

Short Distance Pronouns in Representational Noun Phrases and a Grammar of Sentience

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Introduction

It is well-known that the syntactically-based binding theory of Chomsky 1981, although it makes sense of a large body of data, fails to account for certain instances of pronominal and anaphoric coreference. Much work has been done on long-distance anaphora (LDA), but less attention has been paid to the complementary violation: short-distance pronouns (SDP), or pronouns that take an antecedent within a local domain where Condition B of Chomsky 1981 should rule them out. These occur in two environments:

representational NPs:¹

- (1) Lucie_i saw a picture of her_i.
Max_i heard a story about him_i.
(Reinhart and Reuland 1993)

and *directional or locational PPs* (Lees and Klima 1963):

- (2) John_i has no covering over him_i.

In this paper we focus on the representational NPs.

Linguists have long-known that long-distance anaphors are sensitive to discourse factors variously termed point of view, logophoricity, or empathy (e.g., Kuno and Kaburaki 1977, Zribi-Hertz 1989, Reinhart and Reuland 1993 among others), but pronouns have not generally been recognized as interacting with point of view in any

¹ The term *picture noun phrase* has been commonly used in the literature to refer to some of these NPs, but I will use the term representational NPs instead, which is more accurate.

fundamental way (Cantrall 1973 as a notable exception). This paper presents certain facts about SDPs in representational NPs and argues that they should be analyzed in terms of point of view. Point of view will be analyzed more generally in terms of a grammar of sentience.

This paper outlines two factors in the acceptability of SDPs in representational NPs, and proposes analyses that integrate existing proposals for the syntax of the left periphery and the feature specification of pronouns. The paper is in some ways a sketch, for the sake of brevity leaving out argumentation which can be found elsewhere, and focusing on creating a clear picture in its entirety, through integrating these different strands of work. The picture is a beginning sketch of a Grammar of Sentience for natural language. Much of what is proposed here remains a project for future research.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 outlines the first observation, that SDPs are better in representational NPs that are associated with a point of view. Section 2 develops this observation into an analysis employing a Sentience Phrase and a grammatical feature for sentience. Section 3 outlines the second observation, that SDPs are better with sentient antecedents. Section 4 proposes an account for this based on the idea that an experiencer thematic role comes lexically marked as [+sentient]. Section 5 is a brief summary.

It is important to remember that the kind of binding facts discussed here involve the interaction of a number of factors, making the judgments seem muddled. Some readers may have slightly different judgments, but they should see the same trends and relative

differences. The paper will isolate and examine two of these different, intersecting factors affecting the felicitousness of SDPs.

1. SDPs improve in NPs that are associated with a point of view

The first observation about conditions on SDPs in noun phrases is the following: SDPs improve in NPs that are associated with a point of view. We may begin by asking, what does it mean to have a point of view associated with a noun phrase? Compare:

- (3) a. Maggie_i ran into her beloved_j brother.
 b. Maggie ran into her damn_{spkr} brother.

In (a) the subject – Maggie – is interpreted as the one to whom that brother is beloved.

In (b) it is the speaker – not Maggie -- who applies the epithet *damn* to the brother.²

These are quite robust judgments with some cross-linguistic generality.³ For the interpretation of each of these examples involving point of view, some sentient individual must be assigned as the source of the evaluation of the predicate invoking point of view (*beloved*, *damn*). This is referred to in this paper as the *point of view anchor*. The adjectives *beloved* and *damn* introduce an implicit argument representing that necessarily sentient entity from whose point of view the predicate is evaluated. The role of sentient entities in grammar have been discussed in terms of *discourse roles* (Sells 1987, Kamp 1984), *logophoric roles* (Minkhoff 1994), or *sentience roles* (Speas and

² SDPs are also possible with other types of NPs, but they are most felicitous with representational NPs. For brevity's sake, the paper will not go into the reasons for this. For brevity, we will also not address the reasons for the judgment in (a). These facts have to do with the argument structure and lexical semantics of the psych-adjective.

³ The author has observed anecdotally that these judgments also hold in Argentinian Spanish, Quebec French, and Japanese.

