On the (non)universality of anaphoric structure

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Pronouns and anaphors

- Pronouns and anaphors in many languages seem to be morphosyntactically related in some way.
  - iye ~ iye mwini — Chichewa
  - her ~ herself — English
  - vaaḍu ~ vaaḍini vaaḍu — Telugu
  - e ~ e-na potha — Kutchi Gujarati

- Over the years, some contenders for this relationship have been proposed: adjunction, possession (+ extra structure), … (Faltz, 1977; Patel-Grosz, 2013; Ahn & Kalin, 2018; Charnavel & Sportiche, 2022; Abels, 2022)

- Today: Middleton 2020, 2021 — a cross-linguistically identical relationship between pronouns and anaphors

Middleton's Thesis

- Three types of anaphoric elements

Basque (Middleton, 2020, ex. 10)

(1) Anaphor: Locally bound variable

Kanga-k use to bakarrik Piglet-ek maite du-ela bere buru-a
Kanga-ERG think have only piglet-ERG love have-that BERE BURU-DET
'Kanga$_1$ thinks that only Piglet$_2$ loves himself$_2$'

(2) Diaphor: Non-locally bound variable

Bakarrik Piglet-ek uste du Kanga-k maite du-ela bera
only Piglet-ERG think have Kanga-ERG love have-that BERA
'Only Piglet$_1$ thinks that Kanga$_2$ loves him$_1$'

(3) Pronoun: Free pronoun

Bakarrik Piglet-ek uste du Kanga-k maite du-ela hura
only Piglet-ERG think have Kanga-ERG love have-that HURA
'Only Piglet$_1$ thinks that Kanga$_2$ loves them$_3$'

Middleton's findings: *ABA

- Sample: 80 languages (12 language families + 1 isolate)

	Tongan	English	Xining	Peranakan Jawanese	Unattested
Anaphor	ia	herself	jia ziji	awake dheen dhewe	X
Diaphor	ia	her	jia ziji	awake dheen	Y
Pronoun	ia	her	jia	dheen	X
	AAA	AAB	ABB	ABC	*ABA

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- An *ABA pattern, by now familiar from Bobaljik (2012); Caha (2009); Smith et al. (2019).

Middleton's thesis: *ABA and the containment hypothesis

- *ABA $\Rightarrow$ Containment

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- *ABA ⇒ Containment
- With bottom-up vocabulary insertion, if the diaphor and pronoun have different exponents, there is no way to 'go back' to the pronominal exponent after the D node is merged.

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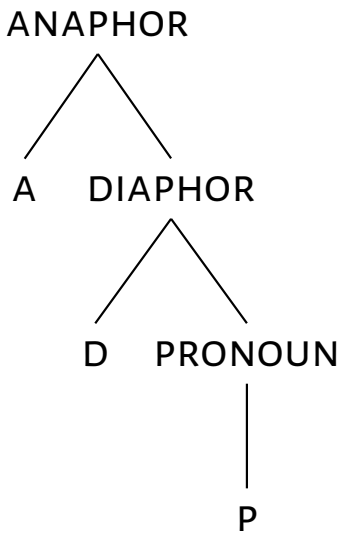

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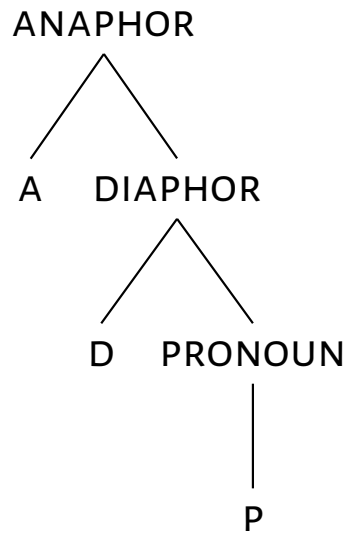

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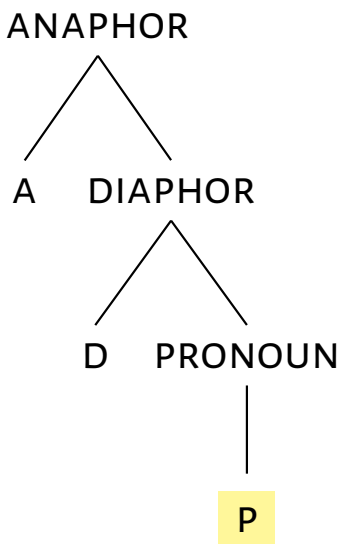

