Local and Long Distance Reflexives in Archaic Chinese
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1. Introduction

This paper proposes an analysis of the two reflexive pronouns – 
zi (自) and ji (己) – in late archaic Chinese
of the Warring States period (5th – 3rd centuries BCE). (1) shows examples of ZI and JI, both functioning as
a direct object bound by the local subject. In surface order, JI follows the verb, while ZI precedes the verb.

1) a. ⚤ 己 以 安 人。(Analects 14)

    "Train yourself in order to protect other people."

b. 多 行 不 義 , 必 自 斃。(Zuozhuan, Yin 1)

       “Having done much wrong, he will certainly do himself in.”

Regarding the positional difference, I propose in this paper that JI is a free form and occurs in a variety
of argument positions. ZI, on the other hand, is a bound form and must be adjoined to the verb. There is
also a functional difference between the two. JI can be locally or long distance bound, while ZI must be
locally bound. At first blush, it appears that the difference between the two cannot be captured in terms of
Principles A and B of Chomsky’s (1981, 1986) Binding Theory. However, I argue that a Phase-based
analysis does show the two forms to be subject to complementary licensing conditions. ZI must be spelled
out in the same domain as its antecedent at the time of transfer to the interfaces in the theory of Multiple
Spell-Out (Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2004). In contrast, JI must be spelled out in a different domain from its
antecedent.

2. Distribution of JI

In this section, I show that JI can be locally or long distance bound in terms of the tradition notion of
governing category. When JI is long distance, it functions as a logophor, strongly associated with point-of-
view. It will also be clear from this section that JI occurs in a variety of argument positions and should be
analyzed as a free form and not morphologically dependent on the verb.

2.1. Long Distance JI

In three texts of the late archaic period, Analects of Confucius, Mencius, Zhuanzi, there are 58 occurrences
of long distance JI. Of these, 30 appear in a clause embedded under a psych verb. This is clear evidence
that JI is a logophoric anaphor, given that examples like those in (2) express the emotional state of its
antecedent.

2) a. 諸侯 恶 其 害 己。(Mencius 10)

       “The feudal lords dislike it that they inconvenience them.”
b. 不 患 人 之 不 己 知。 (Analects 1)

Bu huan, [ren zhi bu ji zhi].
NEG worry others GEN NEG self understand

“Do not worry that others do not understand you.”

There are 16 examples of JI appearing in other embedded contexts, co-referential with the matrix subject. There are also 12 examples in which JI which is unbound. However, these examples also provide clues as to the logophoric nature of JI. In (3), JI is the object in a monoclausal construction which does not contain the antecedent of JI. Here, JI displays typical logophoric behavior, referring to the speaker. The sentence also expresses the speaker’s lament, i.e. his emotional state.

3) 莫 己 知 也。 (Analects 14)

ej mo ji zhi ye.
none self know DECL

“No one understands me!”

In the examples in (4), JI is used contrastively. (4a) shows JI in embedded subject position co-referential with the matrix subject. It is being contrasted with the internal argument in the matrix clause ren ‘person’. In (4b), JI is also contrasted with ren in the preceding clause. It has been suggested by Harbsmeier (1981) that the basic function of JI is to express contrast. However, such a characterization cannot account generally for the use of this pronoun, as it very frequently is not used contrastively. On the other hand, the contrastive use can be subsumed under an analysis in which JI is a logophor strongly associated with the speaker’s point-of-view. Specifically, JI is used when the speaker stands firmly on the side of JI’s antecedent, as opposed to others.

4) a. 己 所 不 欲, 勿 施 於 人。 (Analects 12)

[Ji suo bu yu], e wu shi yu ren.
self REL NEG want NEG.IMP extend to person

“What you yourself do not desire, do not inflict on others.”

b. 人 皆 取 先, 己 獨 取 後。 (Zhuangzi 3.11)

Ren jie qu xian, ji du qu hou.
other all take lead self alone take rear

“While others all take the lead, one alone himself remains in the rear.”