Tenny 2003). These are like thematic roles, but they refer to necessarily sentient entities, and serve as point of view anchors for predicates that make implicit reference to some individual's point of view.

Next we observe that SDPs in representational NPs improve, in the context of an implicit point of view. The SDPs in the sentences below improve when the speaker-oriented evaluative *damn* is included in the NP:

- (4)
- a. ?Lucie_i saw a picture of her_i.
 - b. Lucie_i saw the damn picture of her_i.
-
- a. *Jessie_i stole a photo of her_i out of the archives.
 - b. Jessie_i stole the damn photo of her_i out of the archives.
-
- a. *Lucie_i took a picture of her_i.
 - b. Lucie_i took that damn picture of her_i.

The speaker-oriented adjectives tend to introduce specificity, which is known to improve the binding possibilities (Fiengo and Higginbotham 1981).⁴ However, the same sentences repeated below with non-specific NPs, although awkward, are still acceptable with SDPs, especially if enough emphasis is placed on *damn*:

- (5)
- Lucie_i saw a *damn* picture of her_i.
 - Jessie_i stole a *damn* photo of her_i out of the archives.
 - Max_i told a *damn* story about him_i.

Evidentials are another type of predicate introducing a POV anchor. Evidential adjectives such as *apparent*, *clear*, *obvious*, *dubious*, or *doubtful* are a diagnostic for one type of point of view.⁵ These adjectives have as an implicit argument the individual

⁴ Other facts affecting acceptability of SDPs in NPs are discussed in Tenny 2004a.

⁵ Care must be taken to distinguish evidentials that are truly active POV predicates, introducing an

to whom the fact or state of affairs is apparent, evident, or obvious -- the one who knows or evaluates the truth or falsity of a proposition. (6) is ambiguous: it may be obvious either to Jill or to the speaker, that the pictures that Jill hates are pictures of tragedy:

(6) Jill hates obvious pictures of tragedy.

When the NP contains a SDP, the POV anchor is ambiguous.

(7) Jill_i hates obvious pictures of her_i.

With the pronoun, the point of view associated with the adjective could be understood as the speaker or the subject; the pictures could be obvious either to Jill or to the speaker. To make this clearer, contrast the pronoun, with a reflexive in the same position:

(8) Jill_i hates obvious pictures of herself_i.

With the reflexive the point of view is not associated with the speaker; it is understood as associated with the subject *Jill*. The following two sentences may make this contrast clearer. Speaker POV is possible with pronouns but not reflexives:⁶

- (9) a. Mary_i sent John obviously obscene pictures of her_i, which she thought were innocent.
 b. #Mary_i sent John obviously obscene pictures of herself_i, which she thought were innocent.

We will not discuss the reflexives further in this paper.

Operators for point of view have been proposed in the literature (Koopman and Sportiche 1989, Hollebrandse and Roeper 1999, among others). In this paper we analyze point of view predicates such as *damn* and *obvious* as introducing a variable for

implicit POV anchor that must be bound in the interpretation, from those words used in a general, non-POV sense. The distinction is lexical and/or idiolectal.

