BINDING OF CLITIC AND NON-CLITIC PRONOUNS IN OSSETIC [*]

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In this talk, I will

> - Describe classes of noun phrases w.r.t. their binding properties in Ossetic
> - Advance a conjecture about cross-linguistic binding properties of bound possessive pronouns
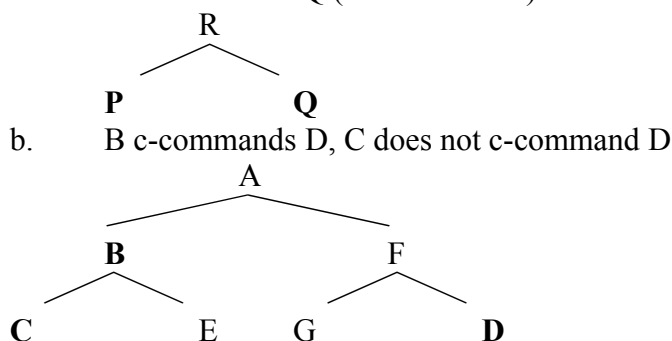
1. CLASSICAL BINDING THEORY

CHOMSKY (1981, 1980); REINHART (1983)
Syntactic binding: NP_1 syntactically binds NP_2, if they are coindexed and NP_1 c-commands NP_2

- co-indexed: roughly speaking, refer to the same linguistic entity
- c[onstituent]-command: a relationship between tree nodes:

A c-commands B, if any node dominating A dominates B as well, and neither of them dominates the other.

(1) a. P c-commands Q (and vice versa)

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            R
          /   \
        P       Q
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b. B c-commands D, C does not c-command D

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              A
           /     \
         B         F
        / \       / \
       C   E     G   D
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Three classes of nominals:
R-EXPRESSIONS (dog, cat, President of Ruritania *etc*)
PRONOMINALS (I, you, her *etc*)
ANAPHORS (herself, each other *etc*)
BINDING CONDITIONS:
CONDITION A An anaphor must be bound in its local domain.
CONDITION B A pronominal must be free in its local domain.
CONDITION C An R-expression must be free.

- A CHALLENGE: Cross-linguistically, there are grounds to define more classes of nominals and of binding domains.

Non-IPA symbols used in the handout: *c = ts; č = tʃ; š = ʃ; ž = ʒ; dž = ʤ.* Glosses are listed on p. 9.

- An alternative: to recognize that each language has it own classes of nominals, and that each class satisfies an appropriate binding condition. However, the format of such condition is universal.

General format of a binding principle (Büring 2005):

> ❖ A nominal of class X must be bound/free in its domain
> ❖ Description of the domain

- Disclaimer: It is still an oversimplification, but one much better approximating the reality.
- I will not discuss more drastic modifications, like Pollard & Sag (1992) and Reinhart & Reuland (1993): their main thrust is to cope with some intricacies of the English reflexive binding.

2. OSSETIC
- Two closely related Eastern Iranian idioms: Iron and Digor
- Examples will be mostly from Digor. As far as I know, the two idioms are identical as to their binding properties.
- Consistently head-final (although the constituent order in affirmative clauses is in principle fairly free)
- No grammatical gender (a convenient feature for creating binding ambiguities)
- Minimal evidence for the existence of the VP, no evidence I am aware of for a non-flat structure of VP
- Normally nominative subjects, no ergativity, the verb only agrees with the subject:

(2)　　　　*ez　ječi　eχca　gʷesχan-me　ravard-**ton***
　　　　　　I.NOM　that　money　G-ALL　　　give.PST-PST.1SG
　　　　　　'I gave Gwaskhan that money.' Aghuzarti A.

- Few verbs with "weird" semantic role – syntactic function relationship:

'to want': the wanter in the oblique, forms other than 3SG do not exist.

(3)　　a.　*aχur　　ken-un=ba=**de**　　qeber　**fend-uj***
　　　　　　learning　do-INF=CTR=ACC.2SG　very　want-PRS.3SG
　　　　　　'But you very much want to learn.' Aghuzarti A.

　　　　b.　*wyj=me　　fend-y* (Iron)
　　　　　　it=ACC.1SG　want-PRS.3SG
　　　　　　'I want it.'