In sum, we can say that JI need not be in a structurally local relation with its antecedent. JI also displays the expected characteristics of a logophoric anaphor. It is especially sensitive to speaker’s point-of-view.

2.2. Local JI (bound by local subject)

JI can also be locally bound. Here, I am generalizing the notion of local binding as binding by the local grammatical subject. I include cases which could be understood as long distance binding, specifically when JI functions as the possessor in an NP. (5) shows examples of this type; JI functions as possessor of the direct object. There are eight such examples in the three texts examined.

5) a. 仁 以 為 己 任, 不 亦 重 乎?

Ren yi wei [ji ren], bu yi zhong hu?
benevolence take be self responsibility NEG indeed heavy Q

“Taking benevolence as your responsibility, is this not indeed a heavy duty?” (Analects 8)

b. 善 以 不 得 舞, 為 己 憂。

Yao yi bu de Shun wei [ji you].
Yao take NEG obtain Shun be self concern

“Yao took not obtaining Shun (as his successor) as his own concern.”
There are also cases in which JI is unambiguously locally bound. There are thirteen examples in the three texts which I consulted in which JI is the object of a preposition. Note that zhu in (6a) is a portmanteau form consisting of the object pronoun zhī and the preposition yu.

6) a. 君子求諸己，小人求諸人。
   Junzi qiu zhu (=zhi+yu) ji, xiao ren qiu zhu ren.
   “A superior man seeks it within himself, while a small-minded person demands it of others.”
   (Analects 15)

   b. 於己取之而已矣。
   Yu ji qu zhi er yi yi.
   “(One) seeks it in himself and that’s all.”
   (Mencius 11)

Finally – and crucially – there are as many as fifty examples of JI itself functioning as an internal argument bound by a clause-mate subject.

7) a. 明於權者不以物害己。
   Ming yu quan zhe bu yi wu hai ji.
   “One who understands how to react will not harm himself with anything”
   (Zhuangzi 2.10)

   b. 射者正己而後發。
   She zhe zheng ji er hou fa.
   “An archer straightens himself and then shoots.”
   (Mencius 3)

In sum, JI occurs in a variety of argument positions and can be either locally or long-distance bound, in terms of the traditional Binding Theory. Long distance JI furthermore exhibits the general behavior of a logophoric anaphor. I note in passing that these are the basic characteristics of the modern Mandarin anaphor zi1.

3. Distribution and Function of ZI

In this section, I show that ZI must be locally bound, in contrast to JI. Additionally, I provide evidence that ZI is a morphologically bound form and must be adjoined to the verb, accounting for its pre-verbal position.

3.1. Local Antecedent

The examples in (8) show ZI in pre-verbal position bound by the local subject.

8) a. 多行不義，必自斃。
   Duo xing bu yi, bi zi bi.
   “Having done much wrong, he will certainly kill himself.”
   (Zuozhuan, Yin 1)

   b. 夫子自道也。
   Fuzi zi dao ye.
   “The master is speaking of himself.”
   (Analects 14)

The examples in (9) and (10) show that ZI also takes the most local subject as its antecedent. If JI appears in an embedded clause, it will generally be coreferent with the matrix subject. On the other hand, ZI must refer to the embedded subject. (9) shows examples of relative clauses. JI is the object in the relative

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clause in (9a), coreferential with the matrix subject. ZI is the object of the relative clause in (9b), coreferential with the embedded subject.

9) a. 不 若 黃帝 而
    be.ashamed like Huangdi CONJ
    “He is ashamed of not being as good as Huangdi and feels sympathy for those who are not as good as he is.”

b. 未 見 其 過
    I not.yet see 3.GEN error
    “I have never seen someone who can see his errors and privately blame himself”

(10) shows examples involving complement clauses. JI is coreferential with the matrix subject, while ZI is coreferential with the embedded subject.

