

POINT OF DEPARTURE

- Pronouns have **silent descriptive content**
 - E-type pronouns (Cooper 1979; Evans 1977, 1980; Heim 1982, 1990)
 - bound variable pronouns (Sauerland 2007, 2008)
 - referential pronouns (Sauerland 2004; Elbourne 2005)
- Virtually any pronoun can be replaced with a noun (Schlenker 2005, Elbourne 2013)
- Traces in movement chains as definite descriptions (Sauerland 1998; Fox 1999, 2002)
- Structural representation:** (i) pronouns as φ -heads taking DP complements (Sauerland 2004), (ii) pronouns as definite articles taking NP complements (Elbourne 2013). Unifying idea \rightarrow all semantic types of pronouns have silent content and involve some type of NP-deletion.

Natural language has at its disposal so-called **adnominal pronouns** (1), i.e., construals where a pronoun co-occurs with a noun within the same DP (Postal 1969, Pesetsky 1978, Cardinaletti 1994, Longobardi 1994, Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002, Ackema & Neeleman 2013, Höhn 2016).

(1) We linguists work hard.

THIS STUDY

- Questions:**
 - How do pronoun-noun construals inform the idea that pronouns surface with silent descriptive content?
 - How should the descriptive content be represented?
 - How does the study of adnominal pronouns inform our understanding of structural building blocks in the composition of pronouns more generally?

- Proposal:** There are two ways an overt noun can merge with a pronoun: (i) as a **complement** or (ii) as a **modifier** (adjunct).
- The way the noun merges comes with a set of semantic consequences.
- The type of merge provide direct insights into which types of syntactic objects can act as bound variables.

COMPLEMENTS & MODIFIERS: WAYS TO REALIZE THE NOUN

A note on morphology: Adnominal pronouns are syncretic with non-adnominal ones, i.e., they do not surface with a special morphological form.

- In adnominal construals *we linguists*, the pronoun and the noun constitute a single DP. The overt noun merges as a complement of the pronoun.

- (2) a. We linguists submit our papers on time.
b. You mathematicians always arrive early.

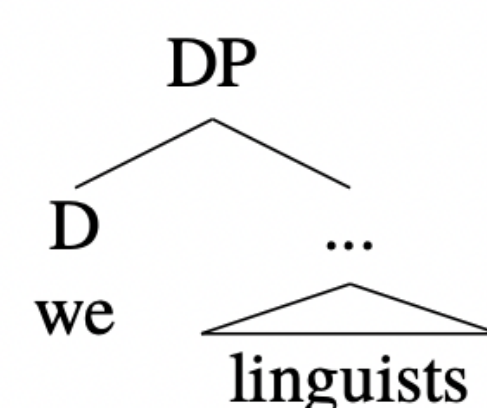
complement

- In non-adnominal, i.e., stand-alone pronouns, descriptive content of the pronoun can be overtly realized (enclosed in square brackets in the examples below). However, its syntactic status is significantly different as it merges as a modifier/adjunct.

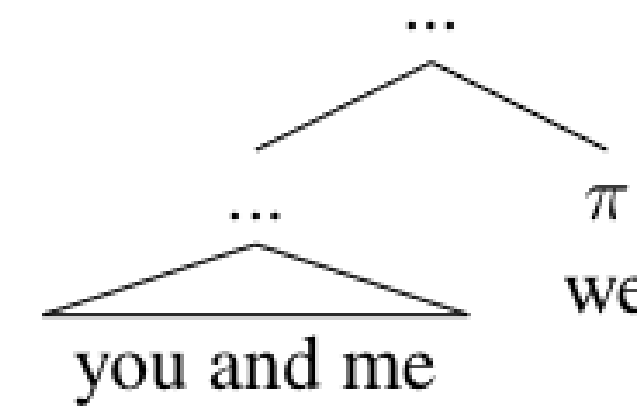
- (3) a. She, [the professor], is very smart.
b. He, [the athlete], seems well-trained.

modifier (adjunct)

Complement



Modifier



- Condition C violation:** pronouns escape Condition C if used for disambiguation (Schlenker 2005). Note that it is the stand-alone noun that is used to disambiguate, and not the pronoun-noun construal. If the noun is overt, it merges as a modifier (*his, linguist's*).

pronoun noun realization

✓	✓	<i>we linguists</i> (complementation)
✓	✓	<i>we, you and me</i> (modification)
✓	∅	stand-alone pronoun
∅	✓	stand-alone noun

- (4) **A linguist working on Binding Theory** was so devoid of any moral sense that **he** forced a physicist [working on particles] to hire **the linguist's** girlfriend in his lab.