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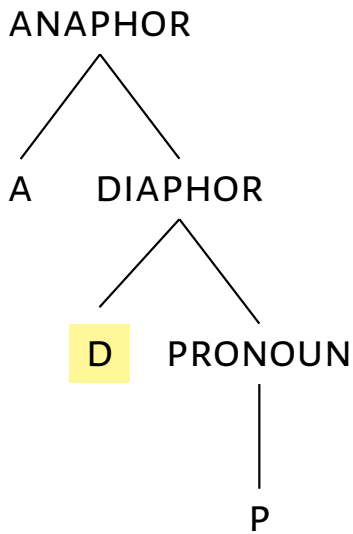

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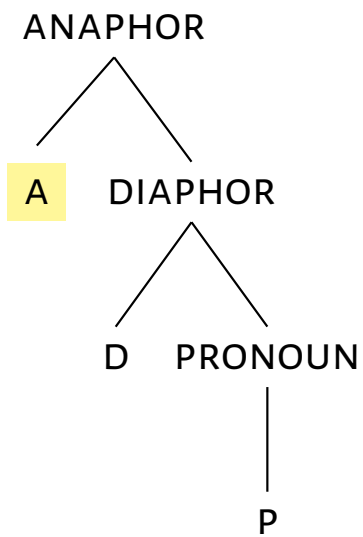

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PseudoABA patterns

- Three languages in the sample exhibit so-called PseudoABA patterns: the pronominal exponent is also found in the anaphor, but not in the diaphor

	Malayalam	Yoruba	Babanki
Anaphor	avan avan	ara ré	ə̀wénə́ wén
Diaphor	taan	òun	jì
Pronoun	avan	ré	wén

- Spelling-out spans allows us to capture these facts

(5) Babanki

a. [P] ↔ wén

b. [D [P]] ↔ jì

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(6) Yoruba

a. P ↔ ré

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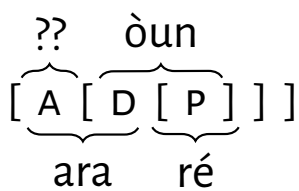

PseudoABA patterns in Yoruba

(7) Olú so [pé Màríà féràn rè]
Olu say that Maria like him
'Olu$_1$ said that Mary likes him$_2$'

(8) Olú so [pé òun rí Adé]
Olu say that he see Ade
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(9) Adé rí ara rè
Ade see body his
'Ade saw himself'

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- *ara rè* is not the only shape an anaphor can take. When the 'diaphor' *òun* is the antecedent, the diaphor can be part of the anaphor

(10) Olú sọ pé òun rí ara òun
Olu say that he see body his
'Olu$_1$ said that he$_1$ saw himself$_1$' Adesola & Safir 2005, D10

Problem 1: Optionality in Yoruba

- There seems to be a degree of optionality to how the anaphor is realised in Yoruba:

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Olu say that he see body his (in mirror)
'Olu$_1$ said that he$_1$ saw himself$_1$ (in the mirror)' Tadjoudine Mamadou, P.C.

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- To capture optionality in the sample, Middleton makes use of 'probabilistic impoverishment' rules (Nevins & Parrott, 2010)

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- **Russian Doll Deletion Constraint** Ackema & Neeleman 2018, Zompì 2019, Middleton 2021
  Only the outermost layer of a structure is available for impoverishment.

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(17) VI Rules for ABA

a. [D [P]] ↔ exponent2

b. P ↔ exponent1

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[D] → ϟ / [A [___ …]]

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Body part reflexives

- In both Babanki and Yoruba (like in many other languages), reflexive anaphors are morphologically complex, built with the pronoun and the word for 'body'.
- The 'body-part reflexives' in these two languages are homophonous with structures which mean 'his body'

(19) Babanki

à-wén á wén
CL-body AM 3SG
'their$_{SG}$ body' or 'themself$_{SG}$'

(20) Yoruba Adesola & Safir (2005)

ara à rè
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- If the non-pronominal part of the anaphors were really exponing [A] and/or [D], there must have been a reanalysis (cf. himself vs his-self).
- We also do not expect φ-based covariation in the anaphoric forms.