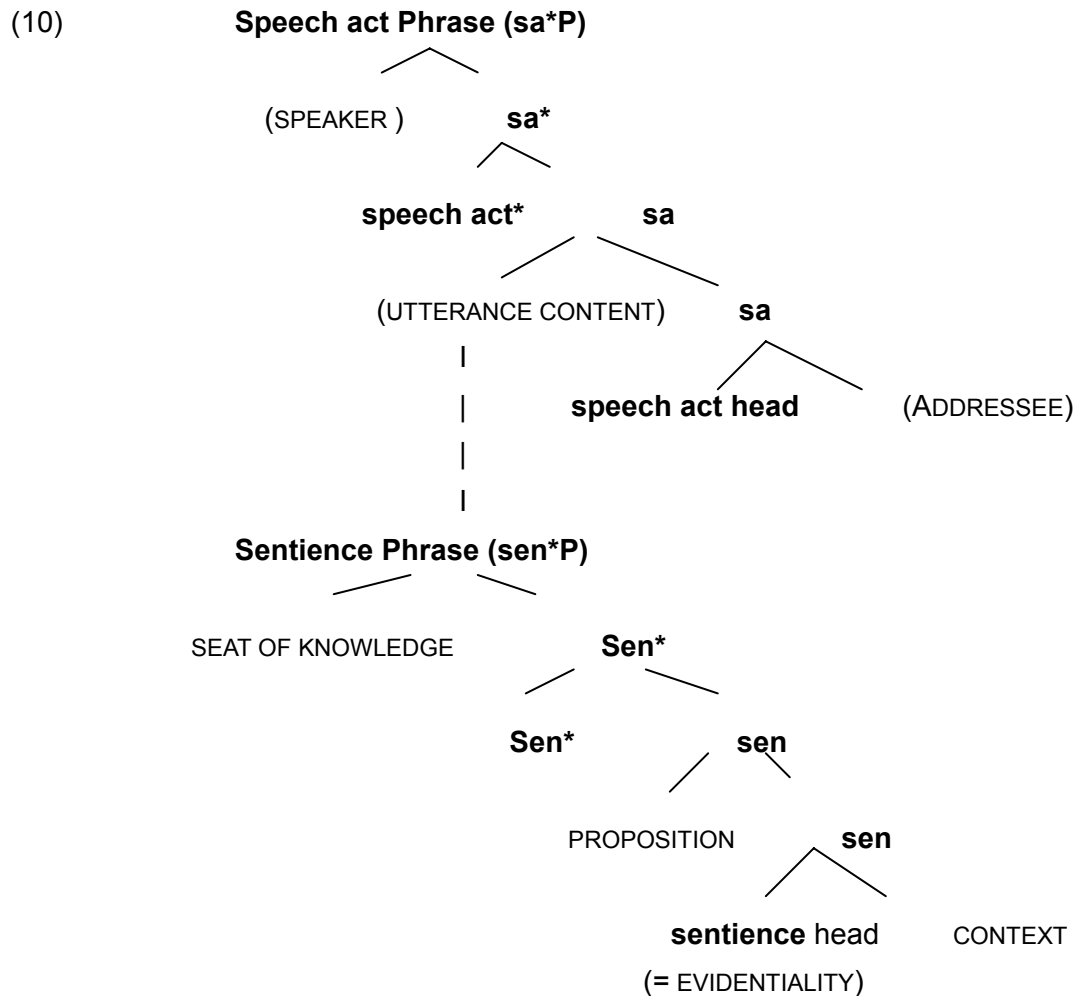
⁶ I am grateful to Peggy Speas for these examples.

the point of view anchor, which is bound by an operator from a higher position. We consider in the next section what that higher position is.

2. Some syntax of the left periphery

2.1. The Sentience Projection

Within the last ten years, the syntax of the left periphery has become an active area of investigation as syntacticians have uncovered clues to the fine structure of the CP. A number of proposals have emerged for syntactic projections at the top of the CP, for features that encode information related to the syntax-pragmatics interface (Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999, Rivero 1994, Ambar 1999, 2000, Koopman and Sportiche 1989, Hollebrandse and Roeper 1999, among others). A number of these authors (Rizzi, Cinque, Ambar, Rivero) have proposed that there is a projection at the top of the CP whose head encodes illocutionary force. Cinque 1999 has also proposed an Evidentiality Phrase near the top of the CP based on the cross-linguistic distribution patterns of evidential adverbs and morphology. Speas and Tenny 2003, building on this work, proposed that the Speech Act Projection at the top of the CP, and a Sentience Projection below that (encoding evidentiality among other things) make up the syntactic skeleton of a grammar of sentience. This sparse structure negotiates between various points of view that are grammatically encoded within a sentence. Speas and Tenny motivate these structures by showing that they predict the small range of grammaticizable speech acts across languages, and also certain contrasts between declarative and interrogative meanings (which this paper will not discuss). The structure proposed in Speas and Tenny 2003 is below:



At the top of the clause there is a projection for the Speech Act,⁷ with speaker, addressee, and utterance as arguments. Tsoulas and Kural 1998 have proposed that first and second person pronouns variables bound by operators for speaker and addressee, somewhere above the CP. This structure would provide the syntactic sites for those operators in the Speech Act Phrase.

