

BINDING THEORY

- How pronouns get their meaning
- Coreference
- Binding theory
 - ✓ Principle A
 - ✓ Principle B
 - ✓ Principle C



3 TYPES OF DPs

Anaphors: reflexives + *each other*

1. Grace saw **herself**.

Pronouns

2. Grace saw **her**.

R-expressions: everything else

3. **Grace** saw **the girl**.

R-EXPRESSION & PRONOUN MEANING

4. Brinley is glad.

5. She is holding the baby.

6. Brinley is glad she is holding the baby.

WE INDICATE REFERENCE WITH INDICES

7. Brinley_i is glad that she_i is holding the baby.

8. Brinley_i is glad that she_j is holding the baby.

WHAT IS COREFERENCE?

When 2 DPs refer to the same person, we say that they **corefer**.

Coreference only applies to DPs

The first coreferent is called the **antecedent**.

WHAT IS THE ANTECEDENT?

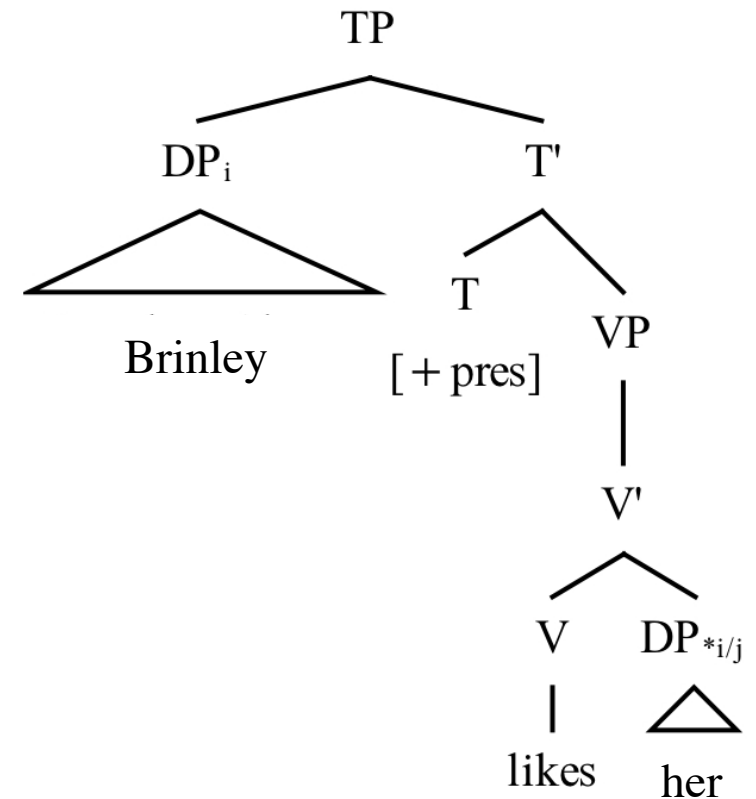
7. Brinley_i is glad that she_i is holding the baby.

8. Brinley_i is glad that she_j is holding the baby.

DP DISTRIBUTION IS RESTRICTED

9. She_i is glad that [Brinley]_{*i/j} is holding the baby.

10. [Brinley]_i likes her_{*i/j}.



DISTRIBUTION OF ANAPHORS

How would you characterize the distribution of anaphors?

