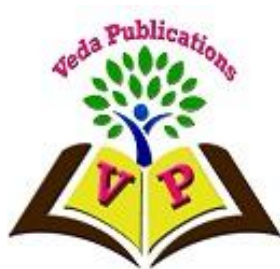RESEARCH ARTICLE

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BLOCKING EFFECT IN TELUGU & ENGLISH

Somasekhara Varaprasad K
(Ph.D in Linguistics and Phonetics,The English and Foreign Languages University,Hyderabad)

***Email*:** kancherlasekhar70@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the parameteric variation among langauges in terms of Blocking effect and exhibits that Telugu shares this **parameter** with Kannada, Tamil, and Malayalam and with other languages such as Chinese, Korean and some African languages. And, English, on the other hand, does not exhibit this Blocking effect which makes it different from the other languages mentioned above.

Keywords*: *Blocking Effect, Long Distance Anaphor.*

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that the languages which have Long distance[1] reflexives exhibit what is called Blocking Effect (Cole et al., 2006; Huang and Tang, 1991). The Blocking Effect is defined as follows: "If self's antecedent has certain person feature, every intervening subject must also have the same person feature".

For example, if *self's* antecedent is 3rd person, every intervening subject must also be 3rd person. If not, co-indexing is not possible. This effect is known as "Blocking effect". Cole has said that the languages which lack subject verb agreement exhibit this Blocking Effect.

Now let us look at Long distance reflexives occurring in Chinese language.

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[1]Long distance anaphors always allow an antecedent outside of its Binding domain.

1) $Zhangsan_k renweiLisi_j zhidaoWangwu_i xihuanziji_{i/j/k}$

Zhangsan thinksLisi knows Wangwu likes   self

Zhangsan thinks Lisi knows that Wangwu likes himself.

-Chinese (Cole, Hermon & Sung: 1990)

In sentence, the self *ziji* can refer to any of the three antecedents: the *ziji*can refer to the subject *Wangwu* within embedded clause or it can refer to the subject *renwei* which occurs in the intermediate clause or it can refer to the matrix subject *Zhangsan*. Since all the three subjects have same person feature, *ziji*can refer to any of the three subjects.

The same structure obtains even in Korean language also. Consider the following example,

2) $Cheolsu_k$-nun $Youngshik_j$-I $caki_{i/j/k}$-lulcoaha-nun-keot-ul

Cheolsuk-TOP Youngshik-NOM self-ACC like-ASP-COMP-ACC

$Youngsu_i$-kaalkoitta-kosaengkakha-n-ta.

Youngsu-NOM know-COMP think-ASP- DEC

Cheolsu thinks that Youngsu knows that Youngshik likes himself.

-Korean (O'Grady:1987)

In sentence (2), the Korean self *caki* can refer to any of the three antecedents. It can refer to the nearest subject of the embedded clause; *Youngshik*; or it can refer to the intermediate subject, *Youngsu*; or it can refer to the matrix subject *cheolsu*.

Now let us discuss and see how and when Blocking effect takes place in these two languages.

Self in both of these languages is devoid of person feature and it can refer to either 1st or 2nd and 3rd persons also. But, if *self* has to have the matrix antecedent then the matrix subject and embedded subject ought to have the same person feature. If not, the co-indexing becomes impossible. Consider the following examples,

3) $Zhangsan_k renwe_i wo_j zhidaoWangwu_i xihuanziji_{i/*j/*k}$

Zhangsan thinks   I know   Wangwu likes self

Zhangsanthinks I know that Wangwu likes himself.

-Chinese (Cole, Hermon & Sung: 1990)

4) $Chelswu_i$-nun nay_j-$kacasin_{*i/j}$-ulsarrangha-n-ta-kosayngkakha-n-ta

Chelswu-TOP I NOM self-ACC love-Pres-Decl-Comp think-Pres-Decl

Chelswu thinks I like him.

-Korean (Cole, Hermon & Sung: 1990)

In sentences (3 & 4) there is Blocking effect. *self* in these two languages refers to the antecedent within the clause but not the matrix subject as there is an intervening 1st person subject between *self* and matrix subject.

Now, let us look at Telugu, Tamil and Kannada and see whether there is Blocking effect in these languages.

One important feature that distinguishes Telugu from Kannada and Tamil is that *taan* in those languages cannot function as a pronoun whereas *taan* in Telugu can function both as a reflexive and as a pronoun. Since *taan* does not have this dual function in the other two languages, it is replaced by a pronoun when it ought to be coferential with the matrix or embedded subjects.

According to the co-occurrence restriction of *taan* in both the languages, *taan* cannot be used at all with the embedded subjects like *nuvvu* 'you', *neenu* 'I'. In fact, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu do have agreement inflection but they exhibit Blocking effect. Malayalam, on the other hand, which lacks agreement inflection also exhibit Blocking effect. So, Tamil and Kannada provide counter evidence for Cole's observation that languages which lack subject verb agreement exhibit Blocking Effect. Now, let us turn our attention to some Telugu examples which exhibit Blocking effect. Consider the following examples,

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5) raaju$_i$ [ravitana-ni$_{i/j}$koTT-aa-Du ani]   andari-kicepp-aa-Du

Raju   raviself acc beat pst 1stsg/3sg.m COM everybody dat saypst 3 sg.m

Raju told everybody that Ravi has beaten him.

