

TITLE: Reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns. The use of anaphors among adolescents in multilingual urban settings.

SWEDISH TITLE: Reflexivt och personligt pronomen. Anaforisk syftning hos ungdomar i flerspråkiga storstadsmiljöer.

LANGUAGE: Swedish (English summary)

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Abstract

This thesis is an empirical study of the choice between a reflexive and a non-reflexive pronoun to express *coreference* in Swedish. *Anaphoric binding* has previously been considered to follow a typical pattern in which reflexive (possessive) pronouns are interpreted as coreferent with the subject of the finite clause, the *domain*, in which they occur. Non-reflexive (possessive) pronouns are non-coreferent with the subject of the finite clause in which they occur.

The first aim of this study is to investigate to what extent the finite clause constitutes the domain for binding and in what grammatical, semantic or pragmatic contexts variation occurs. The second aim is to relate variation in the distribution of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns to the speakers' linguistic background.

The empirical data for this study is a corpus of spoken and written language based on interviews with 97 adolescents in multilingual urban settings in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö and with a control group of 21 adults from the same cities. All 4088 instances of a choice between a reflexive and a non-reflexive pronoun have been annotated with syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information. The data also includes a grammaticality judgement test with the same informants.

The results show that the typical pattern is used in 97% of the cases (infinitival clauses excluded). Variation most commonly involves non-reflexive possessive pronouns which occur in 12% of the contexts in which a reflexive possessive pronoun is prescribed by the typical pattern. This variation appears mainly in two contexts: in prepositional phrases and in elliptic answers, that consist of only a PP or an NP. The reasons for variation are discussed in terms of markedness, reanalysis of grammatical structure and language processing.

Variation occurs significantly more often with multilingual than with monolingual adolescents. Variation also occurs significantly more often with adolescents than with adults. Other factors, such as age of onset, native language, gender, amount of multilingual interaction and city of residence are also of importance.

The implications of the results for grammatical description are discussed with respect to transformational grammar and Lexical-Functional grammar.

KEY WORDS: Anaphora, binding, reflexive pronoun, linguistic variation, multilingualism, adolescent language, Lexical-Functional grammar, Swedish.

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