10) a. 誠 己 謂 人，則 怫然 作色。
    say self flatterer then anger flush
    “If someone says he is a flatterer, then he flushes in anger.”

b. 言 非 禮 義， 謂 之 自 暩 也。
    speech betray Rite Righteousness say 3.OBJ self injure
    “If his speech betrays the Rites and Righteousness, then (one) says of him that he harms himself.”

Thus, it should be clear that ZI is a local anaphor, always taking the local subject as its antecedent.

3.2. ZI Left-adjacent to V

In this and the following subsection, I argue that ZI is a morphologically bound form, adjoined to the verb. But first I introduce a second usage of ZI. ZI can cooccur with an overt object, in which cases ZI is not itself the object. I argue in this subsection that ZI in these cases is an adverbial bound by the subject.

11) a. 然 則 非 自 殺 之 也。
    thus not.be self kill 3.OBJ DECL
    “Thus, it is not that (one) kills him oneself.”

b. 自 為 之 與？
    self make 3.OBJ Q
    “Did you make it yourself?”

I should point out that there is no overt nominal argument which clearly functions as the subject in the examples in (11). This fact invites speculation that ZI itself could be the subject, which in turn would mean that ZI in these cases is unbound. If this speculation turned out to be true, it would refute the claim of the preceding subsection that ZI is always locally bound.

However, I will argue in this subsection that ZI is not the subject. ZI never occurs in subject position, its position being strictly adjacent to the verb, which is not true of the subject. Therefore, ZI clearly cannot be the element which checks the EPP feature on T. Furthermore, ZI can co-occur with an overt subject.
And this co-occurrence is not limited to contexts permitting a clitic left dislocation analysis. Consequently, ZI cannot be analyzed as a resumptive pronoun in a topicalization structure.

In the following discussion, I use examples of both object ZI and adverbial ZI wherever possible in order to show that the two types of ZI occupy the same position. I indicate the object use of ZI with a line following the verb to show that there is a gap in VP for the base position of ZI.

To begin, ZI can cooccur with an overt subject, which it always follows in surface order.

12) a. 魯君之使者至，
   Lu jun zhi shi zhe zhi,
   "The envoy of the lord of Lu arrived, and Yan He met with him himself."

b. 夫子自道也。
   Fuzi zi dao ye.
   "The master is speaking of himself."

ZI clearly does not occupy subject position, since it follows constituents which the subject always precedes, like subject-oriented quantifiers. (13a) shows ZI following the quantifier jie. The subject precedes jie but could be analyzed as a topic, particularly because it precedes the adverb yi. However, the subject also precedes jie in the embedded clause in (13b). On the assumption that topic position is not available in nonfinite embedded clauses, the embedded subject 2 in (13b) must be in [Spec, TP], showing that the position for the quantifier must be lower than the [Spec, TP] subject position.

13) a. 四面之吏亦皆自行其守。
   Si mian zhi li yi jie zi xing qi shou.
   "The officers at each of the four sides (of the fortress) also all perform their duties by themselves."

b. 民知誅罰之皆起於身也。
   Min zhi [zhufa zhi jie qi ju she] ye.
   "The people know that all punishments are the result of their own actions."

ZI also follows the modal adverb jiang. Note that the subject in both examples below precedes the modal.

14) a. 勿引勿推，福將自歸。
   Wu yin wu tui, fu jiang zi gui.
   "Do not pull or push it; fortune will return by itself."

b. 不欲以靜，天下將自正。
   Bu yu yi jing, tianxia jiang zi zheng ___.
   "If (one) is without desire and passive, the world will aright itself."

It might be suggested that ZI is a resumptive clitic pronoun in a clitic left dislocation construction in (12) – (14). However, (15) shows that ZI also follows subjects which cannot be analyzed as dislocated topics, i.e. embedded subjects.

2 Embedded subjects typically appeared with genitive case in the classical period.
15) a. 君子深造之以道。
Junzi shen zao zhi yi dao
"A gentleman studies deeply in the proper way, as he desires that he attain enlightenment himself."
(Mencius 8)
b. 其自任以天下之重如此。
[Qi zi ren yi tianxia zhi zhong] ru ci.
"Thus was his burdening himself with the weight of the world."
(Mencius 9)

ZI follows negation, which the subject precedes.

