Chinese anaphors can be divided into two semantic types: One (the X-benshen ‘X-self’ anaphor, in which X is either ziji ‘self’ or pronoun-ziji ‘pronoun-self’) requires pure identity with its antecedent; the other (the non-X-benshen ‘non-X-self’ anaphor) allows near identity with its antecedent. Pure identity shown by the anaphor ziji-benshen ‘self-self’ can be derivable from the semantic composition of the near reflexive function of the morpheme ziji ‘self’, the focus function of the morpheme benshen ‘self’ and the operator status of ziji-benshen ‘non-X-self’ anaphor is due to its being “a pronoun in coreference.” In other words, in Chinese pure identity is near reflexivity plus a focus marker which picks out the best representation of the antecedent that happens to be the actual person. Thus, the X-benshen ‘X-self’ anaphor should not be considered a pure anaphor without content. Typologically, there are two ways for human languages to get pure identity: One is by using an anaphor without content; the other is by using a focus marker that picks out the best representation of the antecedent which happens to be the actual person. The typological difference in establishing pure identity provides an answer for the long standing question of why the notion of coargumenthood is often adopted by linguists in defining binding conditions in languages which show an antilocality effect but seldom in Chinese. The distribution and coindexation of all Chinese anaphors, either the X-benshen ‘X-self’ or the non-X-benshen ‘non-X-self’ anaphor, are determined by one single syntactic condition, namely, the traditional binding theory, regardless of whether they are inside or outside the coargument domain.

In contrast, in languages which show an antilocality effect, the binding theory allows both pure and near anaphors within the coargument domain but Condition R filters out one of them in the absence of lexical/morphological reflexivity; however, outside the coargument domain, the binding theory itself governs the distribution and coindexation of all anaphors.

1. Introduction

When an elaborate scenario is provided, human languages allow people to refer to a statue by using the name of the person that the statue portrays. Example (1) is such a case in which the name of the late Generalissimo Jiang Jie-Shi (i.e., Chiang Kai-Shek) refers to his statue rather than the actual person.

(1) Ni kan! Jiang Jie-Shi zai nar yijing zhan-le wu-shi nian le, ye bu xiaode hai yao zai zhan duo jiu. ‘Look! Jiang Jie-Shi has been standing there for fifty years, and we do not know how long he still has to be there.’
Jackendoff (1992) notes that the ability of names to refer either to persons or to their statues partially carries over to anaphors, though in a curious way. For example, (2), taken from Jackendoff (1992, 5), can mean that Ringo Starr (wandering around at Madame Tussaud’s London wax museum) fell on his statue.

(2) Ringo fell on himself. (himself = statue)

That is, the English anaphor (i.e., reflexive) *himself* might take as referent a “virtual representation of its antecedent,” for example the statue of Ringo Starr.

Lidz (1996, 2000, 2001a) points out that the Chinese bare reflexive *ziji* ‘self’ behaves on a par with the English reflexive *himself* in this respect; that is, the Chinese bare reflexive *ziji* ‘self’ does not establish complete identity with its antecedent but rather a relation which allows a coreference interpretation but does not necessarily require complete identity with its antecedent, as indicated by (3).

(3) Mao Ze-Dong ba ziji qiangbi le. (Lidz (1996, 158))
Mao Ze-Dong BA self shot Sfp
‘Mao Ze-Dong shot himself.’ (ziji = Mao Ze-Dong/statue)

In other words, in the Madame Tussaud context, the Chinese bare reflexive *ziji* ‘self’ allows either the statue or the identity interpretation.

All other things being equal, we also find that the same obtains with the Chinese complex reflexive *ta-ziji* ‘himself’, as shown below.

(4) Zai ziji-de tongxiang qian, Jiang Jie-Shi yong gunzi da-le ta-ziji yi-xia.
At self-DE statue before Jiang Jie-Shi use cane hit-Asp himself one-Cl
‘In front of his statue, Jiang Jie-Shi uses a cane to hit himself.’
(ta-ziji = Jiang Jie-Shi/statue)

Since both the bare reflexive *ziji* ‘self’ and the complex reflexive *ta-ziji* ‘himself’ are referentially dependent on but not necessarily identical with their antecedents, following Lidz (1996, 2000, 2001a), we call them near reflexives; that is, near reflexives might take as referent an extension of the antecedent.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, we shall show that the Chinese complex anaphor *ziji-benshen* ‘self-self’ requires complete identity with its antecedent, as shown by the examples in (5) (cf. X.-F. Yu (1996, 1998)).