'to need' the needer in the oblique, the needee is the nominative subject:

(4)　　　　*me=suvellantt-i　　кew-**un***
　　　　　　POSS.1SG=kid-PL-OBL　need-PRS.1SG
　　　　　　'My children need me."

'to succeed in doing something': the logical subject is in the dative:

(5)　　　　*ermest=in　nebal　　bantast-**ej**　　ječi　кuddag*
　　　　　　only=DAT.3SG　no.more　succeed-PST.3PL　that　thing
　　　　　　'But he had never managed to do that any more.' Aghuzarti A.

Dative-marked logical subjects in certain copular constructions

(6)　　a.　*wazal=**min**　ej*
　　　　　　cold=DAT.1SG　be.PRS.3SG
　　　　　　'I am cold.'

　　　　b.　*men-**en**　　cew-en　　ne　jes*
　　　　　　I.OBL-DAT　　go-NMZ　NEG　exists

'I cannot go.' Maliti V.

3. INVENTORY OF NOMINALS IN OSSETIC
- Lexical noun phrases, various indefinites...
- Reciprocal pronouns
- Reflexive pronouns
- Full personal pronouns
- Argumental enclitics
- Possessive proclitics / prefixes

3.0 LEXICAL NOUN PHRASES (AKA R-EXPRESSIONS)
- Must be free in their sentence, nothing unexpected.

3.1 RECIPROCALS

Iron *kɐrɐzi*; Digor *kɐrɐdže-*

Remark Its etymology is obscure, apparently it is a loanword. To have a loanword for a reciprocal is not that unusual, for instance, many Pamiri languages use the Tajiki word *amdigar* (Sokolova 1960 for Bartangi, Bashir 2009 for Wakhi)
Possess all case forms except the nominative.
- Binding conditions:
Totally well-behaved (provided we accept the fact that VP in Ossetic is flat).
Reciprocals have to be bound by something c-commanding them:

(7) a. *soslan ɐma medin-ɐn ne bantastej*
S and M-DAT NEG succeed

kɐrɐdže-j baleder-un
each.other-OBL understand-INF

b. **kɐrɐdžem-ɐn ne bantastej*
each.other-OBL NEG succeed

soslan ɐma medin-i baleder-un
S and M-OBL understand-INF
'Soslan and Madina did not manage to understand each other.'

The binder can be any case-marked NP, but not the complement of an adposition:

(8) a. *kizgutt-i **kɐrɐdžem-ɐn** bavdiston*
girls-OBL each.other-DAT I.showed

b. **kɐrɐdže-j** *kizgutt-ɐn bavdiston*
each.other-OBL girls-DAT I.showed
'I showed the girls to each other.'

c. *soslan ɐma medin-ɐn* **ɐnɐ** **kɐrɐdžem-ej** *ceren*
S. and M-DAT without each.other-ABL live-NMZ

ne j
NEG be.PRS.3SG

d. ***kɐrɐdžem-ɐn** *ɐnɐ soslan ɐma medin-ej cer-ɐn*
each.other-DAT without S and M-ABL live-NMZ

ne j
NEG be.PRS.3SG

3.2 REFLEXIVES
3.2.1 Morphology
- simplex reflexives: self-case
(9) a. *[χe-cɐj ɐppɐl-un]=ba womej ɐgadɐ-dɐr ɐj*

self-ABL   praise-INF=CTR it.ABL   shameful-COMPis

'But to praise oneself is more shameful than that.' Iræf

- complex reflexives: possessive clitic = self-case *mɐ=χe-cɐn* 'myself.DAT'
- The distribution of simplex and complex forms has nothing to do with binding proper.
- The latter are much more common, and it is their behavior that I will discuss.

Similarly to the reciprocals, reflexives can be bound by any NP argument of the verb:

(10)   a.   *ɐᵢ=χe-mɐ*   *soslan-iᵢ*   *bavdiston*

              POSS.3SG=self-ALL   S-OBL   I.showed

      b.   *soslan-mɐᵢ*   *ɐᵢ=χe*   *bavdiston*

              S-ALL   POSS.3SG=self I.showed

              'I showed Soslanᵢ to himselfᵢ.'

However, the subject has a priority as a binder:

(11)   *mistɐᵢ* *χɐfš-iⱼ*   *ɐnɐ*   *ɐᵢ/*ⱼ=χe-cɐj*

            mouse frog-OBL   without   POSS.3SG=self-ABL

            cɐr-un   *nɐ*   *waʒ-uj*

            live-INFNEG   let-PRS.3SG

            'The mouseᵢ does not let the frogⱼ to live without itselfᵢ/*ⱼ.'

