Sig and *sig själv*

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1 *Själv* as an anti-obviative

(1) In Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch, certain types of predicates disallow bare reflexives that are coreferential to a coargument of the predicate (Everaert 1986:204, Hellan 1988).

    a. Long reflexive *sig själv* required: *hata* 'hate', *föredra* 'prefer', *förstå* 'understand', *angripa* 'attack', *förakta* 'despise', *älska* 'love', *(be)straffa* 'punish', *åtala* 'sue', *kritisera* 'criticize', *ange* 'denounce', *avguda* 'worship', *använda (som)* 'use (as)', *laga* 'fix', *känna* 'know', *lura* 'cheat', *undervisa* 'teach', *hylla* 'celebrate'

    b. Bare reflexive *sig* allowed: *tvätta* 'wash', *raka* 'shave', *gömma* 'hide', *rädda* 'save', *förnedra* 'humiliate', *upprepa* 'repeat', *skydda* 'protect', *försvara* 'defend', *unna* 'grant', 'not begrudge', 'allow', *kalla* 'call', *hänga* 'hang', *förklara* 'explain', *försörja* 'supportf', *utbilda* 'educate', *fråga* 'ask', *rättfärdiga* 'justify', *vässa* 'sharpen', *identifiera* 'identify', *frigöra* 'free', *sköta* 'take care of', *legitimera* 'legitimize'

The most common explanation in the literature is that *sig* is allowed with stereotypically "self-directed" verbs, while *sig själv* is required with "other-directed" verbs (Haiman 1983, Kiparsky 2002, König & Vezzosi 2004, Gast 2006, Burzio 2010).

(2) Outside of the coargument domain, bare *sig* is always OK.

    a. *Causatives:*
Gracchus$_i$ lät en slav$_j$ döda sig$_i$
'Gracchus$_i$ had a slave$_j$ kill him$_i$.'

    b. *Resultative fake objects:*
USA$_i$ kan inte döda sig$_i$ till framgång i Afghanistan.
'USA cannot kill itself to success in Afghanistan.'

    c. *Benefactives:*
Han$_i$ ville döda sig$_i$ en björn.
He wanted to kill himself a bear.

    d. *Possessives:*
Det österrikiska folket dömde sin lögnaktige president.
The Austrian people$_i$ condemned their$_i$ mendacious president.

    e. *Conjuncts:*
Frisören$_i$ rakar sig$_i$ först och kunderna efteråt.
The barber shaves himself first and the customers afterwards.

    f. *ECM:*
De$_i$ ansåg sig$_i$ tvungna att skydda den inhemska textilindustrin.
They considered themselves obliged to support the native textile industry.

(3) My OT typology of pronominal systems treated this as a special case of the cross-linguistically widespread phenomenon of Obviation (Kiparsky 1991/2002), Kiparsky 2012).

a. Principle B effects emerge from into two independent interacting universal constraints, OBVIATION and BLOCKING.

b. OBVIATION requires (semantic) coarguments to have disjoint reference. Some pronominal systems (e.g. Algonquian) are entirely based on Obviation (disjoint reference marking), others entirely on reflexivity (reflexive marking).

c. Cree (Grafstein 1989)

    a. John o-wa:bam-a:-an
    John 3-see-3-OBV
    'John$_i$ sees him$_j$'

    b. *John o-wa:bam-a:
    John   3-see-3(PROX)
    'John$_i$ sees him$_i$'

d. Three types of bare reflexive pronouns:

    1. German *sich*, Old English *him* allow coargument antededents with any type of verb,

    2. Dutch *zich*, Frisian *him*, Swedish *sig* allow coargument antededents with a subclass of verbs (*wash, defend. . .*), and

    3. Marathi *aapan̩*, Homeric Greek *hé-* reject all coargument antecedents.

e. BLOCKING makes anaphors obligatory in their (syntactic) binding domain, superseding the coreferential interpretation of pronominals in that domain.

f. A stringency hierarchy of binding domain constraints interact with Obviation and Blocking to generate a pronominal typology.

(4) *Implementation:* Assume that syntactic structures, with anaphoric relations marked by coindexation, are mapped into semantic representations (λ-abstractions), and variables in those semantic representations are in turn mapped into intended referents. Coindexation of NPs induces an identity statement between their corresponding variables. Obviation requires that these mappings must be bijective in the coargument domain.

OBVIATION: In the coargument domain,

a. different arguments must be assigned to different variables, and

b. different variables must be assigned to different individuals.

Thus, Obviation is not a syntactic condition on coindexation, but a principle governing the interpretation of coindexed syntactic structures.

