

1. Introduction

- English reflexive nominals are composed of two distinct nominals:

(1) We will not embarrass **our selves** / ***one self**

(2) GENERALIZATION ON φ -MATCHING

In English reflexives, pronouns φ -match their antecedent

- This is introduced in textbooks and presupposed by researchers across a spectrum of analyses (cf. discussion in Sundaresan 2018)
- Perhaps because bound pronouns are φ -deficient (e.g., Heinat 2006, Reuland 2006, Kratzer 2009, Rooryck and Vanden Wyngaerd 2011)

♦ **Empirical Question:** How valid is the generalization in (2)?

♦ **Theoretical Question:** How do we derive this generalization (to the extent it is valid)?

2. Referential Construal

- English anaphors contain two nominals (pronominal possessor + $\sqrt{\text{SELF}}$; Postal 1966), which generally match the antecedent in φ -features

♦ **φ -mismatches exist!**

- Imposters (Collins and Postal 2012)

(3) a. **Your majesty** must protect **yourself/himself**.
 b. **Mommy and Daddy** need some time to **ourselves/themselves**.

- Context in quantified expressions / group nouns

(4) a. [Spoken by a single woman in a group of women]
Each of us is doing it **ourselves/herself/#himself**.
 b. [Spoken to a group of women]
At least one of you believes in **yourself/herself/#himself**.
 c. [Spoken about a mixed-gender group]
Everyone loves **themselves/%themselves/%himself**.
 d. [Spoken about a group of individuals]
The football team organizes the weekly tailgate **itself/themselves**.

- ‘Singular *they*’ (judgments are known to vary here)

(5) a. [Spoken about an individual of unknown gender]
Whoever that is ought to control **themselves/%himself**.
 b. [Spoken about an individual with non-binary gender identity]
Kim wrote a book by **%themselves/%themselves/#himself**.

(6) WEAK IDENTITY CONDITION IN ENGLISH

The bound pronoun in an English reflexive must be able to be construed as (weakly) interpretive identical to its antecedent

- Something like (6) is necessary for proxy readings

- BUT (6) is not enough:** 3.SG anaphors never occur with a 1st/2nd person or PL antecedent

(7) a. **The football players** organize the weekly tailgate ***itself/themselves**.
 b. **We** are each behaving ***himself/*herself/ourselves**.

3. Counter-Indexicals

- Counter-indexical (CID) contexts** change what is possibly weakly identical

(8) a. If I were you, **I’d** do **myself/yourself** a favor & bring food!
 b. If I were you guys, **I’d** do **myself/yourselves** a favor & bring food!
 c. If I were them, **I’d** do **myself/themselves** a favor & bring food!

- But there are additional constraints on CID-mismatch

i. Irrealis Mood Required

(9) When I dreamt I was you, **I** did **myself/*yourself** a favor...

ii. The local subject must be 1.SG

(10) a. If we were you, **we’d** do **ourselves/*yourselves** a favor...
 b. If you were me, **you’d** do **yourself/*myself** a favor...

iii. The pronoun cannot be 3.SG

(11) a. If I were them, **I’d** do **myself/themselves** a favor...
 b. If I were her, **I’d** do **myself/*herself** a favor...

- The latter two have been supported through an AMT experiment ($n=78$)



4. A Dual Approach to φ -Features

- Reflexive anaphors do not uniformly get their φ -features valued in the derivation**

- Premise: Reflexive anaphors structurally contain a (bound) pronoun
- Premise: Not all (bound) pronouns are φ -deficient
- Premise: Whenever a pronoun’s φ -features are derivationally valued, those φ -features must match the antecedent’s
- Observation: Reflexive pronouns do not always match the φ -features of the antecedent

∴ Reflexive pronouns are not always φ -deficient

- Unlike others, 3.SG reflexive pronouns never mismatch their antecedent**
 - (Note: this is about π and $\#$, and not about person alone; recall ‘them’)
 - This suggests their φ -features are **derivationally entangled** with those of the binder

∴ 3.SG reflexive pronouns require a unique derivation

- 3.SG is different from other pronouns in gender (γ) features

	SG	PL
1	\emptyset	\emptyset
2	\emptyset	\emptyset
3	[$\pm F, \pm M$]	\emptyset

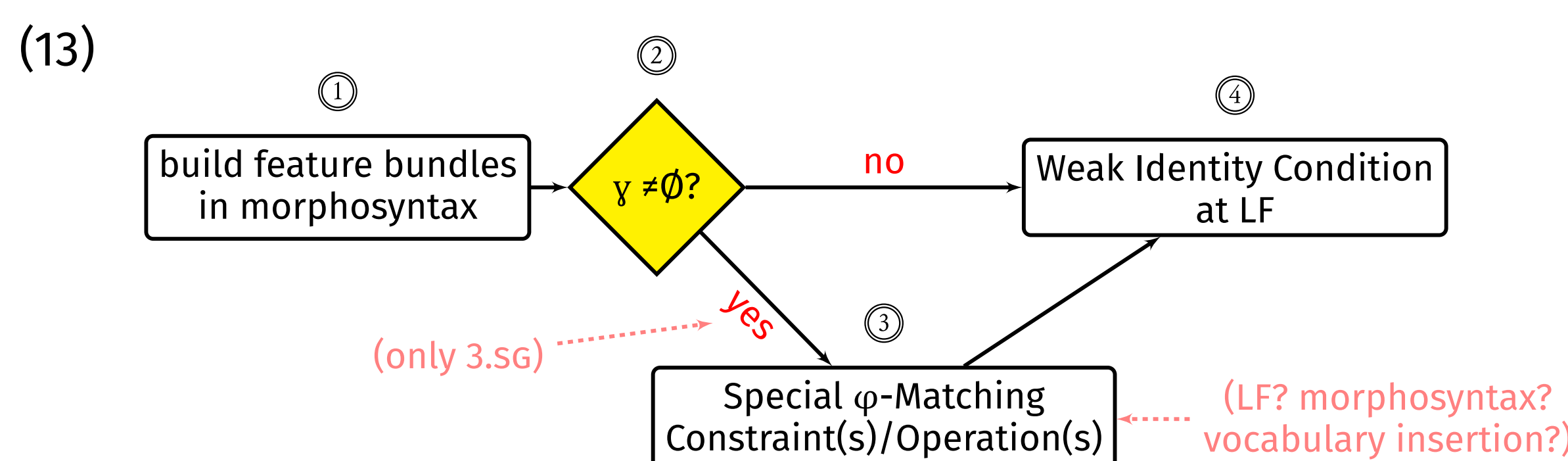
Gender-specification in English pronouns

