Three Principles

Just a reminder, we discussed when two NPs can and cannot co-refer. We formalized them into three principles below:

**Principle A:** Anaphors must be bound locally (e.g. within the smallest clause).
- *himself ate.*

**Principle B:** Pronouns must not be bound locally (e.g. within the smallest clause).
- *John$_1$ hates him$_1$.*
- John$_1$ thinks he$_1$ will win.

**Principle C:** R-Expressions must be free everywhere (in the sentence).
- *John$_1$ thinks John$_1$ will win.*
- When he$_1$ was in the kitchen, John ate an apple.

In order to understand these principles, we had to first understand two definitions: Binding and C-Command.

**Binding**

$\alpha$ binds $\beta$ iff $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are co-indexed and $\alpha$ c-commands $\beta$

**C-Command**

For any two nodes, $\alpha$, $\beta$ such that $\alpha$ does not dominate $\beta$, $\beta$ does not dominate $\alpha$, and $\alpha \neq \beta$: $\alpha$ c-commands $\beta$ iff the first node dominating $\alpha$ also dominates $\beta$.

We can use the above principles to investigate more data given below.

Exercises 1

Given what we know about reflexives in English and Principle A, take a look at (1) and (2). Ask a native speaker (or yourself) whether the judgments that are given below are correct. Answer the following question for each example below:

- Who is the antecedent for the reflexive?
- How many clauses are there? Mark them with brackets.
- Does the acceptable version of the sentence satisfy Principle A? Why or why not?
• Briefly describe what you think is going on with these sentences.  

(1) John promised Mary to behave himself/*herself.
(2) John persuaded Mary to behave herself/*himself.

Exercises 2: The status of epithets

Anaphoric epithets are definite descriptions that have an antecedent in the sentence. For example in (3), the epithet *the poor fellow* behaves like a pronoun and can refer to *the President*.

(3) I saw [the President] on TV last night and [the poor fellow] looked tired.

If anaphoric epithets behave like a pronoun, then it should be subject to Principle B. See if this is the case for examples (4-7) and answer the following questions:

• Are each of these sentences acceptable to a native English speaker?
• If they are acceptable, do they satisfy all three principles A, B, and C?
• If they are unacceptable, why do you think that is?
• Briefly explain what you think the status of anaphoric epithets should be. In other words, how would you categorize them?

(4) [The President] said that [the poor fellow] was tired.
(5) [Bill] believes [the guy] to be desperate for company.
(6) [John] thinks that I admire [the idiot].
(7) [He] thinks that I admire [the idiot].
(8) [He] likes [the idiot].
(9) After [John] walked in, [the idiot] sat down.

Exercises 3: *ziji* data in Mandarin Chinese

Finally, let’s look at referential NPs in another language. In Mandarin Chinese, there is an anaphor ‘*ziji*’ that behaves in interesting ways. Because it is an anaphor, it should be subject to Principle A. Review the data given below and answer the following questions:

• Does *ziji* behave like the reflexives that you’ve encountered in English?
• Briefly describe what you think the behavior of *ziji* is.

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1 Hint: Look at the sentences without the reflexive.

1. John promised Mary to behave.
2. John persuaded Mary to behave.

For each sentence, who is the subject of the embedded clause ‘to behave’? We will talk about this next class but you should see that the subject of the embedded clause in these sentences might also serve as binders of reflexives in the exercise.

2 ‘Th’ in (13) is a regular pronoun that is subject to Principle B.
– What NPs can bind *ziji*? Where can these NPs appear? What’s going on with *wo* in (14)?

Remember: *John thinks Bill believes Sue likes himself.*

(10) Zhangsan \_ shuo ziji \_ hui lai.
    Zhangsan say self will come
    ‘John said that himself will come.’

(11) Yuehan \_ renwei Mali like ziji \_.
    John think Mary like self
    ‘John thinks that Mary likes himself.’

(12) Zhangsan \_ renwei Lisi \_ zhidao Wangwu \_ xihuan ziji \_ /l/w.
    Zhangsan thinks Lisi knows Wangwu like SELF
    ‘Zhangsan thinks that Lisi knows that Wangwu likes himself/him.’

(13) Zhangsan \_ renwei Lisi \_ zhidao Wangwu \_ xihuan ta \_ /l/ * w.
    Zhangsan thinks Lisi knows Wangwu like him
    ‘Zhangsan thinks that Lisi knows that Wangwu likes him.’

(14) Zhangsan \_ renwei wo \_ zhidao Wangwu \_ xihuan ziji \_ / * j/w.
    Zhangsan thinks I knows Wangwu like SELF
    ‘Zhangsan thinks that I knows that Wangwu likes him/himself.’