

## 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  $\varphi$ -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.

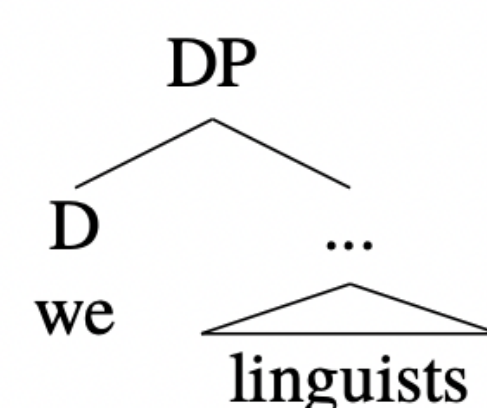
**complement**

- 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.

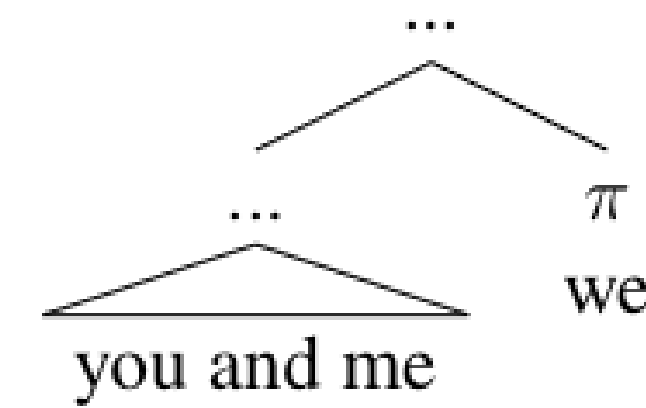
- (3) a. She, [the professor], is very smart.  
b. He, [the athlete], seems well-trained.

**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,  $\varphi$ -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<sub>x</sub>self 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 [<sub>modifier</sub> 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  $\iota$ -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,  $\iota$ -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 fysikoi*, *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' (Iatridou 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

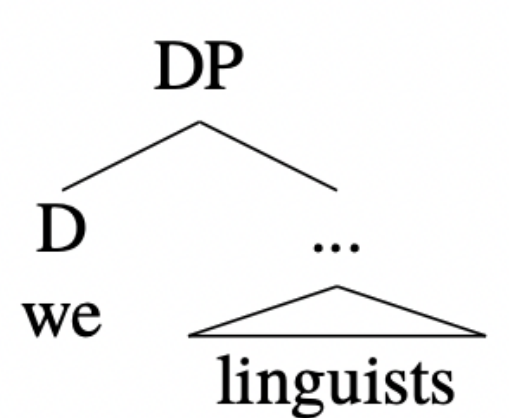
- Back to binding (recall: \**We linguists like our linguists' books*):

- (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 ( $\iota$  applying to a definite plural)
- an overt noun imposes restrictions on the pronoun drop and blocks it even in *pro*-drop languages

Complement



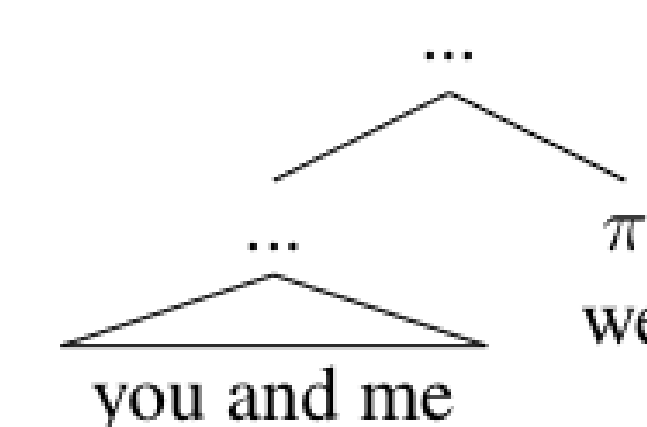
### Emergence of the variable

- 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

Modifier



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