

OPTIONAL PRONOMINALIZATION

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This paper might better have been titled 'Optional Non-Pronominalization' since I am accepting existing rules on pronominalization and am only concerned with cases when these rules are not obligatory, i.e., when they are optional. Studies of pronominalization have been concerned with when and in what direction pronominalization is possible, but none have considered when it is possible to either pronominalize or leave both noun phrases in a sentence without making the sentence ungrammatical. When there are two equi-NP's in a sentence, is pronominalization always obligatory? One way to answer this question is to discover under what conditions we have the option of retaining both noun phrases. The presence of these conditions would indicate cases when pronominalization is optional; i.e., the speaker could choose either to pronominalize by existing rules or to leave both NP's in the sentence.

Obvious cases of obligatory pronominalization spring immediately to mind. For example, a mature native speaker would not say, 'John hurt John's hand.' Rather, if the two NP's had the same referent, he would say, 'John hurt his hand.' He would not say, 'John hurt John,' but instead, 'John hurt himself.' These are cases of obligatory pronominalization. There is no option of leaving the second NP unprominalized while retaining a grammatical sentence. A casual examination of sentences containing pronouns might lead to the tentative rule that pronominalization is always obligatory when there are two or more equi-NP's in a sentence. This is a rule that has been unstated but that apparently underlies some earlier papers on pronominalization. George Lakoff, however, pointed out a few cases where provision would have to be made to retain both NP's and devised a constraint to permit this (G. Lakoff, 'Pronouns and Reference'). In this paper, I hope to show several cases where pronominalization is optional, and to show that surface structure is the primary determiner of when pronominalization is optional. The latter indicates that pronominalization must be, as Lakoff speculated, an output condition.

I. Possessives and Reflexives

Simple sentences are the least likely to have optional pronominalization. (I am using simple sentence in the traditional sense here, i.e., one that contains only one main clause and no dependent clauses.) Examine the following sentences, all of which are ungrammatical if the underlined NP's have the same referent.

- *1. John hurt John.
- *2. John saw John in the mirror.
- *3. I told John to watch John.
- *4. John bought a car for John.
- *5. John found a picture of John.

None of these is grammatical until the second NP is pronominalized to the reflexive pronoun, in this case himself. This seems to indicate that pronominalization is not optional with reflexive pronouns. NP's in most other simple sentences also reject optional pronominalization. For example:

- *6. John had no cover over John.
- *7. John broke John's leg.
- *8. John's dog bit John.
- *9. John works in John's office.

From these sentences it would seem that we could state a general condition that made pronominalization obligatory not just for sentences with reflexive pronouns, but also for simple sentences in general. However, sentences 10, 11, and 12 prevent this.

- *10. In Dave's favorite bar, Dave drinks martinis.
- 11. In Dave's apartment, Dave charms Michelle with sweet words.
- 12. In Dave's apartment, Michelle charms Dave with sweet words.
- *13. Dave charms Michelle with sweet words in Dave's apartment.
- *14. Michelle charms Dave with sweet words in Dave's apartment.

The first example (10) is grammatical to me, although some people have indicated that it is questionable to them. Sentences 11 and 12 are grammatical. All are simple sentences. In sentences 13 and 14, when we move the introductory phrase to the end of the sentence, the sentence becomes ungrammatical. There seems to be something about the possessive that allows it to have optional pronominalization when it is in a preposed phrase. I use the restriction of the preposed phrase because of sentence 8 above, where the possessive precedes the other NP but is not in a preposed phrase, and the sentence is ungrammatical. The possessive provides the only exception I could find to the pronominalization of one of the two equal-NP's in a simple sentence. This raises the question of whether the special quality of the possessive carries over into other sentences with preposed phrases. For example, what about sentences using dislocation.

- *15. Dave always writes to Michelle about Dave's neighborhood.
- *16. Dave's neighborhood, Dave always writes to Michelle about it.

- *17. Michelle always writes to Dave about Dave's neighborhood.
- 18. Dave's neighborhood, Michelle always writes to Dave about it.
- *19. Dave always writes to Michelle about Dave's neighborhood where she used to live.
- 20. Dave's neighborhood where Michelle used to live, Dave always writes to her about it.