11. Grace_i saw herself_i.
12. *Grace_i saw herself_j.
13. *Herself_i laughed.

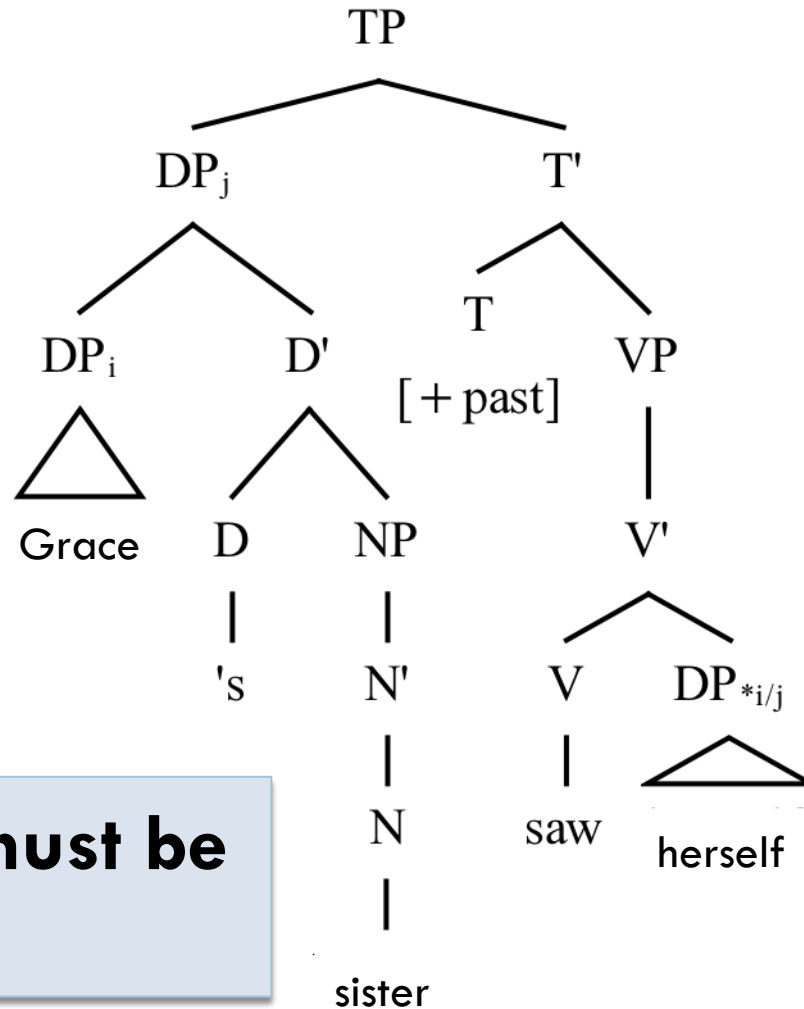
DISTRIBUTION OF ANAPHORS

What about now?

14. *[Grace]_i's sister saw herself_i.

15. [Grace's sister]_j saw herself_j

DISTRIBUTION OF ANAPHORS



An anaphor must be BOUND.