- I am leaving aside the lexicalized uses of the allative of reflexives that can be used as a noun 'at home' (cf *chez nous*) and as adjectives meaning 'my/our/their kind of, local, indigenous' (*cf* Russian свойский, нашенский etc):

(12)   a.   'at home'

            cuma *sɐ=χe-mɐ*   *divan-bɐl*   *ɐvduld-ɐj*

            as.if POSS.3PL=self-ALL   couch-SUP   sprawl.PST-PST.3PL

            'As if he was sprawling on a couch at home.' Maliti V.

   b.   'local'

            duwɐ *nɐχe-mɐ*   *χwenχag*   *sɐw*   *furk'a-j*

            two   POSS.1PL=self-ALL   alpine   black   ram-OBL

            'two local mountain black young rams' Sabajti S.

- Bad news: Some speakers also allow non-bound reflexives:

(13)   a.   *ɐnɐ*   *mɐ=χe-(cɐj)*   *ma*   *rajdajetɐ!*

            without   POSS.1SG=self-ABL   NEG.IMP begin.IMP.2PL

            'Don't begin (it) without me!'

   b.   *ɐnɐ*   *jɐ=χi-(sɐj)*   *mɐ*   *rajdajut* (Iron)

            without   POSS.3SG=self-ABL   NEG.IMP begin.IMP.2PL

            'Don't begin (it) without him!'

- The variants with the regular personal pronoun are grammatical as well (and some speakers judge only them possible):

(14)   *ɐnɐ*   *mɐn-ɐj*   *ma*   *rajdajetɐ!*

          without   I.OBL-ABL   NEG.IMP begin.IMP.2PL

         'Don't begin (it) without me!'

- But to some extent this phenomenon exists in other languages too (Pollard & Sag 1992; Reinhart & Reuland 1993), so this a (not very well-understood) problem anyway.
- Upshot: reflexives and reciprocals behave as they are expected to, provided we accept the fact that VP is flat.

4. PERSONAL PRONOUNS: INDEPENDENT AND ENCLITIC

- Clitics are drastically more frequent than full pronouns.

4.1 ENCLITICS

- Within a simple clause, pronominal enclitics must be free (15a), however, when the clitic sits in a dependent clause, the preferred binder is the subject of the matrix clause (15b):

(15) a. *biččew$_i$=ɐj$_{*i/j}$ winuj ajdɐnɐmɐ*
        boy=ACC.3SG looks mirror-ALL
        'The boy watches him/*himself in the mirror.'

   b. *biččew-i$_i$ fɐnduj [ɐ=χ^{w}erɐ$_j$=ɐj$_{i/*j/??k}$*
        boy-OBL   wants POSS.3SG=sister=ACC.3SG

        kud   fa-wwinɐ   ajdɐn-i]   woj
        CPL   PRV-see.SUB.FUT.3SG   mirror-OBL   COR
        'The boy$_i$ wants his sister to watch him$_{i/?k}$/*herself in the mirror.'

- Nevertheless, choosing a binder earlier in the discourse is possible when required by the context:

(16)   *ramazan=ni   rakurdta   cɐmɐj=ɐj*
        R=ABL.1PL   asked   CPL=ACC.3SG

        ra-jjev-ɐn   k'osta-j   tala-tɐ-bɐl
        PRV-change-SUB.FUT.1PL   K-OBL   seedling-PL-SUP
        'Ramazan asked us to change it (the title of a school newspaper) into "Kosta's seedlings".' M. Isaev

CONCLUSION: Enclitic behave as pronominals should do.

4.1 INDEPENDENT PRONOUNS

The binding domain for personal pronouns is the sentence, rather than the minimal clause:

(17)   *Mɐdinɐ-mɐ$_i$ wotɐ kɐsuj [cuma je$_{*i/j}$ mɐ=zɐrdɐ-mɐ   cɐwuj]*
        M-ALL   so looks as.if (s)he POSS.1SG=heart-ALL   goes
        'Madina$_i$ thinks that I like him/her$_{*i/j}$.'

AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION: 3sg pronoun in the capacity of a correlative (and this is the most common use of 3sg pronouns in Ossetic)

FACT Ossetic complex clauses normally use the correlative strategy: for instance, in (17) *wotɐ* is a corelative.

In the capacity of correlative, the pronoun is co-indexed with the dependent clause (18a), or a constituent in the dependent clause (18b)

(18) a. *[tuɐd ke   rajdɐdta]$_i$ woj$_i$ nɐ   lɐdɐr-etɐ*
        war CPL began   it.OBL NEG   you.understand
        'You don't understand that a war has begun.' Maliti V.

   b. *rɐštdžijnadɐ [či   fɐndag-bɐl]$_i$ agurdta*
        truth   what path-SUP   sought

        womɐj$_i$ fɐstɐmɐ   ra-zdɐχ-a?
        it.ABL   back   PRV-turn-SUB.FUT.3SG
        'Would he turn back from the path upon which he looked for the truth?'

ACTUALLY, NO CONTRADICTION: the correlative pronoun sits in the main clause and thus is not c-commanded by anything in the dependent one.

4.3 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS
4.3.1. "Full possessive pronouns":
Like argumental pronouns, full possessive pronouns must be free in their minimal clause:

(19)   **mɐn šinχon-i   nɐ   warz-un*
        I.OBL   neighbor-OBL NEG   love-PRS.1SG

'I don't love my neighbor.'

4.3.2 POSSESSIVE PREFIXES

Preferably, bound in the clause:

(20)   *(ɐz)   mɐ=šinχon-i*   *nɐ*   *warz-un*
         I   POSS.1SG=neighbor-OBL   NEG   love-PRS.1SG
         'I don't love my neighbor.'

The subject is the preferred binder, (21a). In the absence of one, the sentence will become ambiguous, (21b).

(21) a. *soslan_i rustam-ɐn_j   ɐ_{i/?*j/?*k}=kiwunugɐ   ravardta*
           S   R-DAT   POSS.3SG=book gave
           'Soslan_i gave his_{i/?*j/?*k} book to Rustam.'

      b. *ɐ_{i/j/k}=furt   soslan-ɐj_i   rustam-ɐn_j   p'ismo ɐrbaχasta*
           POSS.3SG=son   S-ABL   R-DAT   letter brought
           'His_{i/j/k} son brought a letter from Soslan_i to Rustam_j.'

I am leaving aside reflexive possessives, which are much rarer and somewhat marked.

5. Why is there such a difference?

- ➢ What was the original system?
- It is likely that when a clause-mate binder was present, the possessive pronoun had to be reflexive. This is so in attested examples from Middle Iranian languages:

(22)   Buddhist Sogdian (Vessantara Jātaka, l. 278-279 Benveniste 1946: 19)

             rty   nwkr   wytr   γw   wyspyδr'k   'kw   γypδ   š'ykn s'r
             and   then   returned   DEF   prince   to   self   palace on
             'And then the prince_i returned to his_i (lit. self) palace.'

(23)   Khotanese Saka (Jātakastava Dresden 1955: 431, v. 67 16r 1)

             ttina   rruste ba'ysa   ṣi'   hvi   hi:ya   dasta
             with.that   lost   Buddha   this   human   self   hands
             'Thereby the man lost, O Buddha, his hands.'

- It is still so in modern Pamiri languages (fieldwork data):

(24)   Wakhi

      a. *uz=um   xat   xɨ/?*ži   χuni   xɨtk*
           I=PST.1SG   self.EMP   self/my   house   build.PST
           Shughni

      b. *uz=um   χubaθ   χu/*mu   čid   mizd*
           I=PST.1SG   self.EMP   self/my   house   build.PST
           'I built my house myself.'

- Conclusion: Some of the functions of reflexives have been taken over by possessive proclitics/prefixes
- I have earlier advanced a conjecture (Erschler 2009) that, first, possessive proclitics are close to prefixes, and, second, that the emergence of possessive proclitics is a contact-induced development (specifically, an outcome of West Caucasian influences).
- Specifically, at some point in the history, enclitics to the preceding constituents got re-analyzed into proclitics.
- Simultaneously, they acquired new binding properties.
- WHY???