The rule seems to hold true. The sentence is grammatical when the possessive NP precedes the second NP, as in sentences 16, 18, and 20. The sentence is ungrammatical when the possessive form follows the other NP, as in sentences 15, 17, and 19. In each grammatical sentence, the preposed possessive is in a phrase. What about possessives in clauses? For example:

- *21. Before Dave could get his clothes out, Dave's house burned.
- 22. After Dave's house burned, Dave moved in with Michelle.
- 23. Dave's house burned before Dave could get his clothes out.
- *24. Dave's house burned before Dave could get Dave's clothes out.
- *25. After Dave had worried all night, Dave's son called to say he was safe.
- 26. Dave's wife called to say that she was safe, after Dave had worried all night.
- 27. Dave's wife called to say that Dave's car was wrecked.
- 28. That Dave's car was safe was a relief to Dave.

Here, too, the sentence is grammatical when the possessive form precedes the other NP (as in 22, 23, 26, and 28) and ungrammatical when the possessive form follows the other NP (as in 21 and 25). The possessive can be in the main clause or the dependent clause. Notice, also, in sentences 21, 23, and 24 we have three uses of the NP. Sentence 24 is ungrammatical because we used the possessive after a non-possessive equi-NP. Sentence 27 indicates that two possessives are possible when neither is preceded by another non-possessive equi-NP. Thus the possessive constraint holds true for complex sentences as well as simple ones. From the preceding examples, we can propose the following tentative condition for optional pronominalization.

Condition: SD: X NP₁ X NP₂ X

Both NP's may be retained when one is in the possessive form and one is not, and the possessive form precedes the second NP.

Restrictions: 1. NP₁ = NP₂

2. In a simple sentence, the possessive must be in a preposed phrase.

3. In a complex sentence, the NP's must be in separate clauses. If there are two possessives in the sentence, both may be retained unless a third NP precedes one of them.¹

II. Adverb Clauses

Adverbial clauses containing pronouns other than possessives seem to be another group that lends itself to special treatment in the retaining of both NP's. Of course, not all adverbial clauses act precisely the same way. Time adverbials, for example, work in the following manner:

- 29. Michelle saw Dave before Dave had a chance to get away.
- *30. Before Dave had a chance to get away, Michelle saw Dave.
- *31. Michelle sat down at Dave's table before the waiter could kick Michelle out.
- *32. Before the waiter could kick Michelle out, Michelle sat down at Dave's table.
- 33. Dave gives Michelle money to spend when Michelle is depressed.
- *34. When Michelle is depressed, Dave gives Michelle money to spend.
- 35. The judges declared Dave the winner after Dave had all but given up hope.
- *36. After Dave had all but given up hope, the judges declared Dave the winner.

It is possible to draw two observations from these sentences. First, each time the adverb clause was preposed, the sentence became ungrammatical, whether or not it was ungrammatical when the clause was at the end of the sentence. Thus, it would seem that we cannot prepose an adverb clause and have optional pronominalization. Second, we must ask ourselves, why do sentences 29, 33, and 35 work, and why doesn't sentence 31 work? All of these sentences have the adverb clause at the end of the sentence, and all of the clauses are time adverbials. Here the subject-nonsubject distinction that Lakoff pointed out in 'Pronouns and Reference' seems to come into play. In all of the grammatical sentences, the NP in the main clause is a non-subject, and the NP in the adverb clause is a subject. Thus our condition will not only have to take into account whether the adverb clause is preposed, but also the subject-nonsubject relationship between the equi-NP's in the dependent and main clauses. These clauses, however, were all time adverbials. What about other adverb clauses--do they have the same restrictions? Consider the following causal adverbials:

- 37. Michelle hated Dave because Dave had insulted her.
- *38. Because Dave had insulted her, Michelle hated Dave.
- *39. Dave insulted Michelle because Dave didn't like her.
- *40. Because Dave didn't like her, Dave insulted Michelle.

Sentences 38 and 40, the sentences containing a preposed adverbial clause, are both ungrammatical. Sentence 37, which has the NP used as a subject in the dependent clause and as a nonsubject in the main clause, is grammatical. But sentence 39, which has the NP used as a subject in both clauses, is ungrammatical. Thus the same tentative restrictions would hold for causal adverbials.

Adverbs of condition and conjunctive adverbs of concession present more of a problem than adverbs of time and cause. Consider the following sentences:

- 41. Michelle hated Dave, although Dave had done nothing.
- *42. Although Dave had done nothing, Michelle hated Dave.
- 43. They can ride with Jerry if Jerry brings his car.
- *44. If Jerry brings his car, they can ride with Jerry.

