object constructions in which an indirect object is related to the internal argument or direct object (13); see also (2). Note that the referent of the PD in (13) does not possess the car; the PD is linked to the accomplishment of buying a car expressed by the whole vP, which is an indication that the ApplP in (13) is a high rather than low applicative and that it takes vP as a complement.

(13) I bought *me* a nice car *for my daughter*.

If the above discussion is on the right track, we now have a way to account for the non-reflexive nature of PDs. Take the PD construction (14a), for example. Derivationally, (14a) looks like (14b). The subject *John* undergoes first merge in Spec,vP, while the PD *him* undergoes first merge in ApplP above vP. *John* moves to Spec,IP. After that, C<sup>0</sup> projects and the structure converges. Note that the *verb* sold in (14b) undergoes head movement to ApplP in order to obtain the right word order and to satisfy a requirement of the PD to cliticize to the verb. This requirement is typical of PDs cross-linguistically (Jouitteau and Rezac 2007:98 and works cited therein). This may explain why pronouns like *him* and *them* in Southern American English are realized as *'em* (see Conroy 2007:80–81).

(14) a. John sold him a dozen toothbrushes.



Under usual assumptions, *him* in (14a) is coreferential with *John* and is thus expected to be realized as a locally-bound reflexive pronoun. However, we learnt in Section 2.2 that reflexive pronouns are not the result of locality; they are the result of movement and the anti-locality restrictions on movement. The derivation in (14b) shows that *him* and *John* are not related through movement. More specifically, no movement of the PD within the same prolific domain is involved. Therefore, no reflexive pronoun is needed to salvage the derivation.

Compare (14) to (15). Sentence (15a) contains a reflexive pronoun. As (15b) shows, *John* starts out as an internal argument of *sold* — or, in Pykkänen’s (2008) terms, as a low rather than high applicative — before it moves to Spec,vP where it takes on the external theta role of the predicate. This movement takes place within

the same Prolific Domain, the  $\Theta$ -Domain, which is a violation of the CDE. In order for the derivation to be salvaged, the lower copy of *John* needs to be pronounced. However, pronouncing the lower copy along with the copy of *John* that eventually lands in Spec,IP is a violation of the LCA in (8) above. One way around this problem is by replacing the lower copy of *John* with a default filler: an element that phonologically looks different but that may be interpreted the same. This filler is the *-self* anaphor *himself* (15c).

- (15) a. John sold himself a dozen toothbrushes.  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> John [<sub>VP</sub> sold [John] [a dozen toothbrushes] ]]  
 c. [<sub>CP</sub>[IP John [<sub>VP</sub> John [<sub>VP</sub> sold [himself] [a dozen toothbrushes] ] ] ] ]

A word about the derivation of the PD construction in (14) is in order. The movement of the subject over ApplP seems to violate minimality. Given that *him* is closer to Spec,IP than *John*, *him* rather than *John* should move to the subject position. Closer examination, however, shows that *him* is not an appropriate candidate for movement to Spec,IP. The reason is that *him* — or *'em* — is a head rather than a phrasal structure (see Cuervo 2003 for a similar observation). According to the Structure Preservation Hypothesis (Emonds 1976), only phrasal structures can move to specifier positions; heads may only move to head positions.<sup>1</sup> This means that *John* is the closest appropriate candidate for movement to Spec,IP; it may move over *him* without violating minimality.

The claim that PDs are heads goes against Horn's (2008) observation that PDs are weak pronouns à la Cardinaletti and Starke (1996, 1999). According to Cardinaletti and Starke, there are two types of defective pronouns: weak pronouns and clitics. The former are phrasal structures, while the latter are heads. Evidence that PDs are heads or clitics comes from the fact that, unlike weak pronouns, PDs may not be realized with full NPs. Take (16) and (17) for example. In (16a) the weak pronoun *'em* is an indirect object or a low applicative; it may be realized with the epithet *idiots*, in which case *'em idiots* has the phrasal structure in (16b) (see Abney 1987). The same is not true about *'em* in (17a); the PD may not be realized with an epithet. Note that (17a) becomes acceptable if the epithet is deleted, as (17b) illustrates. This is an indication that the pronoun in (16) is a weak pronoun/phrasal structure, while the PD in (17) is a clitic/head.

- (16) a. I got *'em idiots* some new toys.  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> [<sub>D</sub> 'em] [<sub>NP</sub> idiots] ]  
 (17) a. \*They got *'em idiots* some new toys for their kids.  
 b. They got *'em* some new toys for their kids.

It is worth mentioning that a PD in Southern American English may be realized as *X's ass*, as Horn (2008:179, ex. 22c) points out:

<sup>1</sup>The Structure Preservation Hypothesis is maintained in Bare Phrase Structure via the Uniformity Condition (Chomsky 1995). For a detailed discussion and application, see Donati (2005, Section 4). For an alternative way to maintain the Structure Preservation Hypothesis in the Minimalist Program without resorting to the Uniformity Condition, see Nunes (1998).



(18) Movies, I love *my ass* some funny movies.

This seems to indicate that PDs may in fact be phrasal. However, according to Horn, examples like (18) are very uncommon. He holds that “there are well over 1.5 million Google hits for *I love my ass* (. . .), but virtually all with literal rather than metonymic reference”.

In addition, the few examples with *X’s ass* in Horn (2008) and online seem to indicate that the subject is necessarily the recipient/beneficiary; that is, *X’s ass* seems to function as the *-self* anaphor in (19). While sentences like (20a) are possible — albeit very rare — Google hits, sentences like (20b) are not. In other words, I was not able to find an example with *X’s ass* and a separate internal argument. Compare to (21); the sentence contains both a PD and a recipient/beneficiary.

(19) I love *myself* some fried chicken. (Google hit)

(20) a. I bought *my ass* three shirts saying . . .

b. \*I bought *my ass* three shirts for *my boyfriend*.

(21) I bought *me* a gift for *my daughter*. (Google hit)

### 3. CONCLUSION

The construal of binding relations in terms of movement was suggested by Chomsky (1973), who holds that “in the syntactic domain in which a moved NP can bind its trace, an NP can bind an anaphor (–R), but it cannot bind a pronoun or any non-anaphor (+R)” (in Reuland and Reinhart 1993:693). Let us assume that both anaphors and traces are derived by movement. The former are realized as reflexive pronouns because they are the outcome of movement within the same Prolific Domain. The latter are deleted copies because they are the result of movement across Prolific Domains. This means that if PDs are not linked to their antecedent through movement, there is no reason for them to be realized as anaphors or to be deleted.

If this analysis is correct, PDs provide empirical proof that Binding Theory and the choice between anaphors and free pronouns are the result of movement and anti-locality restrictions rather than binding and locality. As Reuland (2001:441) observes, “the well-formedness of binding anaphors or pronominals is subject to locality conditions . . . however, since locality cannot be a characteristic of interpretive dependencies per se, such a step would only state the problem, rather than solve it.” PDs show that locality constraints as stated in Binding Theory are only central in their relation to movement rather than in the choice between anaphors and free pronouns. *-Self* anaphors obtain derivationally; they are the outcome of movement, and this explains their interpretation dependency. PDs are not linked to their antecedent derivationally. Therefore, despite their apparent locality, PDs are not realized as *-self* anaphors.

Of course, the question that follows is: How can we explain the interpretation dependency of PDs? In other words, why do they have to be coreferential with the subject? Suggestions have been made in the literature (see for example Borer and Grodzinsky 1986), but more work needs to be done. I leave this topic for future research.

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