- Three novel diagnostics** for the complement-modifier distinction:
 - adnominal pronouns cannot be bound
 - adnominal pronouns take generic DPs as their complements
 - languages show differences in availability of adnominal pronoun drop, that is crucially distinct from the canonical *pro*-drop

① ADNOMINAL PRONOUNS CANNOT BE BOUND

- The pronoun in adnominal construals *we linguists* cannot be bound (5-a). Binding is licensed once the noun is deleted (5-b).
- (5) a. *We linguists like our linguist's books.
x We linguists $\lambda x.x$ like the linguist x linguist's books
- b. We linguists like our books.
We linguists $\lambda x.x$ like the linguist x books
PF: We linguists like our books
- Note that in reflexive binding where the pronoun consists of two parts, φ -features and *self* (Sauerland 2013, 2016), the first part is available for binding (6). Thus, the presence of an additional building block (*self*) does not make the pronoun invisible for binding.
- (6) Anna saw herself in the mirror.
Anna $\lambda x.x$ saw her_xself in the mirror.
- However, if the noun merges later as an adjunct/modifier [late merger of adjuncts (Fox 1999, 2002)], binding is licensed.
- (7) a. Binding
We linguists $\lambda x.x$ like x's books
- b. Modifier-merge
We linguists $\lambda x.x$ like x's [_{modifier} linguists'] books
- c. Realization at PF
✓ We linguists like our, the linguists', books.

Summary:

- overt noun in the complement position appears in the scope of the binder and blocks it
- overt noun in the modifier position is not in the scope of the binder as it merges later

② ADNOMINAL PRONOUNS TAKE GENERIC COMPLEMENTS

- Only generic nouns appear in the complement position of the pronoun. Genericity compositionally derived via applying ι -operator to a plural noun (Chierchia 1998, Dayal 2004).
- (8) we linguists, we athletes, we Americans
- Cross-linguistic differences are predicted to correlate with the realization of genericity. In Greek, ι -operator is overtly realized (Alexiadou et al. 2007, Lazaridou-Chatzigoga & Alexiadou 2019), thus the overt definite determiner and the noun merge in the complement position.
- (9) *emeis oi fysikoí*, *emeis oi Éllines*
we the physicists we the Greeks
'we physicists, we Greeks'
- Nouns merged as modifiers do not obey the genericity requirement:
- (10) a. She, the professor, has arrived.
b. He, the athlete, is likely to win.

③ PRONOUN OVERTNESS REQUIREMENT

- When surfacing with a complement, the pronoun cannot be omitted. In English, this is observable from the absence of binding if the pronoun was deleted.
- (11) #(We) linguists submit our papers on time.
- In languages with transparent agreement morphology, such as Italian and Serbian, dropping the pronoun results in ungrammatical forms. As both Italian and Serbian are full *pro*-drop languages that can omit pronouns without restrictions, (12) suggests that the pronoun must be in structurally different position where the omission is blocked.
- (12) *(Noi) ballerine amiamo i vestiti. (13) *(Mi) ballerine volimo haljine.
we ballerinas love.1pl the dresses we ballerinas love.1pl dresses
'We ballerinas love dresses.'

Summary:

- overt noun in the complement position blocks the drop of the pronoun in full *pro*-drop languages, where the pronominal omission is otherwise always licensed

CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE: EVIDENCE FROM UNAGREEMENT