16) a. 許子奚為不自織？
Xuzi xi wei bu zi zhi?
"Xuzi, why didn’t you weave (it) yourself?"
(Mencius 5)
b. 夫不自見而見彼。
fu bu jian er jian bi
"not seeing oneself but seeing others"
(Zhuangzi 8)

ZI follows vP-joined adverbs, e.g. manner adverbs.

17) a. 翼然自來，神莫知其極。
Yiran zi lai, shen mo zhi qi ji.
"(A bird) comes flying by itself; even the gods don’t know where it comes from."
(Guanzi 37)
b. 見不賢而內自省也。
Jian bu xian er nei zi xing ye.
"Upon seeing someone not of superior quality, (I) inwardly examine myself."
(Analects 5)

ZI follows object-oriented quantifiers like jin ‘all’ or ‘completely’.

18) 尽自治其事，則事多。
Jin zi zhi qi shi, ze shi duo.
"If (the ruler) takes care of all matters himself, then there is too much for him to do."
(Guanzi 52)

Object-oriented quantifiers in turn are located very low in the structure. (19a) shows that they follow negation. Naturally, they also follow the subject, as shown in (19b).

19) a. 不盡收則不盡御。
Bu jin ze bu jin
"If (the grain) is not all harvested, then it cannot all be used."
(Mozi, Qihuan)
b. 主多怒而好用兵
Zhu duo er hao yong bing
"If the lord often becomes angry and enjoys using military might…. “
(Hanfeizi 15)
Among the clearest evidence for the low position of ZI comes from its placement in subject-control embedded clauses. ZI is left-adjacent to embedded verb and is not located in the matrix clause. This clearly shows that ZI does not occupy the position of the overt subject. Assuming that the subject of the embedded clause is PRO, the overt controller can only occur in the matrix clause.

20)a. 贵人或得計而
Guiren huo de ji er
ruler sometimes succeed plan
欲自以為功。
yu zi yi wei gong.
want self take be credit
“Sometimes the ruler succeeds in some endeavor and wants to take credit for it himself.”

b. 未敢自恃，自命曰粟。
Wei gan zi shi, zi ming yue su.
not yet dare self rely self call say insignificant
“One does not dare to be overconfident in himself and refers to himself as ‘insignificant’.”

To summarize this subsection, I have shown that ZI always immediately precedes the verb. It does not occupy subject position. Nor is it a resumptive clitic pronoun in a dislocation structure. Therefore, ZI cannot be analyzed as the grammatical subject. In the following subsection, I present evidence that ZI is a morphologically bound form, adjoined to the verb.

3.3. ZI not Clitic

The positioning of ZI explored in the previous subsection could be accounted for by analyzing ZI either as an affix or as a clitic which must immediately precede the verb. In this subsection, I argue that ZI is not a clitic but rather is morphologically adjoined to the verb. This claim is supported by the fact that ZI does not exhibit the behavior of other pronouns undergoing cliticization. There is a grammatical phenomenon in archaic Chinese which is traditionally analyzed as cliticization. In sentences containing negation, object pronouns raised from VP and adjoined to the negator. (21) shows monoclausal examples.

21) a. 驕而不亡者，未之有也。
Jiao er bu wang zhe, wei zhi you ye.
arrogant and not lose DET not yet 3.OBJ exist DECL
“There has not yet been one who is arrogant and does not lose everything.” (Zuo zhuan, Ding 13)

b. 吾先君亦莫之行也。
Wu xian jun yi mo zhi xing ye.
former lord also none this do DECL
“None of our former lords did this either.”

In biclausal contexts with nonfinite embedded clauses, embedded object pronouns undergo cliticization under certain circumstances. This is particularly true when the matrix clause contains the negative quantifier mo ‘none’.

