

*Counter-command condition in the  
Japanese reflexive constructions*

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The syntactic conditions on the occurrence of the Japanese reflexive pronoun *zibun* 'self' have been stated as follows (cf. Kuno 1973, McCawley 1976, Inoue 1976, Shibatani 1977, Hasegawa 1981):-

- (i) the subject-antecedent condition: the antecedent must be the subject of a sentence;
- (ii) the antecedent-command condition: the antecedent must command *zibun* 'self'.

The antecedent-command condition explains the contrast between the ungrammatical sentence (1) and the grammatical sentence (2) (McCawley 1976:57):

- (1) \*Hiroshi<sub>i</sub> ga ima gesyuku site iru ie ni zibun<sub>i</sub> wa moo  
now board house in self already  
gonen mo sunde iru.  
five years live

In the house where Hiroshi<sub>i</sub> boards now self<sub>i</sub> has been living as long as five yrsrs.

- (2) Zibun<sub>i</sub> ga ima gesyuku site iru ie ni Hiroshi<sub>i</sub> wa moo  
self now board house in already  
gonen mo sunde iru.  
five years live

In the house where self<sub>i</sub> boards now Hiroshi<sub>i</sub> has been living as long as five years.

and also the contrast between the ungrammatical sentence (3) and the grammatical sentence (4) (Inoue 1976:119):

- (3) \*Taroo<sub>i</sub> ga kai ni der-are-nakat-ta no de zibun<sub>i</sub> wa Ziroo o  
meeting to go-can-not-past as self  
kawari ni yat-ta.  
in his place send-past

As Taro<sub>i</sub> could not go to the meeting, self<sub>i</sub> sent Jiro in his place.

- (3) Zibun<sub>i</sub> ga kai ni der-are-nakat-ta no de Taroo<sub>i</sub> wa Ziroo o kawari ni yat-ta.

As he<sub>i</sub> could not go to the meeting, Taro<sub>i</sub> sent Jiro in his place.

However, consider the following examples:-

- (5) Boku<sub>i</sub> ga hannin de nai koto wa zibun<sub>i</sub> ga  
I<sub>i</sub> NOM(inative) culprit be not fact TOP(ic) self<sub>i</sub> NOM  
itiban yoku sit-te iru.

most well know

Self<sub>i</sub> (i.e. I) know the best (of all the people concerned) the fact that I<sub>i</sub> am not the culprit. (an example taken from a novel—Takagi 1962:214)

- (6) Watasi<sub>i</sub> ga waruk-atta koto wa zibun<sub>i</sub> ga itiban yoku  
I<sub>i</sub> NOM be wrong-PAST fact TOP self<sub>i</sub> NOM most well  
oboe-te imasu.

remember

Self<sub>i</sub> (i.e. I) remember the best (of all the people concerned) the fact that I<sub>i</sub> was wrong.

- (7) Kimi<sub>i</sub> ga waruk-atta koto o zibun<sub>i</sub> ga zenzen  
you<sub>i</sub> NOM be wrong-PAST fact ACC(usative) self<sub>i</sub> NOM not at all  
oboe-te inai no ka?  
remember not QUESTION

Self<sub>i</sub> (i.e. you) don't remember at all the fact that you<sub>i</sub> were wrong, do you<sub>i</sub>?

- (8) Yamada Sensei<sub>i</sub> ga gityoo de aru koto o go-zibun<sub>i</sub> ga  
Yamada Teacher<sub>i</sub> NOM chairman is fact ACC RESPECT-self<sub>i</sub> NOM  
sukkari wasure-te simat-ta.  
completely has forgotten

Self<sub>i</sub> (i.e. Professor Yamada) has completely forgotten the fact that Professor Yamada<sub>i</sub> is the chairman.

As we saw above, the antecedent-command condition requires that the antecedent command *zibun* 'self'. However, on the contrary, in each of the examples (5)–(8), *zibun* 'self' commands the antecedent. Here, we have instances of what I might call 'counter-command reflexives'.

I do not know exactly under what conditions 'counter-command reflexives' are

allowed. But, at least in the examples such as (5)–(8):

- (a) the higher-clause predicate is a (two-place) verb of cognition, knowledge, memory, or the like, e.g. *sir-* 'know', *obo-* 'remember', *wasure-* 'forget', etc.;
- (b) the antecedent is the subject of the complement clause of such a verb, and *zibun* 'self' is the subject of the higher clause;
- (c) the complement clause precedes the higher clause, i. e.;
- (d) the antecedent precedes *zibun* 'self';
- (e) the sentence sounds much more natural when the higher clause contains an adverb of a certain type, e.g. *itiban...* 'the ...est', *sukkari* 'completely', *mattaku* 'completely', *zenzen* 'not at all', etc. than when the higher clause does not contain such an adverb;
- (f) the subject of the higher sentence sounds more natural with the nominative particle *ga* than with the topic particle *wa*.

Note that the examples (5)–(8) differ from the ungrammatical sentences (1) and (3) in terms of these points except for (d).

In conclusion, for the Japanese reflexive constructions, the antecedent-command condition needs to be modified. 'Counter-command reflexives', too, exist (under certain conditions the details of which are as yet unknown).

#### References

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