- Idea: γ -feature values trigger additional derivational steps

(12) GENERALIZATION ON ENGLISH GENDER-CONDITIONED φ -MATCH

If a bound pronoun has a γ -feature that is not \emptyset , then the bound pronoun cannot have φ -features that conflict with those specified on the binder

- Algorithm for a theoretician to determine whether a bound pronoun & antecedent are predicted compatible (Not a derivation!)



- One route for φ -mismatch (for non-3.SG pronouns)
- The other route disallows this (for 3.SG pronouns)
 - Does ③ represent constraints/operations in Syntax? At LF? Both?

Different English bound pronouns are subject to different derivations, **depending on the pronoun’s φ -feature specification in the morphosyntax**

(14) **The team** will do it by **itself**

(15) ***This person/They/He** will do it by **itself**

- γ is specified for *it*
 - φ -features of *the team* don’t conflict
 - φ -features of *this person* don’t conflict, but interpretation of the nominals can’t adhere to (6)
 - φ -features of *they* and *he* do conflict: violates (12)

(16) **The team/This person/They** will do it by **themselves**

(17) ***He** will do it by **themselves**

- γ is not specified for *them*
 - φ -features of the antecedent never matter
 - Any ill-formedness is a violation of (6)

5. Conclusions

- What we now know about building reflexive anaphors in English

① Bound pronouns’ φ -features are interpreted

- ‘construal’, context-defined gender, CID contexts

② φ -features must be active at LF

- Weak identity has to interpret pronoun’s φ -features (see also Heim 2008, Safir 2014; pace e.g. Drummond et al. 2011:399)

③ Morphosyntax builds reflexive anaphors

- Bound pronouns’ φ -feature values influence the derivation and where mismatch is possible

④ We ought to replace (2) in English with (6) and (12)

- There are 2 types of reflexive pronouns in English
- Most do not need to φ -match their antecedent
 - What’s required of them is weak identity
- But 3.SG ones *always* φ -match its antecedent
 - Requiring separate grammatical machinery

- Considering only 3.SG reflexive pronouns, English has no violations of (2)
 - 3.SG is different because how its φ -features (especially γ) are valued
 - These φ -feature differences lead to different derivations

- Properties of binding are **not solely the product of syntax**

- English reflexive anaphors are defined partially syntactically
 - Building the φ -bundles for the pronoun

- Partially postsynactically (based on syntactic input; see Ahn and Kalin forthcoming)
 - The case form of the reflexive pronoun

- Partially semantically/pragmatically (based on syntactic input)
 - Determining whether a bound pronoun can be construed as weakly identical to an antecedent or not, on the basis of φ -features

- A multi-module approach to binding, whose name makes this obvious:

“Distributed Binding Theory”

References

Ahn, Byron, and Laura Kalin. Forthcoming. What’s in a (English) reflexive? In *NELS 48: Proceedings of the 48th annual meeting of the North East Linguistics Society*.

Collins, Chris, and Paul Postal. 2012. *Imposters*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Drummond, Alex, Dave Kush, and Norbert Hornstein. 2011. Minimalist construal: Two approaches to A and B. In *The Oxford handbook of linguistic Minimalism*, ed. Cedric Boeckx, 396–426. Oxford University Press.

Heim, Irene. 2008. Features on bound pronouns. In *Phi theory*, ed. Daniel Harbour, David Adger, and Susana Béjar, 35–56. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heinat, Fredrik. 2006. Probes, pronouns, and binding in the minimalist program. Doctoral Dissertation, Lund University.

Kratzer, Angelika. 2009. Making a pronoun: Fake indexicals as windows into the properties of pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40:187–237.

Postal, Paul M. 1966. On so-called ‘pronouns’ in English. In *Report of the seventeenth annual round table meeting on linguistics and language studies*, ed. Francis P. Dinneen, 177–206. Georgetown University Press.

Reuland, Eric. 2006. Agreeing to bind. In *Organizing grammar: Linguistic studies in honor of Henk van Riemsdijk*, ed. Hans Broekhuis, Norbert Corver, Riny Huybregts, Ursula Kleinhenz, and Jan Koster, 503–513. Mouton de Gruyter.

Rooryck, Johan, and Guido Vanden Wyngaerd. 2011. *Dissolving binding theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Safir, Ken. 2014. One true anaphor. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45:91–124.

Sundaresan, Sandhya. 2018. Distinct featural classes of anaphor in an enriched person system. [lingbuzz/003651](#).