C-command and binding

Based on Koeneman & Zeiljstra (2017)

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COGS 532: Theoretical Linguistics
METU, Informatics

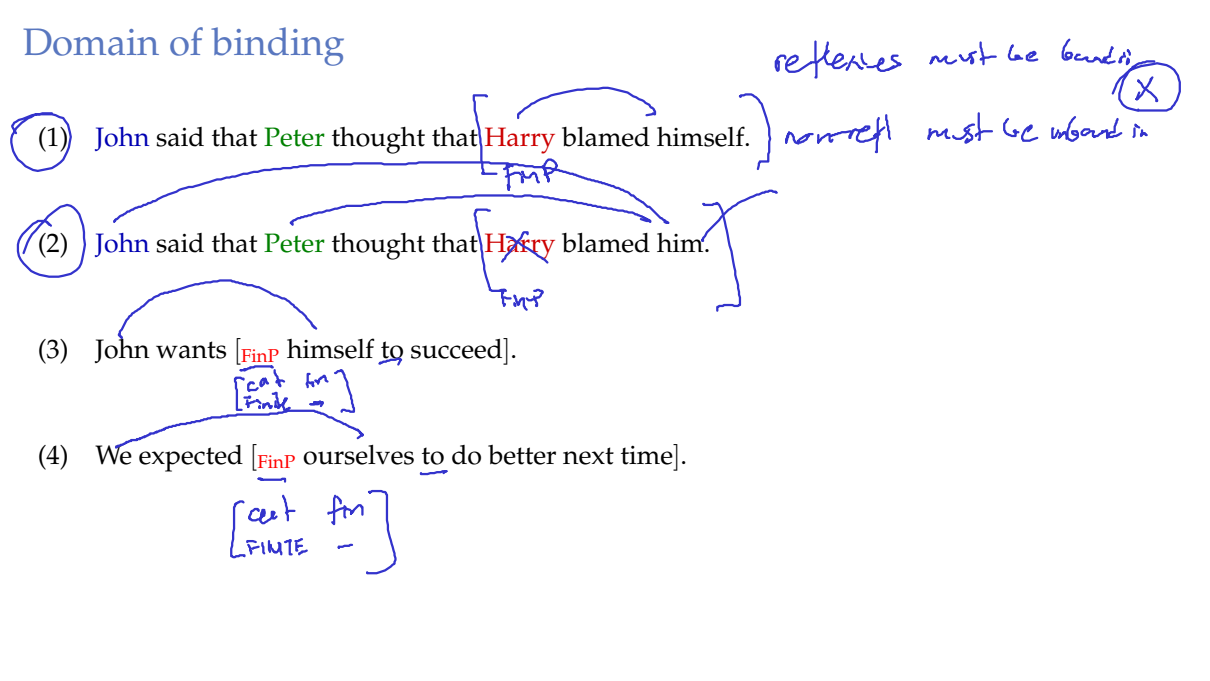
Domain of binding

(1) John said that Peter thought that Harry blamed himself.

(2) John said that Peter thought that Harry blamed him.

(3) John wants [FinP himself to succeed].

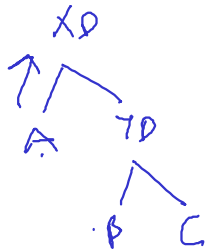
(4) We expected [FinP ourselves to do better next time].

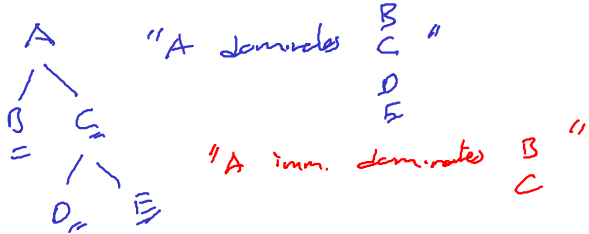


Dominance

A node *A* dominates a node *B* if and only if you can reach from *A* to *B* by going only down in the tree.

A node *A* immediately dominates a node *B* if and only if you can reach from *A* to *B* by going one step down in the tree.





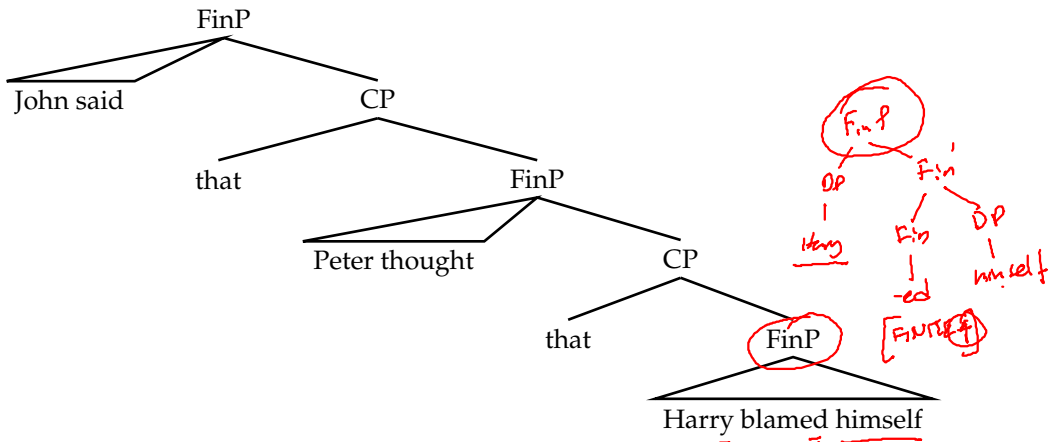
Binding conditions revised

[cat fin
FINITE +]