5. FREE VS DEPENDENT POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS CROSS-LINGUISTICALLY

- A cross-linguistic observation:

Non-independent possessive pronouns have a stronger propensity to be bound than independent ones:

- A few case studies

5.1. Finnish: Possessa carry obligatory possessive suffixes (see arguments for this interpretation in Nevis (1984) and Kanerva (1987) and may be additionally marked by independent possessive pronouns.

(25) a. Independent possessive pronoun present: disjoint reference
          *Pekka näkee **hänen** ystävä-**nsä***
          Pekka sees   his/her friend-3SG
          Pekka$_i$ sees his/her$_{*i/j}$ friend.
      b. Only possessive suffix: conjoint reference
          *Pekka näkee ystävä-**nsä***
          Pekka sees   friend-3SG
          'Pekka$_i$ sees his$_{i/*j}$ friend.'   Toivonen (2000: 584)

Remark This effect is not observed in the 1st and 2nd persons, but these are known to be able to show a different binding behavior.

5.2. North Saami (Toivonen 2000: 606)
Possessive suffixes must be bound

(26) a. *mun   gulan beatnaga-n*
          I   hear   dog-1SG
          'I hear my dog.'
      b. **mun gulan beatnaga-t*
          I   hear   dog-2SG
          intended reading: 'I hear your dog.'
      c. mun   gulan du   beatnaga.
          I   hear   your:SG   dog
          'I hear your dog'

5.3. Georgian
Very few nouns in Georgian may carry a possessive suffix, which is phonologically imilar to the independent pronoun. However, its binding properties are different:

(27)   Nino Amiridze, p.c.
      a. independent possesive pronoun: disjoint coreference with the subject

          *nino-m$_i$ bavšv-i$_j$ **mis**$_{*i/j/k}$ deda-s   anaxa*
          Nino-ERG   child-NOM   his/her mother-DAT   showed
          'Nino$_i$ showed the child$_j$ to her$_{*i/j/k}$ mother.'
      b. possessive suffix: allowed to be bound by the subject

          *nino-m$_i$ bavšv-i$_j$ deda-**mis**-s$_{i/j/k}$ a-nax-a*
          Nino-ERG   child-NOM   mother-POSS-DAT   showed
          'Nino$_i$ showed the child$_j$ to her$_{i/j/k}$ mother.'

5.4. Standard Persian[1]
- Independent pronouns in ezafe or possessive suffxes/enclitics.

Possessive suffix can be bound, whereas the pronoun in the ezafe construction cannot:

(28) a. ^{ok}*mæn ašeʁe gorbe-æm   hæstæm*
          I   love   cat-1SG AUX.1SG
          'I love my cat.'

      b. **mæn ašeʁe gorbe-ye   mæn   hæstæm*
          I   love   cat-EZF   I   AUX.1SG

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[1] I thank Dara Fourouzan for these data.

        Idem (intended reading)

    c.   [ok]*to*   *ašeʁe*   *gorbe-ye*   *mæn*   *hæsti*

        you   love   cat-EZF   I   AUX.2SG

        'You love my cat.'

    d.   [ok]*to*   *ašeʁe*   *gorbe-æm*   *hæsti*

        you   love   cat-EZF   AUX.2SG

        'You love my cat.'

Thus the behavior of Persian possessive suffixes is identical to that of Ossetic possessive prefixes, although the emergence of the both is clearly independent developments.

Final questions:

➢ Is this a valid cross-linguistic observation?

➢ If so, what is its mechanism?

6. CONCLUSION

In their binding properties:

- Reflexives and reciprocals behave as usual anaphors
- Full pronouns pattern with R-expressions
- Argument clitics pattern with pronominals
- *Cf* "The environments where a pronoun must be free are thus much more restricted than the environments where an anaphor can be bound. Furthermore, they do not appear to vary with languages" Reinhart, Reuland 1993
- It looks like they do...
- Possessive clitics are neutral between anaphors and pronominals

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Glosses

ABL ablative; ACC accusative; ALL allative; AUX auxiliary; COMP comparative degree; COR correlative; CPL complementizer; CTR contrastive topic marker; DAT dative; DEF definite; EMP emphatic; ERG ergative; EZF ezafe; FUT future; IMP imperative; INF infinitive; NEG negative; NMZ nominalizer; NOM nominative; OBL oblique; PL plural; POSS possessive; PRS present; PRV preverb; PST past; SG singular; SUB subjunctive; SUP superessive