Binding – Principle A

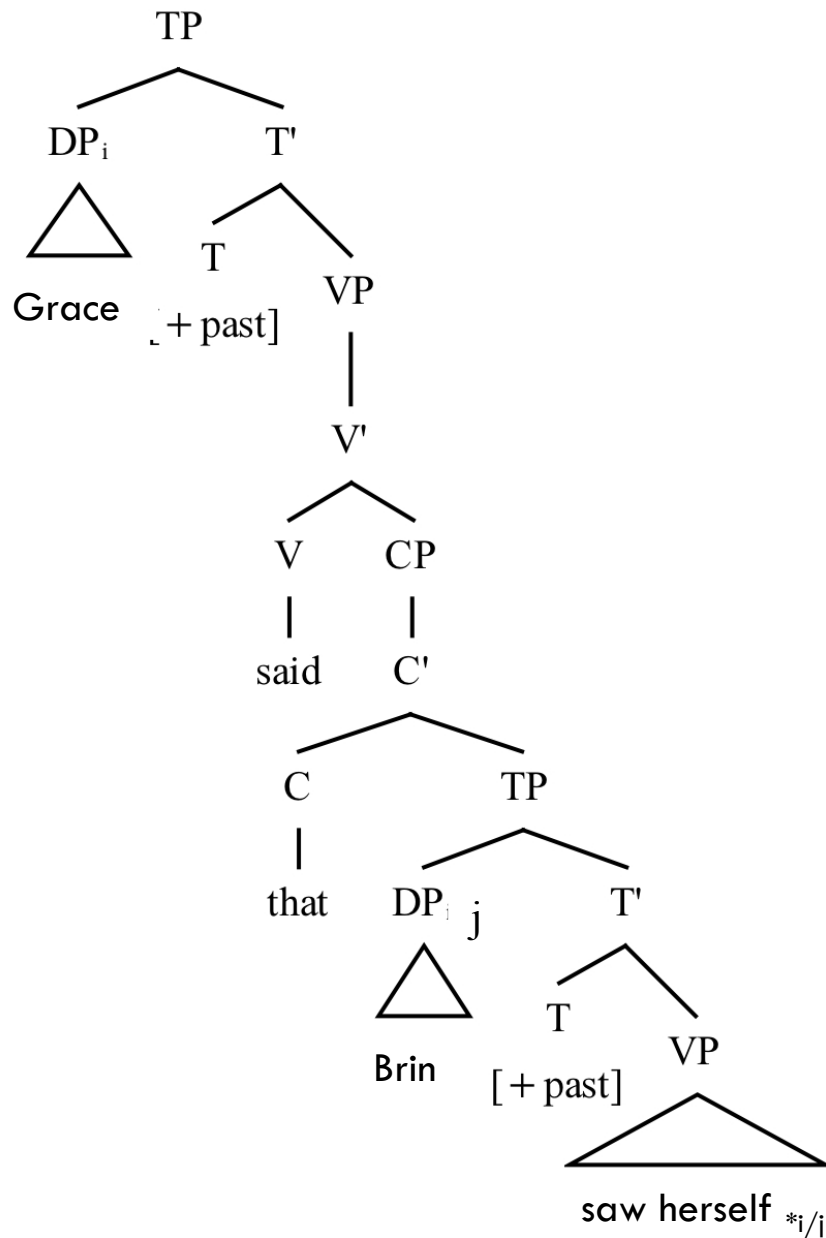
DISTRIBUTION OF ANAPHORS

What about...

17. Grace_i said that Brin_j saw herself_j.

18. *Grace_i said that Brin_j saw herself_i.

19. *Grace_i said that Carl_j saw herself_i.



The domain of a DP is the smallest TP that contains the DP.

PRINCIPLE A

An anaphor must be bound (have a c-commanding antecedent) in its domain.

PRACTICE

Explain, using principle A, why the following sentences are grammatical or ungrammatical:

*Mary_i saw several pictures of herself_j.

*Bill_j decided that John_i should drive himself_j.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRONOUNS

Pronouns are in complementary distribution with anaphors.

19. Grace_i saw herself_i.

20. *Grace_i saw her_i.

21. Grace_i saw her_j.

22. She_i laughed.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRONOUNS

23. [Grace]_i's sister saw her_i.