Problem 2: φ covariation in the Babanki paradigm

- In Babanki, the 'non-pronominal' part of the anaphors covaries with the pronoun's φ-features. [1]

φ	Anaphor		
	CL-body	AM	pronoun
1SG	à-wén	á	ghÓmá
1PL	tà-wén	á	tyés
2SG	à-wén	á	ghá
2PL	tà-wén	á	tyáN
3SG	à-wén	á	wén
3PL	tà-wén	tá	vàwá

[1] Data from the Afranaph Database

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3SG	à-wén	á	wén
3PL	tà-wén	tá	vàwá

- To capture the covariation without subscribing to a possessive structure, we need to posit readjustment rules to account for [3PL]

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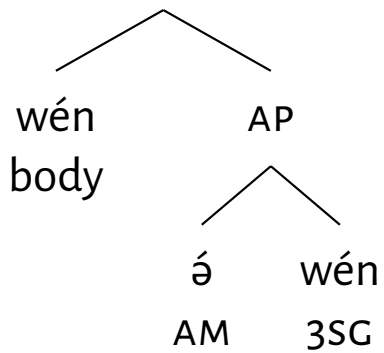
Body part reflexives are structurally possessives

- Instead, treat body-part reflexives as structurally possessive:



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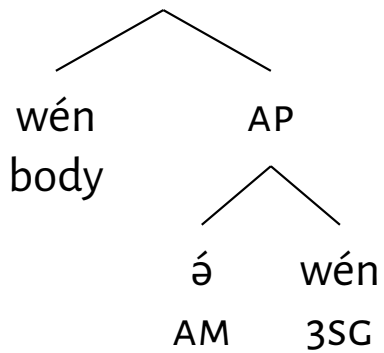

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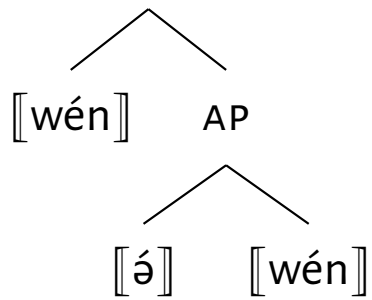
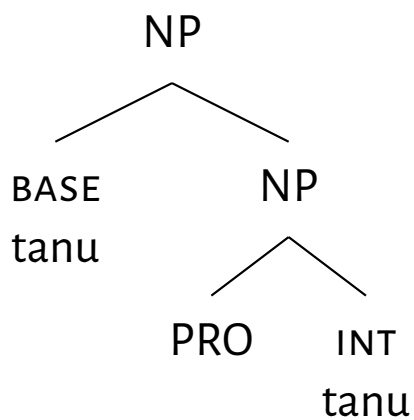


- The anaphoric meaning is idiomatic. Like other idioms, in addition to the idiomatic meaning, you also get a compositional interpretation.

Other structures possible

- Anaphors aren't always possessives.
- They can be simplex like Japanese *zibun* or Russian *sebja*.
- For Dravidian, the structure seems to be one of adjunction (Jayaseelan 1996; Messick & Raghotham 2023).
- For Telugu reflexive *tana-ni tanu* '3SG-ACC 3SG'



Outlook

- Earlier analyses of the internal structure of anaphors — that they are cross-linguistically heterogenous — are likely on the right track.

- If the structures are indeed heterogenous, whence *ABA?

Is there a tripartition?

- A precondition for the existence of *ABA patterns is a tripartition in forms.
- In the sample, there are 9 languages which are classified as ABC languages:

1. Basque
2. Icelandic
3. Malay
4. Telugu
5. Ewe
6. Peranakan Javenese
7. Babanki
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- D is a logophor
- D is a pronoun

Basque

- Claim: [P] = hura [D [P]] = bera

(21) Bakarrik Piglet-ek uste du Kanga-k maite du-ela bera
only Piglet-ERG think have Kanga-ERG love have-that BERA
'Only Piglet$_1$ thinks that Kanga$_2$ loves him$_1$'

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only Piglet-ERG think have Kanga-ERG love have-that HURA
'Only Piglet$_1$ thinks that Kanga$_2$ loves them$_3$' (Middleton, 2020, ex. 10)

- *hura* is a demonstrative, used in lieu of third-person pronouns.

(23) Peiok$_1$ Mireni$_2$ [PRO$_2$ hura$_{1/*2/3}$ ikusteko] erran dio
Peiok Mary-DAT PRO hura to-see said AUX
'Peter$_1$ has told Mary$_2$ to see him$_{1/*2/3}$' (Rebuschi, 1988)

- There is quite a lot of variation in the use of *bera*. Depending on the variety, it can be bound locally, non-locally, or not bound (in the sentence) at all! (Laka, 1996; De Rijk, 2022)

Javanese

- Claim: [P] = dheen [D [P]] = awake dheen

(24) [Gurue Tono$_1$]$_2$ ketok awake dheen$_{1/2/3}$ nggon kaca
teacher tono see body 3SG in mirror
'Tono's teacher saw himself/him/her in the mirror'

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- A morphological impoverishment account can capture the bound uses of *dhewe*, or locally bound uses of *awake dheen*, but the latter is predicted to be infelicitous when unbound — contrary to fact.

