

Introduction to Syntax

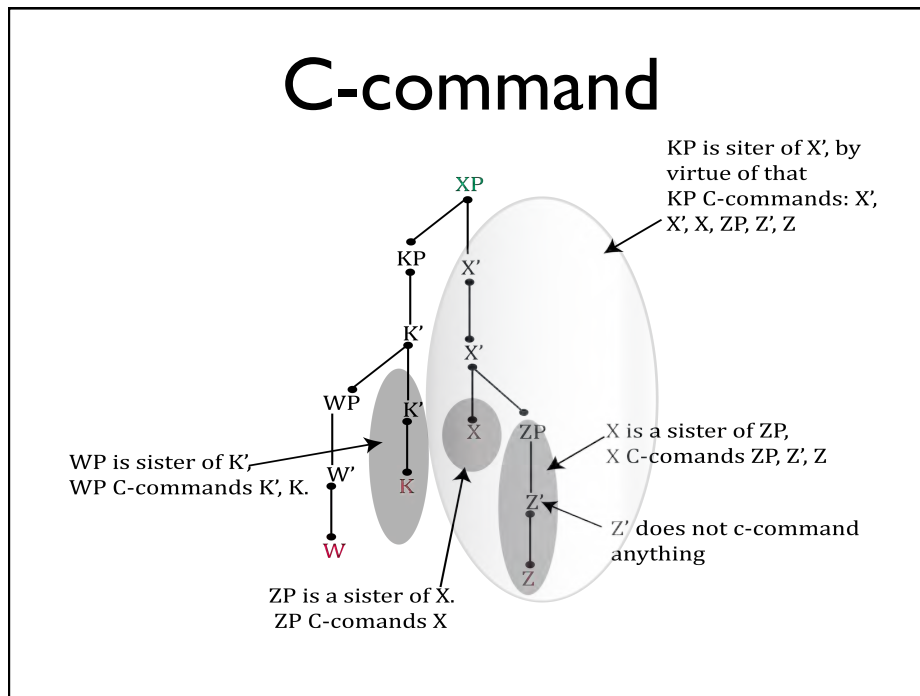
C-command and Binding

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C-command

- Node X c-commands node Y if every node dominating X also dominates Y, and X does not itself dominate Y.
- C-command is connected to sisterhood and dominance.
- It allows us to capture the fact that sisterhood has repercussions on constituents contained inside the sister nodes.
- It is uncanny but C-command can account for the distribution of anaphors, that is elements like
 - pronouns: him, her, he, she, etc.; the reflexives: herself, himself, themselves, etc., and reciprocals like: each other.

C-command



Anaphors indexing

- John₁ said that he_{1/2} is smart
- Indices are written in subscript under the Lexical Item we want to mark.
- In the example *John* is the **antecedent** of the **anaphor** pronoun *him* if their indices match.
- We can use numbers or letters as indices. Their value is irrelevant.
- What is crucial is that they match.
- When indices do not match, we assume the pronoun has an antecedent in the discourse, but not the sentence

Discourse vs sentence antecedent

- Note that a discourse interpretation is possible for pronouns, but not anaphors like reflexives or reciprocals:
 - A. John₁ calls himself_{1/*2} smart
 - B. [John and Mary]₁ call [each other]_{1/*2} smart
- When an interpretation is impossible, we place an asterisk next to the index that represents the impossible interpretation.
- Sometimes, there is no possible interpretation:
 - C. John₁ said that himself_{*1/*2} is smart

Pronoun vs reflexive

- When a pronoun is possible with an antecedent, a reflexive is usually not
- When a reflexive is possible with a certain antecedent, a pronoun is possible, but not with that antecedent
 - A. John₁ said that himself_{*1/*2} is smart
 - B. John₁ said that he_{1/2} is smart
- Reflexive possible -> pronominal not with same antecedent
 - A. John₁ calls himself_{1/*2} smart
 - B. John₁ calls him_{*1/2} smart

Agreement is a confound

- Note that there are other factors that have to be met in order to have an anaphor antecedent relationship.
- The anaphor has to agree with the antecedent, usually in gender, number:

A. John₁ likes herself_{*1/*2}

B. Susan₁ said that he_{*1/2} is smart

Pronoun vs reflexive

- Reflexives have to be in the same CP as the antecedent,
- pronouns cannot.
- That is why a reflexive cannot have a discourse antecedent, because it would not be in the same CP, yet a pronoun can, but does not have to.