24. *[Grace's sister]_j saw her_j

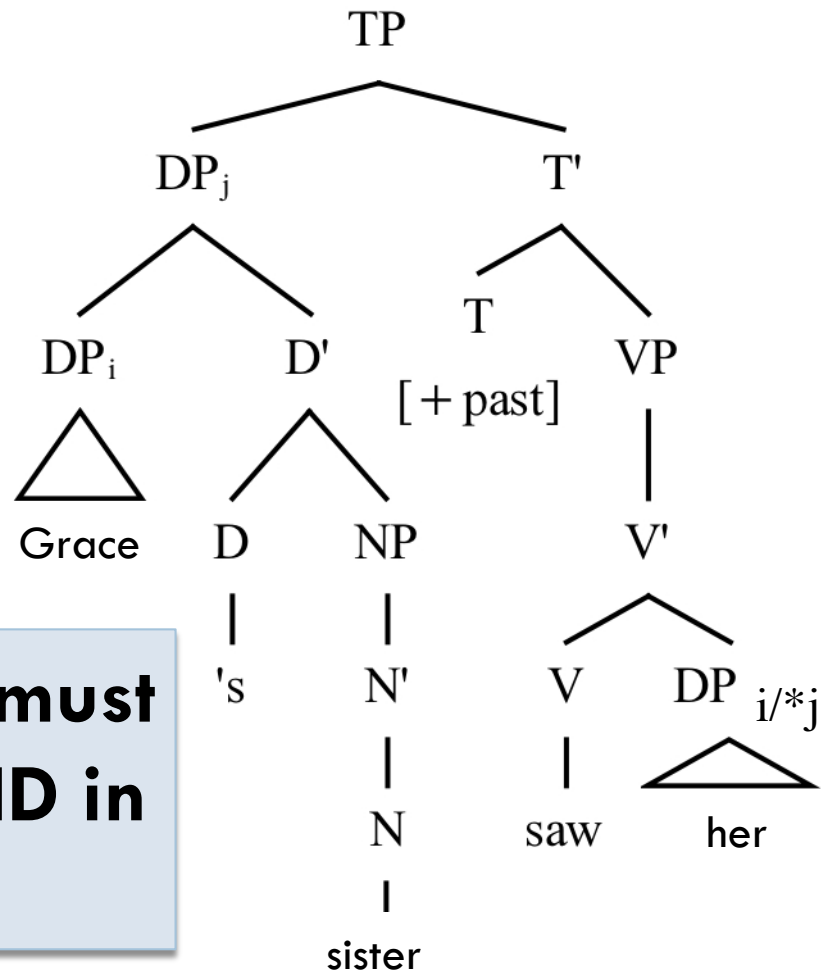
DISTRIBUTION OF PRONOUNS

25. *Grace_i said that Brin_j saw her_j.

26. Grace_i said that Brin_j saw her_i.

27. Grace_i said that Brin_j saw her_k.

PRINCIPLE B



An pronoun must not be BOUND in its domain.

DISTRIBUTION OF R-EXPRESSIONS

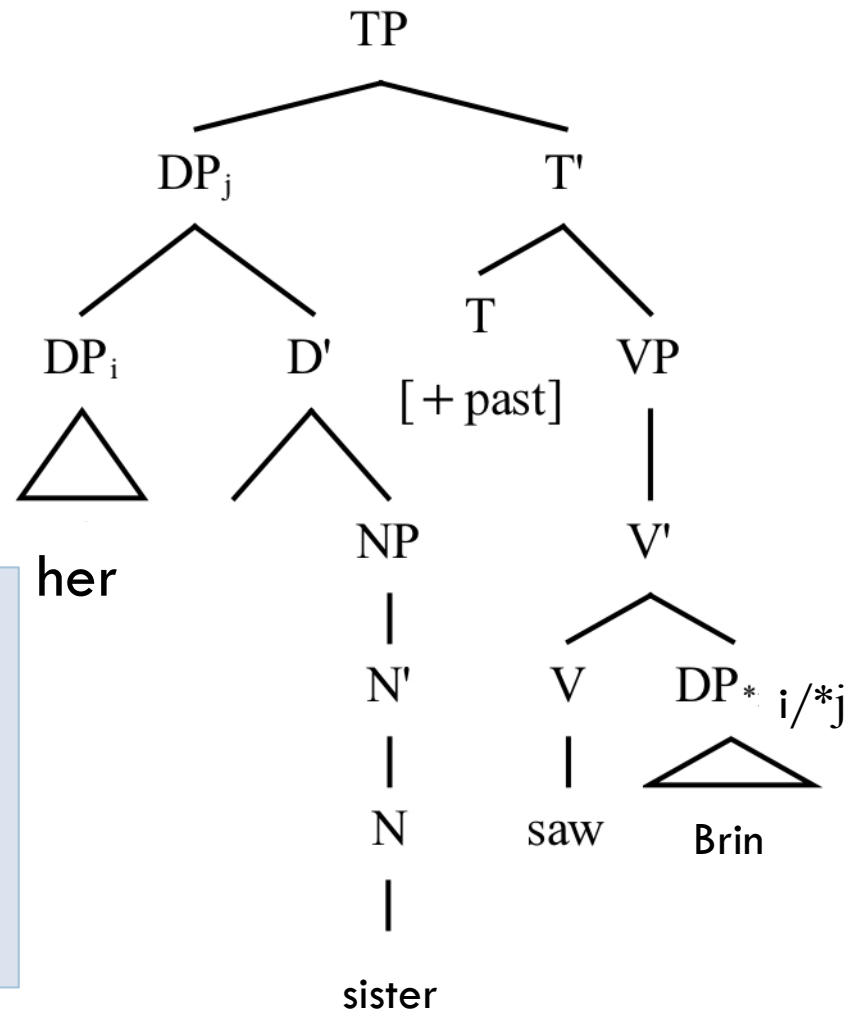
30. *She_i saw Brin_i.