(5) We now have an explanation for why sloppy identity is enforced in the coargument domain.

a. John hates himself, and so does Fred.   (*unambiguous*)
= "Fred also hates himself"   (*sloppy*)
$\neq$ "Fred also hates John"   (*strict*)

b. John considers himself competent, and so does Fred.   (*ambiguous*)

c. John has a picture of himself, and so does Fred.   (*ambiguous*)

d. Mary quoted everyone except herself, and so did Bill.   (*ambiguous*)

e. John will succeed in spite of himself, and so will Fred.   (*ambiguous*)

Idea: an anaphor whose antecedent is a coargument is interpreted as a bound variable, and the sloppy reading is due to the bound variable interpretation of the anaphor in the ellipsis.

(6) Arguments not subject to Obviation, such as the reflexive pronoun *himself*, will be marked as exempt from [4a], let us assume by a feature [−obviative]. Therefore (b) is OK. However, (a) is excluded by [4b].

a. John (λx_i [x_i hates x_j, x_j = John])

b. John (λx_i [x_i hates x_i])

Consequently *John hates himself* cannot be taken as predicating of John the property of "John-hating", but only the property of "self-hating". In other words, Obviation filters out the coreferential interpretation of [5], leaving only the bound variable interpretation, where the two arguments are represented by the same variable, and this interpretation is passed to the second conjunct, giving the "sloppy identity" reading.

(7) Outside of the coargument domain, obviation is not applicable:

a. John (λx_i [x_i considers (x_j competent, x_j = John)])

b. John (λx_i [x_i considers (x_i competent)])

(8) Another consequence: a plural or conjoined DP which overlaps in reference with a coargument has a collective reading but not a distributive reading. (9) shows how *I like us* has only a collective reading (candidate set 1, x→ a, y→ b), and lacks a distributed reading (candidate set 2, x→ a, y→ a+b+c...), and how **I like ourselves* is excluded.

(9)

		BD	OBVIATION	PROX	PARSE	ECONOMY
Coarguments: I like ____.						
1a. ☞ x→ a, y→ b	us					*
1b.	ourselves	*!		*		**
1c.	∅				*!	
2a. x→ a, y→ a+b+c...	us		*!			*
2b.	ourselves	*!		*		**
2c. ☞	∅				*	

(10) The problems that remained

a. How and why do intensifiers like *själv* and its many counterparts (Spanish *mismo*, Russian *sam*, Greek *autos*...) allow the bare reflexives to overcome the obviation constraint? My 2012 hack:

1. *själv* is [–Obviative], and unifies with [+Obviative] *sig* to [–Obviative] *sig själv* (priority unification).
2. Problem: the formal feature [obviative] provides no basis for answering the question what intensification has to do with obviation.

b. How and why do certain predicates (such as *tvätta* and *försvara*) allow *sig* to overcome the obviation constraint? My 2012 hack:

1. Obviation is suspended for stereotypically self-directed actions (à la the pragmatic accounts of Faltz 1976, Kemmer 1993, and Levinson 1991), and so these not require *själv*.
2. Problem: obviation is a semantic constraint that operates on argument structure, so how can it be pragmatically suspended?
3. I bit the bullet and posited a formal verb class distinction: *defend, wash*-type verbs are [–Obviative], and *attack, love*-type verbs are [+Obviative]. Analogous move in Reinhart & Reuland 1993: *self*-anaphors reflexivize predicates.
4. Problem: this predicts a categorical distinction between verbs that allow coargument *sig* and verbs that reject it, but actually it seems to be gradient?.

(11) The percentage of *sig själv(a)* among total reflexive (*sig*) objects for a selection of verbs (KORP).

	# sig	% sig själv(a)		# sig	% sig själv(a)
hata 'hate'	107	100.0	reda 'straighten out'	191	31.9
håna 'mock'	5	100.0	påminnna 'remind'	1,445	27.1
uppskatta 'appreciate'	34	100.0	tvinga 'force'	802	25.9
syna 'inspect'	13	100.0	försörja 'support'	5,172	23.0
älska 'love'	591	99.5	klara 'manage'	21,440	15.1
döda 'kill'	88	97.7	plåga 'torment'	360	14.4
klandra 'blame'	39	94.9	utveckla 'develop'	1510	12.7
nedvärdera 'devalue'	38	94.7	blotta 'bare'	322	9.7
döma 'condemn'	42	92.6	roa 'amuse'	2,696	8.9
anklaga 'accuse'	51	90.2	försvara 'defend'	6,718	5.6
rannsaka 'search'	421	89.9	tvätta 'wash'	910	4.1
förminska 'diminish'	57	77.2	unna 'grant', not begrudge'	5,212	3.9
värdera 'value'	37	75.8	frigöra 'free'	1,456	1.2
rättfärdiga 'justify'	79	56.7	raka 'shave'	950	0.8
belöna 'reward'	271	55.5	utbilda 'develop'	4,008	0.5
intala 'persuade'	584	41.8	gömma 'hide'	6,779	0.1
tappa bort 'lose'	220	40.9			