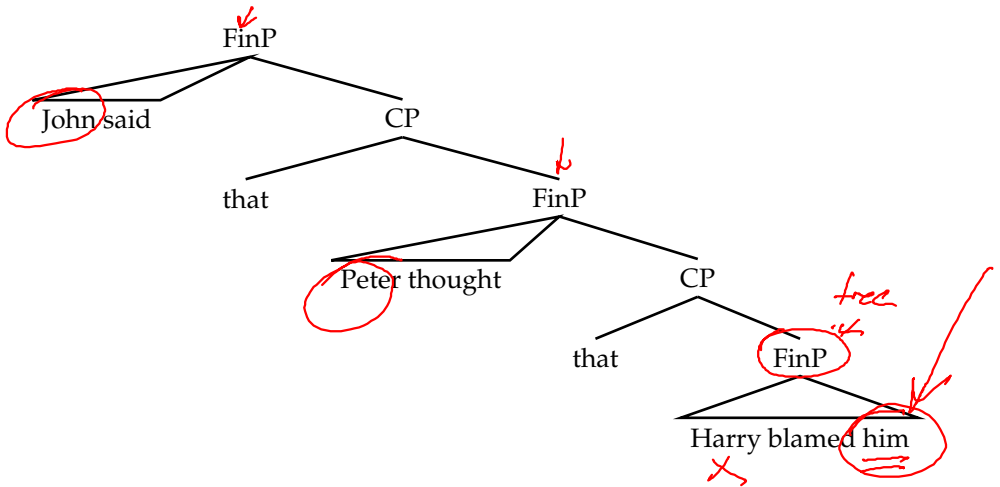
Principle A:
A reflexive must be bound within the closest finite FinP dominating it.

Principle B:
A non-reflexive pronoun cannot be bound within the closest finite FinP dominating it.

(5) John said that Peter thought that Harry blamed himself.

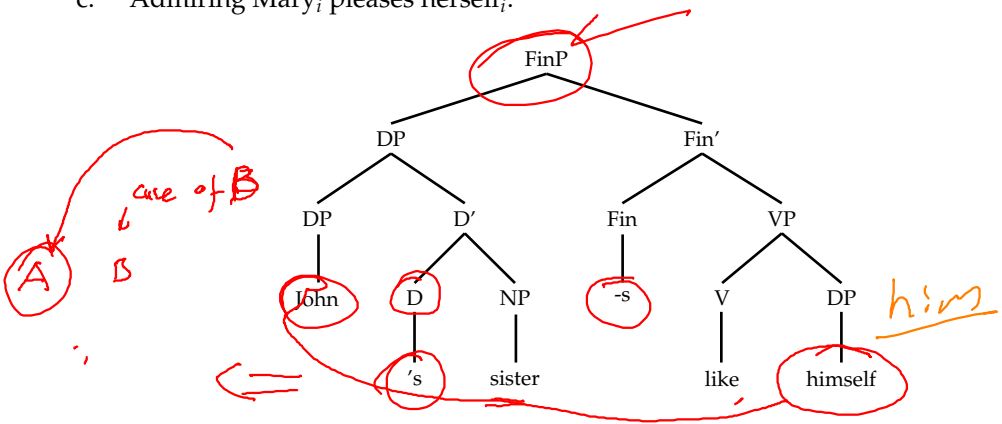


(6) John said that Peter thought that Harry blamed him.



Problems

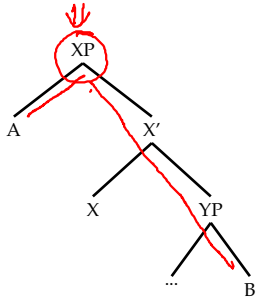
(7) a. *The book about the president$_i$ upset himself$_i$.
b. *John$_i$'s sister likes himself$_i$.
c. *Admiring Mary$_i$ pleases herself$_i$.