⁷ Only a small set of *grammaticized* speech acts are represented by this projection. Not all varieties of possible speech acts identified by pragmatics and philosophers will be represented syntactically. See Speas and Tenny 2003 for details.

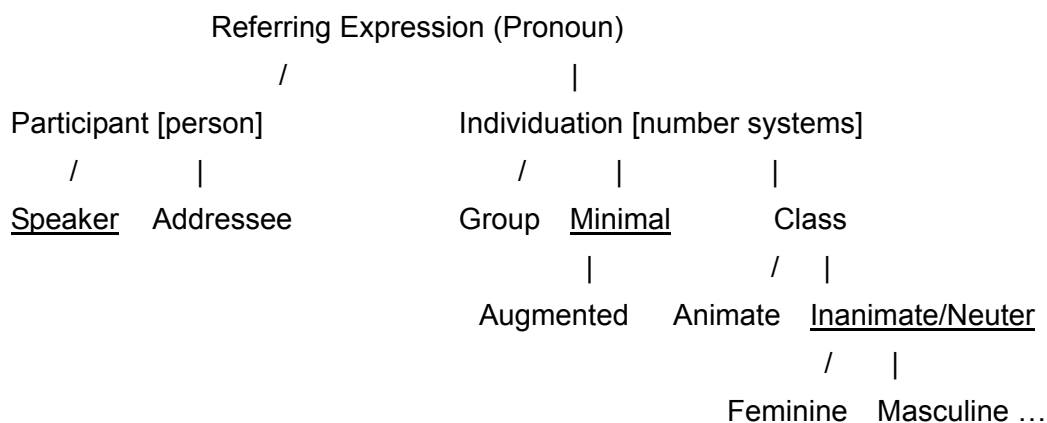
Below the Speech Act Phrase, there is a Sentience Projection (the syntactic expansion of the utterance), whose arguments consist of the proposition, the context, and a *seat of knowledge*. This paper will not go into further arguments for the structures,⁸ but note that they are Larsonian-style lexical structures (Larson 1988), constrained in form and size by basic computational principles for lexical projections, in the spirit of work by Hale and Keyser (1993, 1998, 1999) and others. These are what syntax gives us if we follow it strictly. Of these structures, what is necessary for this paper is only the Sentience Projection, which represents point of view or evaluations of truth relative to some necessarily sentient entity. It would be the projection in which Point of View operators (Hollebrandse and Roeper 1999) or Logophoric Operators (Koopman and Sportiche 1989) occur.

⁸ See Speas (to appear) for arguments supporting the idea of context as an argument.

2.2. The feature [+Sentient]

Harley and Ritter (2002) have argued for the following universal feature geometry for pronouns, motivated by extensive and careful cross-linguistic study of morphological features of pronouns:

(11) *Harley and Ritter (2002)*



Observe that the features on the left branch must be assigned to necessarily sentient entities, which is not the case with the features on the right branch.⁹ Unifying this feature set under the more general feature [+sentient], and substituting the term *discourse participants* for Harley and Ritter's term for person (*participant*), we have feature sets associated with the two projections proposed in Speas and Tenny 2003. The feature [+sentient] is associated with the Sentience Projection, and the features [+discourse participant, +/-speaker] are associated with the Speech Act projection.¹⁰

⁹ The feature [+Animate] in Harley and Ritter's system refers to noun class, and is not the same as the feature for sentience introduced here.

¹⁰ Harley and Ritter argue that a feature for Addressee must be specified independently in the feature system for some configurations in some languages. This adaptation is not meant to argue against this, but to simply cast these ideas in their simplest form..