2 New approaches to *sig* : *sig själv*

(12) A purely syntactic account: *sig själv* is assigned a Theta-role, *sig* is not assigned a Theta-role (Ehlers & Vikner 2017).

    a. Agent as sole argument: *sätta sig* 'sit down' *kasta sig* 'throw oneself', *resa sig* 'arise', *skynda sig* 'hurry'

    b. Experiencer as sole argument: *ångra sig* 'regret', *gräma sig* 'be aggrieved'

    c. Theme as sole argument: *bränna sig* 'get burned' (vs. agentive *bränna sig själv* 'burn oneself')

(13)   a. Problem: if variation between *sig* and *sig själv* reflects alternative role structures, it should correlate with different meanings. In a large class of verbs it doesn't; *själv* is just optional: *försörja* 'support', *skydda* 'protect', *roa* 'amuse', *utsätta* 'expose', *anmäla* 'register', *företräda* 'represent', *ackompanjera* 'accomany', *bota* 'heal', *blotta* 'bare', *unna* 'not begrudge', *frigöra* 'liberate', *raka* 'shave', *utbilda* 'educate', *gömma* 'hide', *legitimera* 'legitimize'...

    b. Both types of reflexives of all these verbs have two Theta roles, an Agent role, and a Theme/Patient role.

(14) Another empirical problem: a class of causative/permissive transitive verbs allow *sig* but not (in the same meaning) *sig själv*.

operera 'operate', *röntga* 'x-ray', *vaccinera* 'vaccinate', *pierca* 'pierce', *kastrera* 'castrate', *sterilisera* 'sterilize', *korsfästa* 'crucify', *omskära* 'circumcise', *åderlåta* 'bleed', *döpa* 'baptize', *undersöka* 'examine', *pensionera* 'retire'

    a. *tatuera sig* = *låta tatuera sig* 'get tattooed', 'have oneself tattooed'

    b. *tatuera sig själv* 'tattoo oneself'

The semantic account provides an explanation: one normally gets oneself tattooed, pierced, vaccinated etc. (⇒ reflexive *sig*), but one normally tattoos, pierces, vaccinates etc. others (⇒ reflexive *sig själv*).

(15) A different semantic account: 'body' vs. 'person' is relevant, not coargumenthood (Lødrup 2007)

"The simple reflexive is used when the physical aspect of the referent of the binder is in focus. It is seen as an inalienable denoting the body of the referent of the binder."

(16)   a. Explains contrasts like *beundra sig själv* 'to feel admiration for oneself' versus *beundra sig (t.ex. i spegeln)* 'to preen, to admire oneself (in a mirror)' (Hellan 1988).

       b. More generally, *beundra* in the first sense is a psych-verb, and psych-verbs are all obviative, requiring *sig själv*, while *beundra* in the second sense is a perception verb, and these allow bare *sig* (*han såg sig i spegeln*). Lødrup's approach makes sense of this division.

(17)   a. Locative PPs take *sig*

         1. Per så en slange bak   seg / *seg selv / *ham.
           Per saw a snake behind him / REFL
           'Per saw a snake behind him.'

         2. Jon følte /   hørte   noe nær seg / *seg selv / *ham.
           Jon felt/ heard something near REFL SELF
           'Jon felt/heard something near him.'

       b. Non-locative PPs take *sig själv*

         1. Man var i et system hvor man ble bondefanget av seg   selv
           one was in a system where one was tricked   by REFL self
           'One was in a system where one was tricked by oneself'

         2. Jernbaneverket   skal konkurrere med seg   selv
           railroad-agency-DEF shall compete   with REFL self
           'The railroad agency is going to compete with itself

         3. (Det) smertet ham mere en han ville innrømme overfor sig   selv
           it   pained   him more than he   would admit   to   REFL SELF
           'It pained him more than he would admit to himself'

       But the (b) cases seem to be clear cases of coarguments, of predicates for which coargument DR is expected.

       c. In the following examples (Lødrup's 16-18), there is no coargumenthood, but *selv* seems to have contrastive focus.

         1. Noen (…) ringer   angående seg selv.
           some call   concerning REFL   SELF
           'Some people call concerning themselves.'

          2. Hun har ikke vaert ute av arbeidslivet   på   grunn av   seg selv.
           she has not been out of employment-DEF because of   REFL SELF
           'She has not been out of employment because of herself.'