Malay

- Claim: [P] = dia [D [P]] = diri [A [D [P]]] = dirinya

(25) Malay — Cole & Hermon (2005)

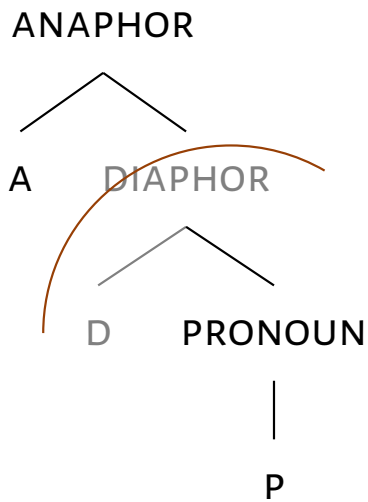
Ahmad$_1$ tahu [Salmah$_2$ akan membeli baju untuk dirinya$_{1/2/3}$]
Ahmad knows Salmah will buy clothes for DIRINYA
'Ahmad knows that Salmah will buy clothes for him/herself/them'

- Like with Javanese, it should be impossible for the anaphor to be bound non-locally, and unbound even more so!

NB 'dirinya' is morphologically complex — diri + 3SG. It is (near) impossible to derive this with the containment structure in (4)!

Anaphor Agreement Effect

- Preminger (2019) (and following him, Rudnev 2020) use the results of Middleton's typological survey to argue that the containment hypothesis provides a ready explanation for the anaphor-agreement effect — a restriction (in some languages) on φ-agreement with anaphors.



- When anaphors are accessible, they can result in a crash (e.g. Icelandic), default agreement (e.g. Georgian), or full φ-agreement (e.g. Tamil).

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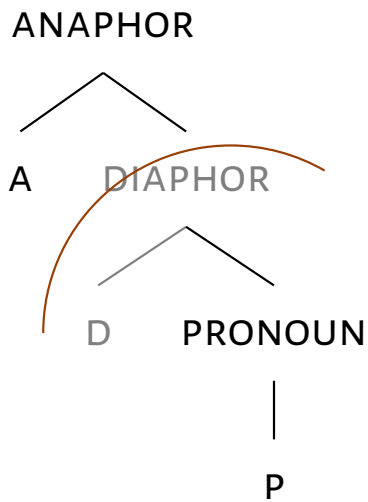

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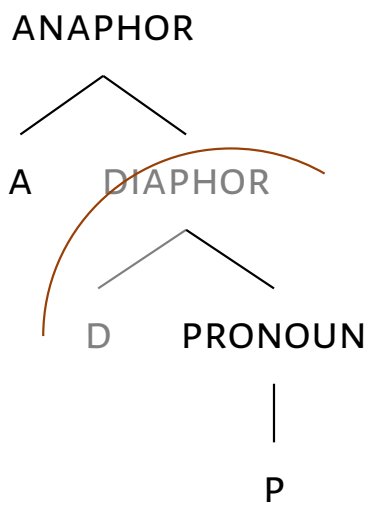

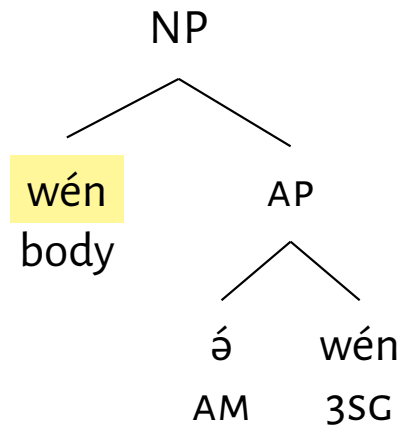

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Conclusion

- Anaphors in the world's languages don't seem to be structured uniformly.
- The uniformity thesis crucially relied upon the existence of *ABA effects in pronominal system — there are good reasons to doubt this.

- Treating body-part reflexives as idioms gives us purchase on the ambiguity, as well as the shape of the anaphoric paradigm.
- Perhaps all complex anaphors allow for a treatment as idioms (modulo grammaticalization).

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