

## Local binding without co-argumenthood: Norwegian noun phrases

1. Introduction Coargumenthood has been a central concept in both LFG and other approaches to binding theory. Binding is then basically a relation between arguments of the same predicate (see for example Hellan 1988, Dalrymple 1993, Reinhart and Reuland 1993, Pollard and Sag 1994, Bresnan 2001, Safir 2004). Reflexives that are not bound by a coargument are considered long distance or 'exempt' reflexives.

A typical representative of the coargument theory is Hellan 1988, who proposed that Norwegian uses complex reflexives in local binding - understood as coargument binding - and simple reflexives in non-local binding. In this theory, it is necessary to assume that reflexives in adjuncts are long-distance reflexives, required by the anti-subject orientation of Norwegian pronouns. However, the author has shown that reflexives in adjuncts behave just like reflexives in complements. For example, they are complex as the main rule (except in locatives). Cf. 1.

(1) Mobberne må stanses (...) av hensyn til **seg selv**  
harassers-DEF must stop-PASS out-of concern for REFL SELF  
The harassers must be stopped out of concern for themselves

The author's alternative view of Norwegian reflexives can be summarized as follows: The local binding domain is the clause. Both simple and complex reflexives can be locally bound, and the choice between them is semantically determined. Again, only simple reflexives can be long distance bound (but this concept now has a more narrow definition).

Coargumenthood has also been claimed to be decisive to binding in noun phrases in for example Norwegian (Hellan 1988) and German (Zifonun 2003). This paper will show that this is not correct for Norwegian noun phrases, which turn out to give new arguments against the coargument theory in general. Based mainly upon examples from texts, I will show that POSS can bind a reflexive without the requirement that POSS or the reflexive is (part of) an argument of the noun. I will also show that the distribution of simple and complex reflexives in noun phrases is different from what has been claimed, and that their distribution is incompatible with their traditional analysis in Hellan 1988.

2. POSS binding adjuncts Hellan 1988:154 states that "In NP-internal binding (i.e. when the binder is in an argument position relative to a noun) of a seg-reflexive, a host of the reflexive and the binder must be semantic co-arguments." (Note that 'seg-reflexive' includes reflexive possessives.)

However, reflexives in adjuncts can be bound by POSS, as in 2-3.

(2) Solskjær's konklusjon på **sin** egen hjemmeside  
Solskjær's conclusion on REFL-POSS own home-page  
Solskjær's conclusion on his own home page  
(3) Gjelstens svar på vegne av **seg selv** og kona  
Gjelsten's answer on behalf of REFL SELF and wife-DEF  
Gjelsten's answer on behalf of himself and his wife

Reflexives that are bound by POSS can be adjuncts of the noun. This cannot be due to any "anti-POSS orientation" of Norwegian pronouns. It is not unexpected, however, considering that adjuncts in clauses are part of the local domain (see 1 above).

Reflexives that are bound by POSS can also be part of an embedded noun phrase, which must be taken to violate Hellan's condition. Cf. 4.

(4) LDs finansiering til forskningsinstitutter i **sin** sektor  
LD's funding to research-institutes in REFL-POSS sector  
LD's funding for research institutes in its sector

3. Non-argument POSS binders The rule in Hellan 1988:154 (above) predicts that only a thematic POSS can bind a reflexive. A similar generalization can be found in Faarlund et al. 1997:1166-67. However, a non-argument POSS can bind a reflexive, examples are 5-6.

(5) deres tid til **seg selv**  
their time to REFL SELF  
their time for themselves

(6) hans medaljer fra **sin** tid i Liverpool  
his medals from REFL-POSS time in Liverpool  
his medals from his time in Liverpool

We see, then, that not only thematic POSS can bind a reflexive. This seems to be an argument for the classical LFG idea of POSS as one syntactic function independent of thematicity.

It must be admitted, however, that the data raises some problems. One question is if it can be considered obligatory for a genitive to bind a reflexive. Some informants accept sentences with pronominals instead of reflexives (Aass 1979:404-6). What conditions the choice is not known. One factor that seems to be relevant is point of view.

Both Hellan 1988:154 and Faarlund et al 1997:1167 give unacceptable sentences like 7 to back their thematicity constraint.

7 \*Jons venner fra **sin** studietid skrev en vakker nekrolog over ham (Hellan 1988:154)  
Jon's friends from REFL-POSS study-time wrote a nice obituary on him  
Jon's friends from his student days wrote a nice obituary on him

It is not clear why 7 is not good. However, it is not perfect with a pronominal instead of a reflexive possessive. The possessive sounds redundant; Norwegian prefers less use of possessors than for example English.

4. Simple and complex reflexives in noun phrases The traditional view of simple and complex reflexives generates two predictions concerning the distribution of simple and complex reflexives in noun phrases.

First, a possessive should not bind a simple reflexive in a noun phrase (claimed in Faarlund et al 1997:1166). This follows if the simple reflexive is a long distance reflexive, because long distance reflexives must be anteceded by subjects. However, simple reflexives bound by possessives are used in locative PPs, like 8.

(8) hans verden rundt **seg**  
his world round REFL  
his world around him

Second, a reflexive in a noun phrase with argument structure should be simple if it is bound by the subject of the sentence (Hellan 1988:69). This follows from its not being a coargument with the subject. Hellan 1988:69 gives 9 as an example (his question marks).

(9) ??Jon leste noen omtaler av **seg selv** (Hellan 1988:69, his question marks)  
Jon read some reviews of REFL SELF  
Jon read some reviews of himself

However, searching the web shows that the complex reflexive is commonly used with *omtale* 'review' and comparable nominalizations, even when there is no internal binder in the noun phrase. Examples are 10-11.

(10) Hun (..) støvsuger nettet etter artikler og omtale av **seg selv**  
she vacuums net-DEF after articles and mentions of REFL SELF  
She vacuums the net for articles and mentions of herself

(11) arbeidsfolk (..) støtter angrep mot **seg selv**  
workers support attacks on REFL SELF  
Workers support attacks on themselves

With many nominalizations, both the simple and the complex reflexive can be found. There seem to be a variety of factors involved, including emphasis, expectedness, etc.

Note that the traditional view cannot save itself by saying that the 'selv' part is emphatic, because uncontroversial long distance reflexives cannot have the 'selv' element.

The variation between simple and complex reflexives shows that noun phrases are not necessarily separate binding domains. When the complex reflexive is used, one has to assume that the subject is a local binder. When the simple reflexive is used, one has to assume (as in the coargument analysis) that the noun phrase is a separate binding domain, which means that these are cases of long distance binding. The conclusion that noun phrases are not necessarily binding domains are supported by research on English, see for example Keller and Asudeh 2001, Asudeh and Keller 2001.