A. John₁ said that himself_{*1/*2} is smart

C. John₁ said that he_{1/2} is smart

D. John₁ calls himself_{1/*2} smart

E. John₁ calls him_{*1/2} smart

Possessives

- This proposal seems to account for previous, but not for examples below:

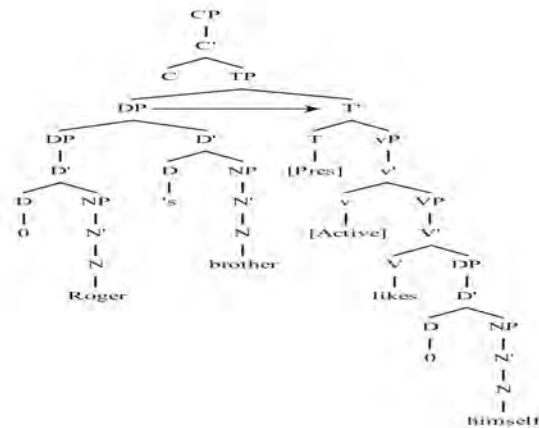
A. [Roger₂'s brother]₁ likes himself_{1/*2/*3}

B. [Roger₂'s brother]₁ likes him_{*1/2/3}

- In A, the reflexive is in the same CP as both DP's *Roger* and *brother*. And yet only one DP=*brother* can be the antecedent of the reflexive!
- In B, both antecedents *Roger* and *brother* are in the same CP as the pronominal anaphor. Yet the pronoun *him* can refer to *Roger* in (B)!

Condition A

- A reflexive, reciprocal requires a C-commanding antecedent within its Binding Domain (CP).

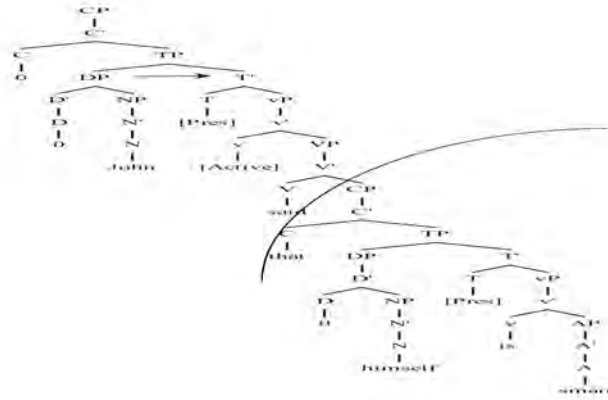


Both CP domain restriction and C-command essential

- Note that the distribution of reflexives requires both a C-commanding antecedent and one that is in the same CP. The latter is needed to account for:

John₁ said [_{CP} that himself_{*1/*2} is smart]

- The reflexive is impossible here, although *John* C-commands it.

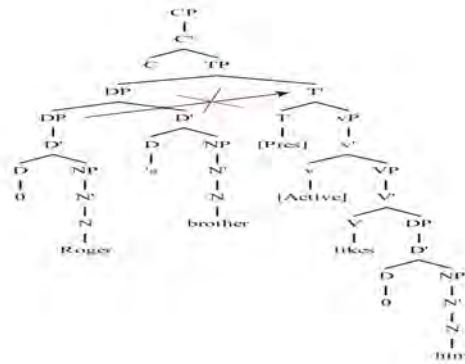


Condition B

- A pronoun requires:
 - within its Binding Domain (CP) a non C-commanding antecedent, and
 - outside its Binding Domain (CP) any appropriate antecedent
- We see that Binding Condition B has two disjoint subparts.
 - Within CP, a pronoun cannot be C-commanded by its antecedent.
 - But outside CP an antecedent can, but does not have to, C-command the pronoun.
- Note that a discourse antecedent is also outside CP.

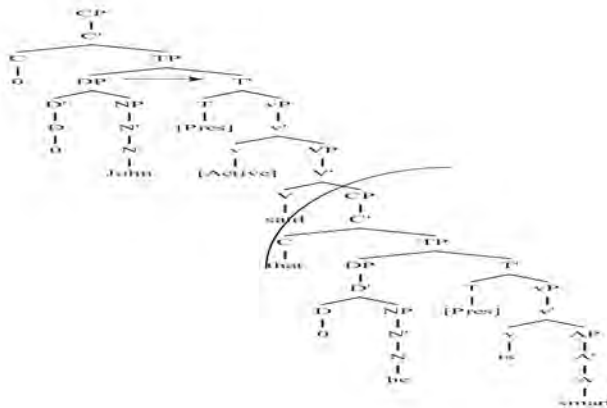
C-command in pronouns

- That is why:
- [Roger₂'s brother]₁ likes him *_{1/2/3}
- Since *Roger's brother* does C-command *him* but *Roger* does not (shown by the crossed out arrow):



Binding domain in pronouns

- The Binding Domain part part accounts for:
- John₁ said that he_{1/2} is smart



Condition C

- A referring expression must not have an antecedent.
- Referring expressions are NP's that are not anaphors: John, Paris, Susan, Man, Dog, etc.
- Condition C is required to account for examples like:
- John₁ hates John_{*1/2}
- where we see that a referring expression cannot have an antecedent.