          3. 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

         1. Mannen kan gå själv, laga mat och äta själv, tvätta sig själv och gå på toaletten själv.
           The man can walk (by) himself, make food and eat (by) himself, wash himself by himself, and go to the toilet

         2. Zlatan har inte [skrivit [boken om sig] själv].
           'Zlatan has not written the book about himself himself.'

         3. Barberaren kunde inte både raka sig själv och samtidigt vara en av dem som inte rakade sig själva.
           'The barber could not both shave himself and simultaneously be one of those who did not shave themselves.'

         4. …att frigöra sig själv, för ingen annan kommer att göra det åt honom. '…to free himself, for nobody else is going to do it for him.'

(18) AS a counterexample Lødrup cites *piske* 'whip': a putatively other-directed predicate that prefers *sig*. In Swedish, at least, it occurs more commonly with *själv* (21 examples, vs. 16 with *sig*, 8 of those having resultative predicates, e.g. *piska sig blodig, piska sig in*). Not a clear case.

(19) Problems for the locative hypothesis

a. Verbs that are indifferently body- and person-oriented, without any detectable difference in the form of the reflexive.

    1. Han försvarade sig mot angreppet/anklagelsen.
       He defended himself against the attack/accusation.

    2. Magnus Carlsen försvarade sig med en kniv / med h6xg5.
       Magnus Carlsen defended himself with a knife / with h6xg5.

b. Many verbs that strongly prefer *sig* to *sig själv* are not body-oriented, e.g. *unna, frigjöra, utbilda, fråga, presentera, berika*.

c. Conversely, the definitely body-oriented causative/permissive verbs in (14), such as *tatuera* 'tattoo', require *själv*.

d. Coargument effects (2) not accounted for.

3   Semantics to the rescue

(20) Sæbø 2009: *själv* is an intensifier and its distribution is independent of binding. Intensifiers supply focus, which introduces alternatives and contrast. Assume that *sig* is always in focus, with *själv* if it is present, and with the predicate otherwise (in Scandinavian languages). German *sich* differs in that it is not in focus, so that it does not necessarily invoke alternatives and contrast.

    a. Hun [beundrer sig]$_F$.
    b. Hun [beundrer]$_F$ [sig selv]$_F$.

By a principle of contrast (formalized in Bidirectional OT) the more specific focus interpretation of (b), viz. the existence of alternatives, causes (a) to communicate that the argument *seg* is predictable from the predicate *beundrer* 'admires', and that the discourse provides *no* overt alternatives to it. But given the meaning of *beundrer* this is not the case, under any discourse relations. Thus (a) is semantically (or pragmatically) anomalous.

(21) Sæbø assumes four relevant classes of predicates (from Bergeton 2004, 160):

    a. Reflexive predicates, presupposing identity of arguments,

    b. "anti-reflexives", presupposing non-identity of arguments (e.g. *beundra* 'admire'),

    c. neutral predicates, presupposing nothing of the kind (e.g. *försvara* 'defend'), and

    d. "hidden" neutrals, coming close to anti-reflexives; presupposing nothing, but evoking expectations of non-identity of arguments.

It is not clear that there are any discrete semantic classes here, or that the theory needs to assume them. The data , see (11).

(22) Sæbø stipulates that *sig* is always in focus in Scandinavian applies only when it is the coargument of its antecedent: long-distance *sig*, SC subject *sig*, possessive *sin*, etc. can be out of focus. This is equivalent to coargument DR.

(23) Eliminates the dubious discrete classes of predicates. The observed gradience from 0% to 100% *själv* can reflect probabilistic factors of use under fixed lexical meaning.

(24) Unifies the *själv* of *sig själv* with non-reflexive contrastive/focus functions of *själv*, including on non-reflexive Agents or other NPs (as in (17c)).

    a. Rädda G.W. Persson från honom själv!
       'Save G.W. Persson from himself!'

b. filmen om honom$_i$, med honom$_i$ själv som sig$_i$ själv
   'the movie about him$_i$, with himself$_i$ as himself$_i$'

(25) Explains the absence of *sig själv själv*, which would be expected if *sig själv* is a complex reflexive and *själv* an intensifier used to mark focus/contrast. If all uses of *själv* are intensifiers, this would be a natural restriction.

(26) Algonquian-type Obviation can now be seen to be intensification with focus function, and their discourse use above the clausal level can be unified with their intra-clausal argument-tracking function. The basic generalization is that proximate forms are reserved for the current discourse topic (or topics, since in certain cases there may be more than one concurrent topic). A switch of obviation serves, typically, to foreground another topic. Within a clause, obviation is rigorously controlled by the constraint that there can be at most one proximate third person argument.

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