22) a. 虎負嶽，莫之敢擕。
Hu fu yu, mo zhi gan [ying ___].
tiger back crevice none 3.OBJ dare approach
“The tiger backed into a crevice and no one dared to approach it.”

b. 如火烈烈，則莫我敢退。
Ru huo lieli ye mo wo gan [e ___].
like fire fierce then none I dare block
“If (we) are fierce as fire, then no one will dare to stand in our way.”

However, ZI never raises from an embedded clause. It remains in the embedded clause, immediately adjacent to the embedded verb.
None of the great nations would dare to just secure themselves at the base of their castle walls.

One does not dare to be overconfident in himself and refers to himself as 'insignificant'.

The proposal in this paper that ZI is adjoined to embedded verb offers an explanation for the inability of ZI to move out of an embedded clause. Since ZI attaches to the lower verb via incorporation, i.e. head movement, it is not able to undergo long distance movement, since this would require skipping intervening head positions along the way, in violation of ‘Travis’ (1984) Head Movement Constraint.

The incorporation analysis also accounts for why only JI (as in 6), and ever ZI, can occur in a PP. This is because movement of ZI to the verb would also violate the Head Movement Constraint, since ZI would have to skip the intervening P position in order to adjoin to the verb.

To summarize the distribution and function of ZI, ZI is a local anaphor, requiring binding from the local subject. ZI is also a morphologically bound form, adjoined to the verb via incorporation.

4. Analysis of ZI and JI

Dong (2002) proposes an analysis of ZI and JI within the Binding Theory of Chomsky (1981, 1986, and others). She treats ZI as a locally bound anaphor subject to Condition A, which is consistent with the facts examined in this paper. However, she claims that JI is never locally bound, treating it as a pronominal subject to Condition B.

The problem with Dong’s analysis is that, as we have seen in section 2.1, JI can in fact be locally bound (cf ex. 7). The correct descriptive generalization must be as in (26). However, an obvious disadvantage of this generalization is that it cannot capture the difference between ZI and JI in terms of pure complementarity.

Descriptive Generalization

Descriptive Generalization

26) ZI: Locally bound
JI: Local or long distance
27) Proposal
ZI must be bound within its spell-out domain.
JI cannot appear in the same spell-out domain as its antecedent.

I propose that the licensing conditions in (27) apply at the point in the derivation when the domain of a phase head is transferred to the interfaces. Let us examine how (27) accounts for each of the cases of ZI and JI examined in this paper. When ZI functions as an internal argument, it is base merged in VP and incorporates to the verb. The complex verb then raises to v. After the vP phase edge is built and T is merged, VP is transferred to the interfaces. The conditions in (27) apply but since there is no reflexive in VP, they apply only vacuously.

After building the TP layer and moving the subject to [Spec, TP], the rest of the clause will be spelled out. This part of the derivation does contain a reflexive, adjoined to the verb in v. [Spec, TP] also contains the subject, which is the antecedent, so the conditions in (27) are met.

28) a. 夫 不 自 見 而 見 彼 (Zhuangzi 8)

“not seeing oneself but seeing others”

b.

TP

DP_{Subj} T' T vP

<DP_{Subj}> v' zi+V+v VP

<zi+V> <zi>

When ZI functions as an adverbial ZI, we can analyze it as adjoined either to v or to v'. If ZI is base merged in a position adjoined to v, then it will simply be spelled out in this position. If it is adjoined to v', then it can undergo Merger with v in the Morphological Component. What is relevant to the discussion at hand is that ZI is base merged in the edge of vP so it will always be sent to Transfer at the same point in the derivation as its antecedent, the subject, and will therefore always be licensed according to conditions in (27).

29) a. 自 爲 之 與? (Mencius 5)

“Did you make it yourself?”