In (5), *taan* in the embedded clause refers to either the matrix subject *raju* or someone outside the sentence as the embedded subject and matrix subject are in 3rd person. Here, *taan* functions both as pronoun and as reflexive.

6) raaju$_i$ [neenu$_j$ tana-ni$_{*i/*j/k}$koTT-aa-nu ani] andari-kicepp-aa-Du

Raju   I   self acc   beat pst1st COMeverbodydat say pst 3 sg.m

Raju told everybody that I have beaten everyone.

7) raaju$_i$ [nuvvu$_j$ tana-ni$_{*i/*j/k}$koTT-aa-vu ani] andari-kicepp-aa-Du

Raju   you   self accbeat pst2nd COM everybody datpst 3 sg.m

Raju told everybody that you have beaten everyone.

In (6), *taan* cannot refer to the matrix subject *raaju*. It can refer to someone outside the sentence. Here the first person subject *neenu* is blocking co-reference between *raaju* and *tana-ni*. In the same way, *nuvvu*blocks co-reference between *raaju* and *tana-ni* in (7). So, in both the sentences *taan* functions only as pronoun but not as anaphor.

Consider the following example from Tamil,

8) raaman$_i$sonnaan[nii *tannooda$_i$kuzhandayaikillin-aanendu]

Raman   said 3p sg you self's   child-acc   pinched-2p sg COM.

Raman said that you pinched *self's child.   (Jayaseelan, 1998, 38)

In the above sentence, *taan* cannot refer to the matrix subject *raaman* since there is an intervening 1st person subject *nii* in the embedded clause*.* But, if there is a pronoun in place of *taan*, then it refers to the matrix subject without giving rise to ungrammaticality as shown in the following example,

9) raaman$_i$sonnaan [nii *tannooda$_i$/awanooda$_i$kuzhandayaikillin-aanendu]

Raman   said 3p sgyour self's   child-acc pinched-2p sg COM.

Raman said that you pinched *self's child.

(Jayaseelan, 1998, 38)

The same structure obtains even in Kannada and works the same in Tamil (Sudharsan p.c.). Consider the following Kannada examples,

10) ?raaju$_i$ [naanutannanna$_i$baide anta] a-nukoNDa

Raju   I   self acc   chided COMP thought

?Raju thought that I chided self.

11) ?[niinutanna$_i$makkaLannabaide anta] raaju$_i$nanageheeLida

You   self's children-acc abused COMP Raju to me said 3sm

?Raju told me that you abused self's children.

Therefore, we can say that there is a clear Blocking effect in Telugu. This way, Telugu shares this **parameter** with Kannada, Tamil, and Malayalam and with other languages such as Chinese, Korean and some African languages which also exhibit Blocking effect.

This is an important **parametric** variation which distinguishes English from Telugu. English does not show Blocking effect because reflexives in English do not have fixed gender, Case and number features. Consider the following example,

12) Raju told me [that Ravi$_i$ hit himself$_i$]

In (12), the reflexive *himself* refers to *Ravi* within the embedded clause but not to *Raju* though *Ravi, Raju* and *himself*are third person.

English does not show Blocking effect may be because it obeys SSC[2] and nearest subject condition. In this important respect, English differs from Telugu and several other languages in which reflexives are predominately logophoric.

This is an important **parameter** that distinguishes English from Telugu type of languages**.**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN GLOSSES OF THE DATA

1. *   : unacceptable or ungrammatical
2. acc. : accusative case
3. agr. : agreement
4. adj. : adjective
5. adv.: adverb
6. arb. : arbitrary
7. aux.: auxiliary
8. BT   : Binding Theory
9. CM : case marker
10. COMP.: complementiser
11. dat. : dative case
12. DP. : determiner phrase
13. DR : disjoint reference.
14. DS   : deep structure
15. ECM: exceptional case marking
16. emp.: emphatic
17. f.   : feminine
18. fut. : future tense marker
19. GB   : Government and Binding Theory
20. gen.: genetic case
21. hon : honorific
22. Imp : imperative
23. Inf   : infinitive
24. INFL: head of an Inflectional Phrase
25. Inst : instrumental
26. IP   : Inflectional phrase
27. LDA : long distance anaphor
28. LF   : logical form
29. Log : logophor
30. Loc : locative case
31. m.   : masculine
32. N.   : noun
33. n.   : neuter gender
34. neg.: negation
35. nom.: nominative case
36. NP. : noun phrase

[2]Specified Subject Condition (SSC)

Y which is in the non-subject position of an embedded clause cannot refer to Z in the matrix sentence if there is an intervening subject between Z and Y.

37. pass.: passive
38. perf.: perfective aspect
39. PF   : phonetic form
40. pl.   : plural
41. PNG: person-number-gender
42. Poss: possessive
43. PP   : postpositional or Prepositional Phrase
44. PPT : principles and parameters theory
45. prog.: progressive
46. pro : non-overt pronoun
47. PRO : anaphoric subject of infinitival
48. pst. : past
49. refl. : reflexive
50. sg.   : singular
51. self-ben: self benifactive
52. spec: specifier
53. SSC : Specified Subject Constraint/Condition.
54. SS   : surface structure
55. TSC : Tensed-S[entence] Constraint/Condition
56. UG   : Universal Grammar
57. V   : verb
58. VP   : verb phrase
59. VR   : verbal reflexive
60. Vrec: verbal reciprocal
61. 1   : first person
62. 2   : second person
63. 3   : third person

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