31. She_i thinks that [that girl]_{*i/j} should win.

32. *She_i knows that she_j likes Caroline_{*i/*j}.

33. [Her_i sister]_j saw Brin_{i/*j}.

PRINCIPLE C



An R-expression must not be BOUND.

Using binding theory, explain why each of the following sentences is ungrammatical. In your answer, make sure to include (i) which DP is violating a binding principle, (ii) which principle it is violating, and (iii) how it is violating that condition. Draw trees for each sentence.

- a. *Grace_i likes her_i.
- b. *[Sam]_i's girlfriend worships himself_i.
- c. *She_i saw Caroline_i in the mirror.

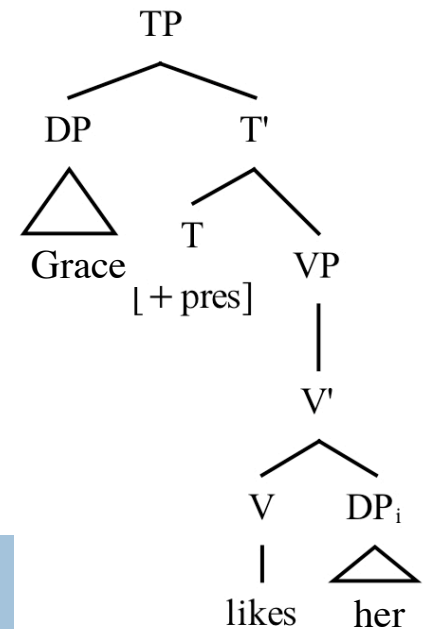
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a. *Grace_i likes her_i.

(i) her

(ii) Principle B

(iii) Principle B states that a pronoun must not be bound in its domain. But *her* is bound in its domain because it has an antecedent, *Grace*, that c-commands it. Therefore Principle B is violated.



Practice

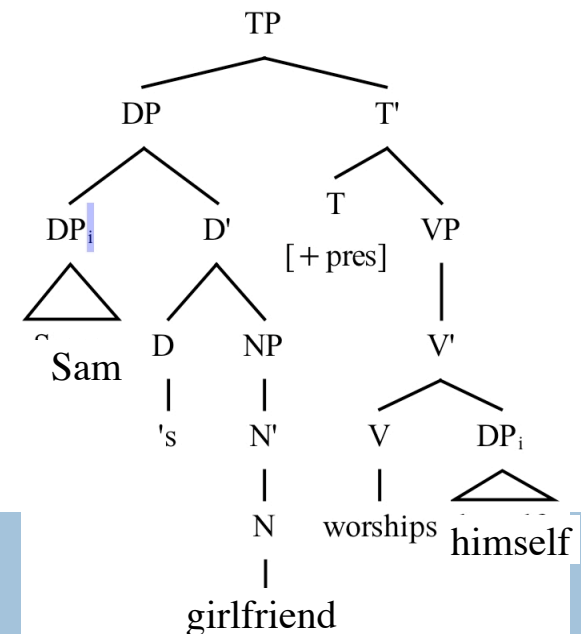
Using binding theory, explain why each of the following sentences is ungrammatical. In your answer, make sure to include (i) which DP is violating a binding principle, (ii) which principle it is violating, and (iii) how it is violating that condition. Draw trees for each sentence.

b. * $[\text{Sam}]_i$'s girlfriend worships himself $_i$.

(i) himself

(ii) Principle A

(iii) Principle A states that an anaphor must be bound in its domain. *Himself* is not bound. It has an antecedent, *Sam*, but it is not c-commanded by its antecedent. Therefore the sentence is ungrammatical.



Practice

Using binding theory, explain why each of the following sentences is ungrammatical. In your answer, make sure to include (i) which DP is violating a binding principle, (ii) which principle it is violating, and (iii) how it is violating that condition. Draw trees for each sentence.

c. *She_i saw Caroline_i in the mirror.

(i) Caroline

(ii) Principle C

(iii) Principle C states that an R-expression must not be bound. But *Caroline* is bound because it has a c-commanding antecedent, *she*. Therefore the sentence is ungrammatical.