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3 Baltin (2003), Canac-Marquis (2005), Lee-Schoenfeld (2008), Quicoli (2008), and others have also proposed phase-based approach to binding.
Moving on to JI, when JI is a direct object bound by the local subject, it is merged in VP. But since JI is a free form it does not raise out of VP. After the vP is built and VP is sent to Transfer, JI will be in VP but its antecedent will not, since the subject is base merged in [Spec, vP] and then moved to [Spec, TP]. Therefore, even when JI is locally bound, it will not be spelled out on the same cycle as its antecedent.

30) a. 射者正己而後發。
(Mencius 3)
She zhe zheng ji er hou fa.
“An archer straightens himself and then shoots.”

Another case of local binding is when JI is contained in a PP and coreferential with the clause-mate subject. This case also does not violate the conditions in (27). Either, we can analyze the PP as phase, in which case its domain will be sent to Transfer when T is merged into the derivation, before the subject moves to [Spec, TP]. Alternatively, we can assume recent approaches to CED effects (Nunes 1999, Nunes and Uriagereka 2000, Stepanov 2007, and others) which propose that the contents of adjoined constituents are spelled out prior to adjunction. This means that JI will also be spelled out inside the PP before the PP is merged into the structure.

31a. 於己取之而巳矣。
(Mencius 11)
ee_i [pp yu ji] qu zhi er yi yi.
in self seek 3.OBJ CONJ finish ASP
“(One) seeks it in himself and that’s all.”
The cases of long distance binding are naturally accounted for, since JI will be separated by its antecedent by multiple phase boundaries. For example, when JI is the object in an embedded complement clause, JI will be spelled out in the embedded VP, with two vP boundaries and one CP boundary intervening between JI and its antecedent in the matrix clause. When JI serves as the possessor of an object, it will still be spelled out in VP, just as when JI itself serves as the object.

One final paradigm is accounted for by this analysis. Like other object pronouns, JI can be observed to raise in the context of negation. However, only long distance JI raises. In the following biclausal examples, JI moves out of the embedded VP and attaches to the negator above that VP.

32) a. 不 患 人 之 不 己 知。(Analects 1)
   Bu huan ren zhi bu ji zhi ___.
   NEG worry others GEN NEG self understand
   “Do not worry that others do not understand you.”

b. 恥 不 若 黃帝 而
   e_i kui bu ruo Huangdi er
   be.ashamed NEG like Huangdi CONJ
   責 不 己 若 者。(Zhuangzi 3.2)
   e_i ai [ e_i bu ji ruo ____ zhe_j].
   feel.sympathy NEG self like DET
   “(He) is ashamed of not being as good as Huangdi and feels sympathy for those who are not as good as he is.”

In the following examples, however, JI is locally bound by its clause-mate subject. In these cases, raising does not take place, and JI remains in post-verbal position.

33) a. 聖人 不 愛 己。(Xunzi 22)
   Shengren bu ai ji.
   saint NEG love self
   “A saint does not love himself.”

b. 唯 至 人 乃 能 遊 於 世 而 不 僻,
   Wei zhi ren nai neng you yu shi er bu pi,
   only superior person FOC can travel in world CONJ NEG stray
   順 人 而 不 失 己。(Zhuangzi 3.4)
   shun ren er e_i bu shi ji.
   accommodate person CONJ NEG lose self
   “Only a superior person can travel through the world and not stray, accommodate to others and without losing himself.”
The difference between (32) and (33) is captured straightforwardly on the analysis of JI proposed in this section. Raising cannot take place in (33), since that would force JI to be spelled out in the same domain as its antecedent, i.e. TP, thereby violating the licensing condition in (27).

34) * 聖人 不 自 爱。
   \[ TP \text{ Shengren, } \text{ bu } \text{ ji} \quad [VP \text{ ai } ___ ] \]
   “A saint does not love himself.”

Raising is not prevented in (32), however, because cliticization of JI to the clause-mate negator still allows JI to be spelled out in a lower domain than its antecedent which will be spelled out in a later phase in the matrix clause.

In sum, then, we can maintain a complementary analysis of the distribution of ZI and JI if we restrict the domain of licensing to spell-out domains at the point of Transfer and not the traditional governing category.

References


