Challenges of Local and Long-distance Binding of Chinese Reflexives:
Syntactic Relations, Semantic Co-reference, and Pragmatic Logophoricity

Chit-Fung LAM (Lawrence)
University of Manchester
chitfung.lam@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Mandarin Chinese has two 3rd-person singular reflexives, namely, *taziji* (complex reflexive) and *ziji* (simplex reflexive). Since Tang (1989), much attention has been drawn to Chinese reflexives, in particular, the simplex reflexive *ziji* owing to its capacity for long-distance binding, which seems to raise problems for the locality requirements of the binding theory (Chomsky, 1981). Although many theoretical solutions have been proposed throughout the past few decades (e.g., Huang & Tang, 1991; Xue, Pollard & Sag, 1994; Cole & Wang, 1996; Huang & Liu, 2001; Pan, 2001; Pan & Hu, 2003; Giblin, 2016; Charnavel, Huang, Cole & Hermon, 2017; Sperlich, 2019), Chinese anaphoric resolution remains a fascinating topic up to the present day (e.g., Reuland, Wong & Everaert, 2020; Sperlich, 2020; Ke & Pires, 2021).

In the first half of the talk, I will focus on the discussion of empirical data, enabling us to identify properties of Chinese reflexives without subscribing to one particular theoretical framework. These properties include local vs long-distance binding, subject orientation, animacy requirements, subcommand, blocking effects, logophoricity, etc. Given that Chinese binding is a complicated puzzle, even the clarification of its linguistic properties is not without controversy. Thus, where appropriate, I will point out the relevant debates, and how cross-linguistic typological research on adnominal possession and logophoricity may shed light on the issues.

The second half of the talk provides a formal model for the empirical data within the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (Bresnan, Asudeh, Toivonen & Wechsler, 2015; Dalrymple, Lowe, Mycock, 2019). In LFG, binding relations are stated with reference to the syntactic structure of dependency relations (f-structure), rather than the phrasal structure (c-structure); binding constraints are specified lexically, rather than on a universal or per-language basis (Dalrymple, 1993, 2015). As binding relations are semantic in nature in the sense that they deal with the co-reference between a reflexive and its antecedent, the formulation of binding constraints involves projection from the f-structure to the semantic structure (s-structure) in LFG's parallel-correspondence architecture. My model of anaphoric resolution is further augmented by the integration of logophoric binding.

Through the lens of Mandarin Chinese, this talk presents an alternative theory for modelling binding relations in LFG terms, instead of following the dominant Minimalist approaches, and opens up a cross-theoretical dialogue.

References:
Bresnan, Joan, Ash Asudeh, Ida Toivonen, and Stephen Wechsler. 2015. *Lexical-Functional Syntax*. John Wiley & Sons.
Charnavel, Isabelle, C.-T. James Huang, Peter Cole, and Gabriella Hermon. 2017. 'Long-Distance Anaphora: Syntax and Discourse'. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax, Second Edition*, 1–82. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Chomsky, Noam. 1981. *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.
Cole, Peter, and Chengchi Wang. 1996. 'Antecedents and Blockers of Long-Distance Reflexives: The Case of Chinese Ziji'. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 357–90.
Dalrymple, Mary. 1993. *The Syntax of Anaphoric Binding*. 36. Center for the Study of Language (CSLI).

———. 2015. 'Obligatory Nonlocal Binding'. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 33 (4): 1089–1120.

Dalrymple, Mary, John J. Lowe, and Louise Mycock. 2019. *The Oxford Reference Guide to Lexical Functional Grammar*. Oxford University Press.

Giblin, Iain. 2016. 'Agreement Restrictions in Mandarin Long-Distance Binding'. PhD Thesis, MIT.

Huang, C-T. James, and C-S Luther Liu. 2001. 'Logophoricity, Attitudes, and Ziji at the Interface'. In *Long-Distance Reflexives*, edited by Peter Cole, Gabriella Hermon, and C.-T. James Huang, 33:141–95. New York: Academic Press.

Huang, C.-T. James, and C.-C. Jane Tang. 1991. 'The Local Nature of the Long-Distance Reflexive in Chinese'. In *Long-Distance Anaphor*, edited by Jan Koster and Eric Reuland, 19:263–82. Cambridge University Press.

Ke, Alan Hezao, and Acrisio Pires. 2021. 'Local versus Long-Distance Bound Implicit Arguments of Inalienable Relational Nouns in Chinese'. *Journal of Linguistics*, July, 1–37. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022226721000190.

Pan, Haihua. 2001. 'Why the Blocking Effect'. In *Long-Distance Reflexives*, edited by Peter Cole, Gabriella Hermon, and C.-T. James Huang, 33:279–316. Syntax and Semantics 33. New York: Academic Press.

Pan, Haihua, and Jianhua Hu. 2003. 'Prominence and Locality in the Binding of Mandarin Complex Reflexive "Ta-Ziji"(s/He-Self)'. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics Monograph* 19: 152–70.

Reuland, Eric, Sally Chi Ho Wong, and Martin Everaert. 2020. 'How the Complexity of Mandarin *Zi-Ji* Simplifies the Grammar'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 51 (4): 799–814. https://doi.org/10.1162/ling_a_00355.

Sperlich, Darcy. 2019. 'Syntactic and Pragmatic Theories of Chinese Reflexives'. *Lingua* 221: 22–36.

———. 2020. 'Reflexive Pronouns: A Theoretical and Experimental Synthesis'.

Tang, C.-C. Jane. 1989. 'Chinese Reflexives'. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 7 (1): 93–121.

Xue, Ping, Carl Pollard, and Ivan A Sag. 1994. 'A New Perspective on Chinese Ziji'. In *Proceedings of the Thirteenth West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*.

Further reading:

Lam, Chit Fung. (To appear). 'A Constraint-Based Approach to Anaphoric and Logophoric Binding in Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese'. In *Proceedings of the LFG'21 Conference*, edited by Miriam Butt, Jamie Findlay, and Ida Toivonen, 202–22. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.