- Greek obeys requirements ① and ② observed for English. However, it does not impose the pronoun overtness requirement, giving rise to so-called **unagreement** construals, i.e., configurations in which verbal morphology inflected for the first or second person plural co-occurs with the external argument in the form of nominative definite plural DP. The pronoun can always be overtly realized.
- (14) (*emeis oi balarínes agapáme ta forémata*.
we the ballerinas love.1pl the dresses
'We ballerinas love dresses.'
- Evidence that the pronoun is projected comes from **binding**. Greek has the complex possessive DP *to diko mu* 'my own', consisting of the definite article *to*, possessive adjective *diko* 'own', and the possessive pronoun *mu* 'my' (Alexiadou 2005). Unagreement construals can license both simple and complex bound possessives.
- (15) *Oi glossológoi agapáme ta vivlíá mas / ta diká mas vivlíá*.
the linguists love.1pl the book poss.1pl / the own poss.1pl book
'We linguists love our books/our own books.'
- The complex reflexive DP *o eaftós mu* 'myself', lit: 'the self mine' (Iatrodou 1988, Anagnostopoulou & Everaert 1999, Spathas 2010, Alexiadou 2014, Angelopoulos & Sportiche 2022) is likewise available in unagreement construals.
- (16) *Oi glossológoi vlépoume ton eaftó mas ston kathréfti*.
the linguists see.pr.1pl the.acc self 1pl.acc prep mirror
'We linguists see ourselves in the mirror.'

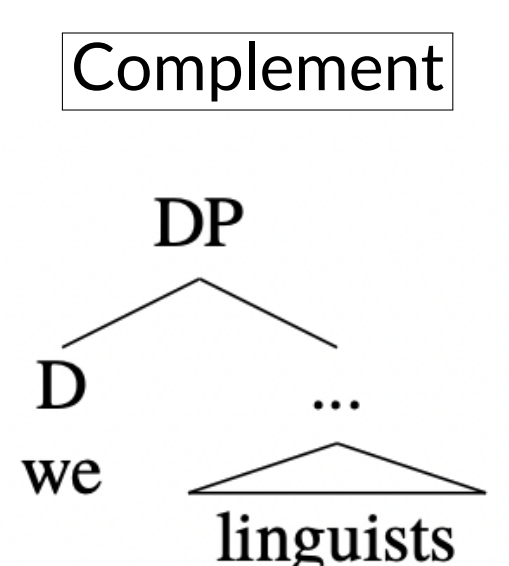
SILENT DESCRIPTIVE CONTENT IN DEPENDENCIES

- Back to binding (recall: **We linguists like our linguists' books*):

- (17) We linguists like our books.
We linguists $\lambda x.x$ like the linguist x books

Complement:

- an overt noun prevents the pronoun to act as a bound variable
- an overt noun has generic reading (ι applying to a definite plural)
- an overt noun imposes restrictions on the pronoun drop and blocks it even in *pro*-drop languages

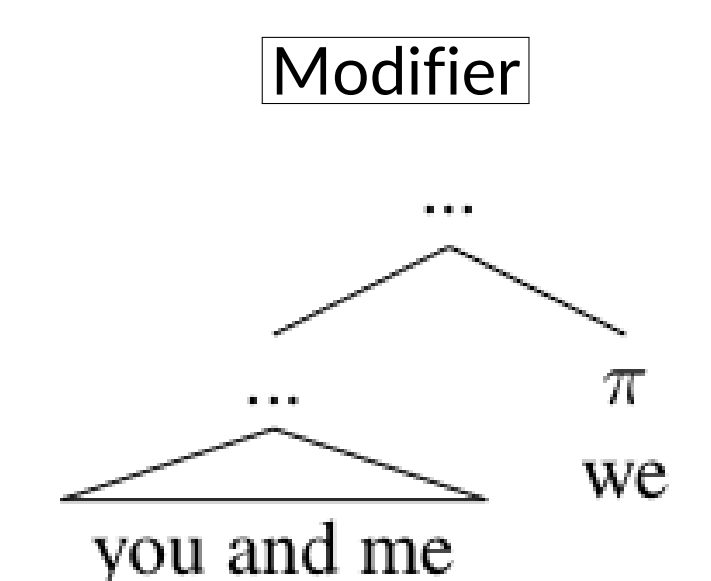


Emergence of the variable

- The pronoun starts acting as a bound variable once the descriptive content is silent.
- In binding, the noun cannot appear in the complement position, but as a modifier.
- Stand-alone pronouns are not realizations of the D head.**

Modifier:

- an overt noun can merge only as an adjunct to the pronoun in an argument position
- re-merge the noun** that is already present in the structure of the pronoun
- always definite - insight into the underlying content, reinforcement by the silent content that is always available



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