These sentences seem to adhere to the general condition proposed for time and causal adverbials. Sentences 42 and 44, with preposed adverbials, are ungrammatical. Sentences 41 and 43 adhere to the subject-nonsubject distinction established, and both are grammatical. But, consider the sentences below:

- ?45. Although Dave smiled politely, Dave was angry.
- *46. If Jerry brings his car, Jerry can take five people.
- ?47. Although they spoke softly to Dave, Dave was angry.
- ?48. If we give a map to Jerry, Jerry can come later.

All of these sentences contain preposed adverbial clauses, yet three of them are at least questionable as to acceptability. None of them would be acceptable if the clause came at the end of the sentence.

- *49. Dave was angry although Dave smiled politely.
- *50. Jerry can take five people if Jerry brings his car.
- *51. Dave was angry although they spoke softly to Dave.
- *52. Jerry can come later if we give a map to Jerry.

None of sentences 45-52 fulfills the subject-nonsubject relationship proposed earlier (NP in main clause must be a subject, and NP in dependent clause must be a nonsubject). Most people I have talked to find sentences 45 and 47 more acceptable than 46 and 48.² Generally, they found 46 and 48 ungrammatical to semi-grammatical. This suggests that there may be a different restriction on preposed adverbials of condition and of concession that states certain conditions under which they may be preposed. I am at present unable to discover these conditions.

The last type of adverb clause considered here is the locative clause.³ This clause seems to function differently from other adverb clauses in regard to our tentative constraint for optional pronominalization. Consider sentences 53-56.

- *53. I hid the treasure where the treasure will be safe.
- *54. I hid Mary where Mary will be safe.
- *55. Mary was hiding where Mary said she would be.
- *56. Where Mary said she would be, Mary was hiding.

None of the above sentences is grammatical although sentences 53 and 54 follow the rule I have proposed. The subordinate clause follows the main clause and the subject-nonsubject relationship corresponds to the other grammatical sentences we have looked at. Locative clauses do not seem to have the option of leaving both NP's unpronominalized.³ Pronominalization is obligatory when one NP is in a locative clause and the other NP is in another clause. Thus we can generalize our second condition as follows:

Condition: SD: X NP₁ X NP₂ X

Both NP's may be retained when one is in the main clause and one is in a non-preposed adverbial clause of time, cause, or condition.

Restrictions: 1. NP₁ = NP₂
2. NP must be a nonsubject in the main clause and a subject in the adverb clause.

Note: Although this condition does not allow for the exceptions in sentences 45-48, it does not permit ungrammatical sentences. A further rule, which I have not developed, would have to account for these sentences.

III. Adjective Clauses

The pronoun most often associated with adjective clauses is the relative pronoun (who, whose, whom, which, that). From sentences 57-59 below, it is obvious that pronominalization of the relative NP in English is never optional.

- *57. The boy the boy came in last was the winner.
- *58. I like the apartment the apartment Michelle rents.
- *59. This is the book the book I lost a year ago.

The second NP, in each sentence, would have to be changed to the relative pronoun. Thus we can say that pronominalization is obligatory when the second NP will become a relative pronoun. What about other NP's in the relative clause besides the NP that is converted to the relative pronoun? For example:

- 60. Dave sent Michelle this birthday card, which Michelle liked.
- 61. Dave always writes to Michelle about his neighborhood, where Michelle lived.
- 62. It was this birthday card, which Michelle liked, that Dave sent to Michelle.
- 63. The neighborhood where Michelle lived, Dave always writes to Michelle about it.
- 64. Dave wrote to Michelle about the neighborhood that Michelle had known as a child.

Sentences 60 and 61 are complex sentences with the NP's serving as the subject of the adjective clause and the nonsubject of the main clause--similar to the distinction that determined the grammaticality of the adverb-clause sentences seen earlier. Sentence 63 shows

that when sentence 61 undergoes dislocation, it is still grammatical; sentence 62 shows that sentence 60 is grammatical when it becomes a cleft sentence. From sentences 60-64, the rule seems to be that both NP's can be retained when one is in an adjective clause, as long as the NP in the adjective clause is a subject and the NP in the other clause is a nonsubject. However, the following sentences are exceptions:

- *65. The boy Michelle had loved jilted Michelle.
- *66. The boy Michelle had loved since childhood jilted Michelle.
- *67. It was this boy, whom Michelle had loved, that Michelle told Dave about.
- *68. The boy who jilted Michelle last year called Michelle today.

