

Syntax II, Assignment #4

Anaphors in English

Due Thursday March 19th

Part I: In this assignment your task is to take some facts about anaphor binding possibilities in English and see how the binding principles discussed in class may be modified (simplified or complicated!) in order to accommodate the new facts.

- (1)
 - a. * Wallace and Gromit thought that each other had eaten the cheese.
 - b. *Wallace and Gromit thought that themselves had overslept.
 - c. Wallace and Gromit thought that they had overslept.
- (2)
 - a. Wallace and Gromit thought that stories about each other would pass the time.
 - b. Wallace and Gromit thought that stories about themselves would pass the time.
- (3)
 - a. * Wallace and Gromit thought that Wendolene's stories about each other would pass the time.
 - b. *Wallace and Gromit thought that Wendolene's stories about themselves would pass the time.
 - c. Wallace and Gromit thought that Wendolene's stories about them would pass the time.

As Roberts shows (p.142), the facts in (1–3) may be accounted for by the following binding principles:

Principle A: an anaphor must be bound in its binding domain.

Principle B: a pronoun must be free in its binding domain.

Binding Domain

The binding domain of α is the smallest XP containing α and EITHER (a) a subject (distinct from α which does not contain α) OR (b) the infl that assigns nominative case to α .

Give a brief account of how these principles account for the status of (1a), (2a), (3a). Next, explain why the fact that BOTH (4a) and (4b) are acceptable is a problem for the principles above. [No need to revise the principles to account for the contrast at this point.]

- (4)
 - a. Wallace and Gromit thought that stories about themselves would pass the time.
 - b. Wallace and Gromit thought that stories about them would pass the time.

It has been claimed (cf. Roberts p.178) that there is a difference in interpretation between (4a) and (4b). The sentence in (4a) favors a reading in which the stories are Wallace and Gromit's own stories, and the sentence in (4b) favors a reading in which the stories are other people's stories (but they're still stories about Wallace and Gromit). *Assuming* that these interpretations are correct, *first* suggest how the contrast could be accounted for; *second*, does your account of the two interpretations change whether (4a–b) are a problem for the binding principles above; *third*, does this allow us to simplify in any way the definition of Binding Domain given above?

Part II: Do the binding possibilities in (5) and (6) force us to revise the binding principles formulated above (you may choose either your answer to Part I or the definitions from Roberts' book quoted in Part I)? Modify the binding principles as necessary.

- (5)
- a. Which pictures of himself_i did Wallace_i see?
 - b. Which pictures of himself_{ij} did Wallace_i think Gromit_j saw?
 - c. Which pictures of himself_i did Wallace_i think Wendolene saw?
- (6)
- a. Wallace_i saw some pictures of himself_i.
 - b. Wallace_i thought Gromit_j saw some pictures of himself_{ij}.
 - c. * Wallace_i thought that Wendolene saw some pictures of himself_i.

Finally, try to accommodate the status of (7) into your theory.

- (7)
- a. * Wallace_i knows which pictures of himself_i Wendolene saw.
 - b. * Wallace and Gromit_i know which stories about each other_i Wendolene told Preston.