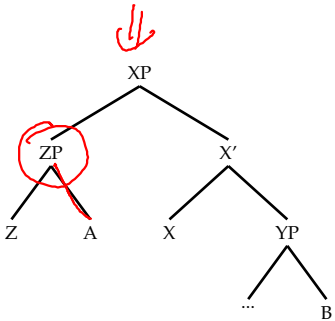


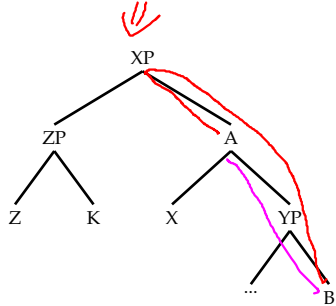
C-command

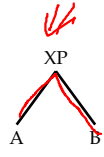
constituent command

A c-commands *B* if and only if the node that immediately dominates *A* dominates *B* and *A* does not dominate *B*.









mutual c-command

"A c-cans B"

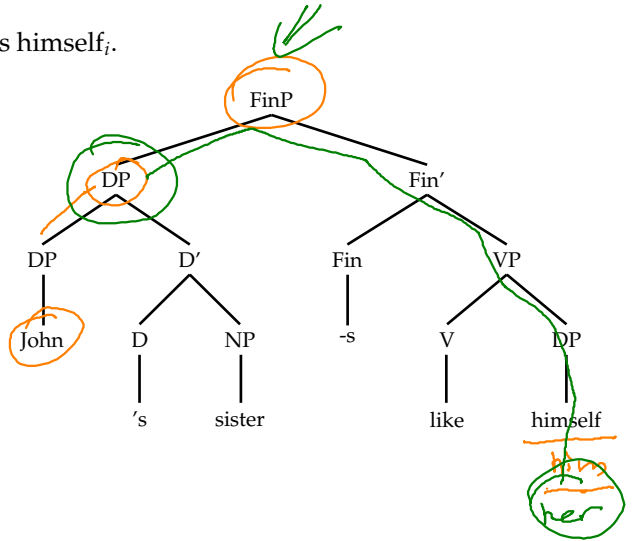
Binding conditions revised

Principle A:
A reflexive must be bound by a c-commanding antecedent, where the antecedent is dominated by the closest FinP that dominates the reflexive.

Principle B:
A non-reflexive pronoun cannot be bound by a c-commanding antecedent, where the antecedent is dominated by the closest FinP that dominates the reflexive.

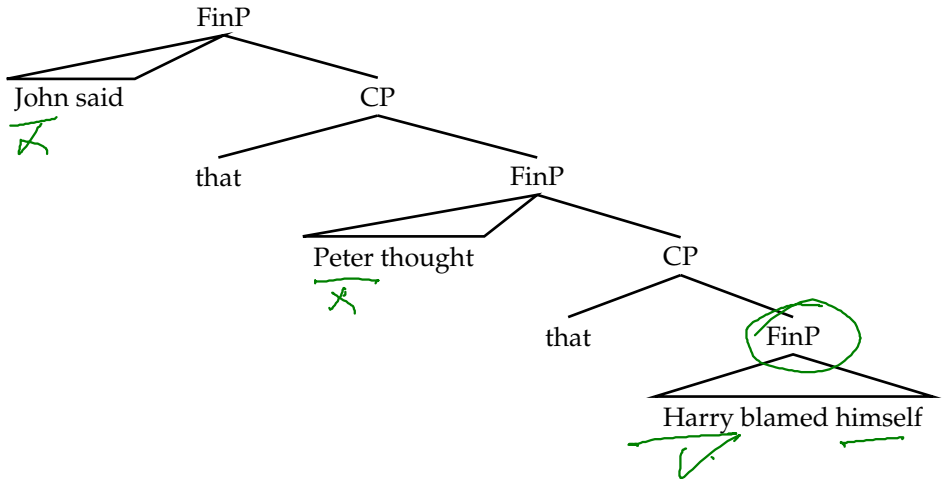
C-command failure

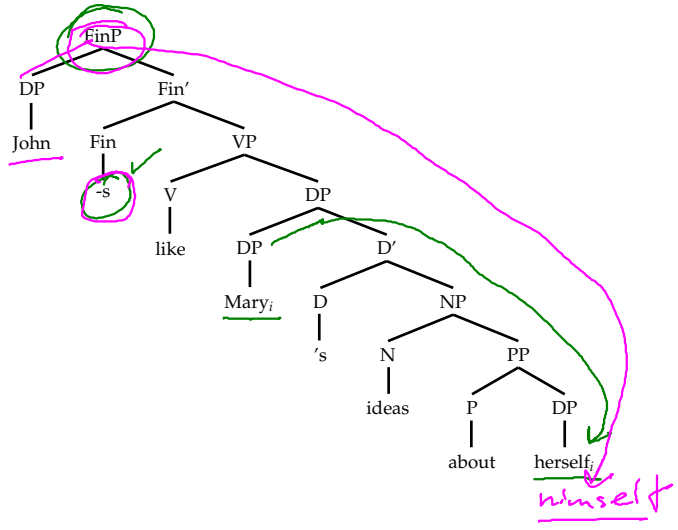
(8) *John$_i$'s sister likes himself$_i$.



“Closest FinP” (locality) failure

(9) *John said that Peter$_i$ thought that Harry blamed himself$_i$.



Binding in other phrases

(10) John likes Mary$_i$'s ideas about herself$_i$.