Sentence 65 has the NP as a subject in the adjective clause and as a nonsubject in the main clause. Thus, it should be grammatical by the tentative condition proposed earlier. It is not. Even when we add additional phrases to reduce the stress on the NP's, as in sentence 66, it remains ungrammatical. The condition also cannot have to do with whether the clause is restrictive or nonrestrictive. Sentences 63 and 64 contain restrictive clauses and are grammatical, and sentences 60, 61, and 62 contain nonrestrictive clauses and are grammatical. Sentence 67 has NP's used as a subject in both clauses, and sentence 68 has the NP in the adjective clause used as a nonsubject and the NP in the main clause used as a subject. Both sentences "break" the tentative condition, and both are possibly grammatical. Thus we have a dilemma: Adjective clauses seem to lend themselves to frequent options in nonrelative pronominalization, but I could discover no apparent condition which holds for all adjective clauses.

IV. Noun Clauses

Noun clauses do not lend themselves to optional pronominalization. Consider:

- *69. Michelle believes that Michelle is beautiful.
- *70. Michelle believes that everyone loves Michelle.
- *71. That everyone hates Michelle bothers Michelle.
- *72. That Michelle is ugly bothers Michelle.⁴

From these examples we can generalize that pronominalization involving a nonpossessive NP in a noun clause and in a main clause is not optional.

V. Additional Considerations

Problems and exceptions arising from the preceding discussion are certainly more numerous than solutions proposed. One consideration that is obviously important is stress. Lakoff and others have pointed out that both NP's must be unstressed in order

for one of them to pronominalize. The same seems true in order for pronominalization to be optional. The more the stress on the NP is reduced, the more prone the NP seems to optional pronominalization. Thus a very short sentence, with less chance of reduced stress on the NP's, would be less likely to retain both NP's than would a longer sentence with modifying phrases or clauses which reduce the stress. This was evidenced earlier in sentences 46 and 47 and in footnotes 2,3, and 4. It is evident also in sentences that contain special stress. For example:

73. Mary saw the hat, bought the hat, and wore it home.

When special emphasis shifts to the verbs, reducing stress on the noun phrase, the repeated noun phrase becomes acceptable.

In the sentence below, the parallelism places special stress on the gerunds, reducing the stress on the NP's.

74. Loving Sam was one thing, but marrying Sam was another.

Another device that reduces stress on the NP is the both...and construction mentioned in footnote 4.

75. The usher's treatment of Bill irritated both Bill and his date.

The facts that stress must be taken into consideration in determining when pronominalization can be optional, and that the few optional pronominalization conditions I have been able to devise all depend on surface structure, support George Lakoff's contention that pronominalization is probably determined by output conditions to determine wellformedness. It seems probable that obligatory pronominalization (such as pronominalization of reflexives and relative pronouns) are transformations and need no additional constraints in the surface structure, and that optional pronominalization is the result of output conditions. For example, suppose we wanted to retain the two equi-NP's instead of pronominalizing in one of the optional cases, and stress were the determining factor. We could not pronominalize before the output condition that added stress, because that would do away with our option. Thus, at least cases of optional pronominalization would have to be stated as output conditions coming after the string has reached surface structure and after stress.

NOTES

¹ The idiomatic use of the of phrase after an adjective seems to be an exception--for example, the sentence *'Ahead of Darwin's time, Darwin was attacked for his ideas.' Other of phrases after an adjective work the same way: *'Astride of Bill's horse, Bill accepted the jumping trophy.' This suggests that the transformation to 'ahead of his time' occurs after pronominalization, thus putting this case of pronominalization, at least, into the deep structure.

² J. Beaver has pointed out that the although clause implicitly involves contrast and therefore may require special stress. This stress, seemingly, must be taken into account in any rule that may be devised.

³ The sentence, 'Wherever Mary says she will be, Mary is.' was pointed out to me as an exception to this rule. However, once again stress seems the determining factor, with special emphasis on says and is needed to make the sentence grammatical. The locative clause is often used as an argument for pronominalization being a transformation, since the sentence 'Where it will be safe, there I hid the treasure,' seems to indicate that pronominalization must come before adverb preposing. Lakoff argues, though, in 'Pronouns and Reference' that adverb preposing does not have to precede pronominalization.

⁴ The sentence 'That Michelle is ugly bothers both Michelle and her mother.' is another example of special stress needed to make the sentence grammatical. This is discussed in Part V.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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