Co-reference in Panara

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Panara co-reference may occur in different constructions involving formatives such as anaphoric elements which refer to entities already established directly or indirectly in the preceding discourse, in the same sentence or the same larger grammatical unit. Here we will present the main manifestations of this co-reference phenomenon in simple and complex sentences. The focus will be on the ergative case marking strongly present in Panara morphology in the realis mood with absence of this marking only in the irrealis mood of verbal morphology. It should be noted, however, that only vestiges of ergativity appear in its syntax. Immediately following the contexts in which co-reference occurs are listed.

Reflexive and reciprocal voice

In the Panara language, side by side with active constructions, we find constructions that express the so called reflexive and reciprocal. These are semantically close to active transitive ones, even though they are semantically less transitive. The main difference in relation to the active refers to the question of co-reference of the anaphoric pronoun with the subject of the construction.

In this language, reflexives are marked by the cliticized pronoun yı ∞ yā, in general, immediately to the right of the clitic which concords with the subject (ergative in realis mode and nominative in irrealis mode). The verb retains its transitive morphology, with the subject marked for the ergative case, that is, the
reflexive is controlled by the agent as in the accusative languages. The choice between one or the other clitic forms is determined by the verb class. Besides a direct object reflexive, there were also found reflexive benefactives and comitatives.

a) Reflexive direct object. In (1) and (3) active constructions, and in (2) and (4), reflexives:

1. ‘the man killed a deer.’

2. ‘the man killed himself.’

3. ‘the child will cut us.’

4. ‘the child cut himself/her self.’

a) Benefactive reflexive. There is no valence reduction, the two arguments occur expressively. Two distinct situations were found:

(i) The beneficiary is the same person as the subject:

5. ‘I bought the clothing for myself.’

(ii) The beneficiary includes the person of the subject:

6. ‘I got things for us.’

b) Comitative reflexive. There is also no reduction of valence. The comitative complement may be expressed.
A reciprocal construction is one in which two participants act equally in relation to each other. In Panará, reciprocality is expressed by means of the clitic pi and/or the dual clitic, co-referent with the subject also dual. When it is expressed only by the dual, there is no way to distinguish a reciprocal from an active construction. As in reflexive constructions, the reciprocals show the same ergative pattern as the reflexive constructions in the marking of case, as may be seen in the examples below. There is, however, no detransitivation of the verb.

Switch-reference

Panará has two prefixes that mark person, a- ~ ā- and i- ~ i-, which may be affixed to verbs. It has not been possible to distinguish the two in terms of function. It was also not possible to detect any kind of phonological conditioning for this alternation, or even determine if they are lexically conditioned allomorphs. In the syntactic contexts in which they occur it may involve a type of switch-reference system since in the examples below the prefix indicates that the subject of the second construction is co-referential with the subject of the first, independent of whether the subject is ergative or absolutive. In serial constructions, they are affixed to the first verb of the series.
These same prefixes, however, also occur in inter-clausal contexts – mainly in constructions in which the pronominal clitic is far from the root of the main verb by interposing grammatical categories of the verb, nouns, classifiers, and/or incorporated postpositions or verbs in serial constructions. In these cases, they are prefixed to the last verb of the series.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns may be used anaphorically to refer to a nominal previously introduced in the discourse, with a predominantly pronominal function. In this case it behaves as the argument of the verb, marked by the morphology as to number as well as ergative or absolutive case.

‘the two children are sick, they are vomiting’.
Demonstrative pronouns may appear as resumptive pronouns, in coreference with an SN ergative or absolutive subject, or with an SN direct object, nucleus of a relative clause. Generally the positioning is clause final. There is not, however, any type of syntactic alignment.

Possession

The noun -ô ‘possession’, when preceeded by a non-contiguous relational prefix (Rodrigues 1981, 1990) s- occurs before the possessed element, which may occupy the complement position or verbal adjunct, in co-reference to the possessor in the function of subject of the transitive or intransitive verb operating, however, in a nominative-accusative alignment.

The noun s-ô also may occur followed by sakiama ´same, own`, a resumptive pronoun of the nominal possessor. In this case, the possessed noun
follows and has the function of direct object. The possessor may have the function of the indirect object (benefactive) or of an ergative subject.

(23) ɪkyɛ hɛ ёр =pɛ =mɛ =sʊ-ri ɛu ɛu ERG REAL.TR=1SG.ERG=DIR=DAT=dar-PERF soap own sakiama piko mɛ she herself Piko BEN ‘I gave to Piko her own soap.’

(24) akɛ hɛ ёр =ti =ɛ =pɛtɛ-ri ɛkɛrɛtɛ Akâ ERG REAL.TR=3SG.ERG=3SG.ABS=lost-PERF recorder.ABS sʊ sakiama possession his own ‘Akâ lost his recorder (his own).’

Another noun, -i, also meaning of ‘possession’, when proceeded by a non-contiguous relational prefix (Rodrigues op. cit.) s-, is less productive than sʊ, and was found mainly in the speech of the older people. The form sɨ occurs in the same contexts as sʊ, except that in those which co-occur with the resumptive pronoun sakiama ‘own, same.’.

(25) maira ɛkɛ koa tɛ Maira.ABS REAL.INT=3SG.ABS=ir RNC-possession house.ABS ‘Maíra went to her (Maíra’s) house.’

(26) pɔsina hɛ ɤ =ti =s-ɛtɛ-ri ɛkɛkɛjɛ Pâsina ERG REAL.TR=3SG.ERG=3SG.ABS-sent-PERF Sekikjy.ABS sɨ koa tɛ possession casa ALA ‘Pâsina sent Sekikjy to his (Pâsina’s) house.’

Coordinate constructions

In coordinate constructions, where arguments differ if they refer to the third person of the same number, there is ambiguity for the interpretation of the elliptical element, which may be solved or disambiguated by the repetition of the argument in the second clause. In case this repetition does not function, there is a tendency to interpret the subject as the elliptical element in the second clause, unless pragmatic factors interfere in this interpretation. As follows:

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(31) nãkã hẽ ø =ti =ø =sa-ri îpri
snake ERG REAL.TR=3SG.ERG=3SG.ABS=bite-PERF boy.ABS
(nãkã) yĩ =ø =tɔ
(snake) REAL.INTR=3SG.ABS=go
‘the snake bit the boy and (snake) ran away.’

(32) nãkã hẽ ø =ti =ø =sa-ri îpri
snake ERG REAL.TR=3SG.ERG=3SG.ABS=bite-PERF boy.ABS
îpri yĩ =ø =tɔ
boy REAL.INTR=3SG.ABS=ran away
‘the snake bit the boy and (boy) ran away.’

But, in a sentence like:

(33) yɔwpĩ hẽ ø =ti =s-ãpũ iãsũ
jaguar ERG REAL.TR=3SG.ERG=3SG.ABS=saw deer.ABS
yĩ =ø =tɔ
REAL.INTR=3SG.ABS=ir
‘the jaguar saw the deer and (deer) ran away.’

Only ‘the deer’ can be interpreted as the elliptical subject in the second clause, because pragmatic factors not allow ‘the jaguar’ from being interpreted as the elliptical subject.

Final considerations

Panará co-reference functions mainly in the nominative-accusative system, but constructions with coordinate clauses suggest a process of change in this language in the direction of a nominative-accusative alignment, even though there are still vestiges of ergative-absolutive syntax (the necessity to repeat the SN in the second clause, for example). A pragmatic reading of the elliptical subject may be interpreted as the prime factor underlying the change from one system to the other. (Queixalós, personal communication).

References
