

The processing of logophoric reflexives shows discourse and locality constraints

Reflexives and pronouns are pronominal forms that lack referential content. In order to be interpreted, they must get their content from an antecedent in the sentence, or from the discourse. Typically, the interpretation is governed by syntactic constraints on a local binding domain (Chomsky, 1981). For example, a reflexive may corefer with only a syntactically local antecedent (*Nancy_i excused herself_i* vs. **Nancy_i said that John excused herself_i*), whereas a pronoun shows a complementary distribution, corefering with only a non-local antecedent (*Nancy_i said that John excused her_i* vs. **Nancy_i excused her_i*). However, the logophoric use of reflexives, as in (1), has been argued to be accomplished by non-syntactic means, such as accessing discourse information (Koster & Reuland, 1991; Reinhart & Reuland, 1993).

- 1) Albert_i was upset that Mary had endangered Gordon and himself_i on the climbing trip.

While recent psycholinguistic evidence has shown that the processing of logophoric reflexives does not reflect syntactic constraints (Harris, Wexler, & Holcomb, 2000; Piñango, Burkhardt, & Avrutin, 2001), the present study examined whether the processing of logophors does in fact reflect the use of discourse information. Since the interpretation of a pronoun necessitates the use of discourse and pragmatic information, pronouns offer a good comparison to determine whether discourse/pragmatic information is similarly accessed for logophoric resolution. The surface distance between a pronominal and its antecedent was also varied (3 - 5) to discern the role of clause-boundedness (locality) for the processing of these constructions. If the reading time profiles for logophoric reflexives and pronouns are similar, this would constitute evidence for the use of discourse information in interpreting logophoric reflexives.

- 3) Albert_i was upset when Susan didn't care that Mary had endangered Gordon and him/self_i on the climbing trip.
- 4) Susan was upset when Albert_i didn't care that Mary had endangered Gordon and him/self_i on the climbing trip.
- 5) Mary was upset when Susan didn't care that Albert_i had endangered Gordon and him/self_i on the climbing trip.

Self-paced reading time measures for the spillover area (*on the climbing trip*) showed that logophors were processed similarly to pronouns when the antecedent was non-local, as in (3) and (4). However, when the antecedent was in the same clause as the pronominal, reading times for the logophor and pronoun sentences differed. For sentences like (5), the logophoric reflexive version was processed significantly faster than the pronoun version (218 ms). As well, it was processed significantly faster than logophor versions with other antecedent positions (3 & 4; 110 ms, average).

These preliminary data suggest that the resolution of logophoric reflexives does require access to discourse information (3 & 4). However, logophoric reflexives also show a processing bias indicative of a locality constraint (5). While it remains to be determined whether the processing of other types of logophoric constructions will lead to similar conclusions, these experimental results make a case for the inclusion of processing constraints to fully account for the distribution and nature of pronominals.

References

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