(12) *Adaptation of Harley and Ritter (left branch only)*

Referring Expression (Pronoun)			
/			
+Sentient	-Sentient	}	[+sentience] → Sentience Phrase
/		<i>it</i>	
/			
+ Discourse Participant	-Discourse Participant	}	[+disc part] → Speech Act Phrase
/		<i>he, she</i>	
/			
+Speaker	-Speaker	}	[+/-speaker] → Speech Act Phrase
<i>I</i>	<i>you</i>		

The feature [+sentient] is also supported by Ritter and Harley's work (Ritter p.c.) and has been proposed by Hanson 2003 in the context of that work.

Integrating these different strands of research in morphology and syntax, and focusing on the feature [+sentience], we have the following set of proposals:

(13) *Interim summary of proposals:*

- (i) Referring expressions (including variables and operators) can be specified with the feature [+sentient].
- (ii) The feature [+sentient] is associated with the Sentience Projection.
- (iv) The specifier of the Sentience Projection (the locus of the seat of knowledge argument) hosts referential items with the feature [+sentient], including operators binding variables for POV anchors.
- (v) Following Chomsky's (1995) view of a feature-driven minimalist syntax, referential items marked [+sentient] can move to the specifier of the Sentience Projection.

2.3. An NP can also have a Sentience Projection

The Sentence and the Noun Phrase¹¹ are parallel in many ways, as has been long observed. The functional structure of DPs and CPs also show syntactic parallels, and it is a small step to extend the proposal for a CP-level Sentience Projection to the NP. Cinque's observations that adverbs and morphemes show a consistent cross-linguistic ordering, holds at the NP level as well (Cinque p.c.) (although generally languages show less morphological functional structure at the NP level than at the CP-level). Cinque's line-up of his highest four projections are below:

- (14) [*frankly* Mood-speech act] [*fortunately* Mood-evaluative
 [*allegedly* Mood-evidential] [*probably* Mod-epistemic]

We see below that evaluative, evidential and epistemic adverbs (17) line up in the same way in the NP that Cinque has observed for the sentence:

- (15) Evaluative adverbs: *John's damn, blasted, surprising, unfortunate, success*
 Evidential adverbs: *John's apparent, obvious, evident, so-called, success*
 Epistemic adverbs: *John's supposed, probable, presumable, likely, success*

- (16) John's damn evident success
 John's apparent probable success
 John's unfortunate likely success

- (17) *John's evident damn success
 *?John's probable apparent success
 *John's likely unfortunate success

The ordering of adverbs is not definitive evidence for the existence of a projection, but

¹¹ I refer to NPs for the sake of discussion, but assume that the Sentience Projection will either be part of the functional structure of the DP, or will be above it.

does reinforce the idea that DPs and CPs have parallel syntactic structure. Tenny 2002 has also argued for a Sentience Projection¹² in Japanese, based on facts about person, evidentiality, and certain declarative/interrogative contrasts in that language. In this paper I will not argue further for this claim, except to employ the idea to show what it does for the facts about SDPs. We have arrived at the following proposal:

(18) *A Sentience Projection on the NP*

An implicit POV variable introduced by a predicate within a noun phrase is bound by an operator occupying the specifier position of a Sentience Projection on the NP.

If an NP has an associated POV operator, it has a Sentience Projection:

- (19) a. Jill_i hates [_{SentienceP} Op_k [_{NP} obvious-*k* pictures of her_i.]]
 b. Lucie_i took [_{SentienceP} Op_k [_{NP} that damn-*k* picture of her_i.]]

A Sentience Projection is an option, in theory, for any NP. However the speaker and addressee can choose whether or not to interpret the NP as relative to some POV anchor, and as therefore having a Sentience Projection.

2.4. Disjoint principle for pronoun binding

Now we arrive at a proposal for pronoun binding that unifies the binding of SDPs out of representational NPs with the wider generalization that pronouns may be bound outside of their clause; and with the observations that anaphora (such as *himself*) can also be sensitive to point of view:¹³

¹² Referred to as the Evidential Projection in that work.

¹³ There is more to be said about SDPs in PPs of location or direction, which I will not say here. But note that prepositional expressions most commonly admitting SDPs have to do with relative location. Prepositions (or prepositional expressions) like *behind*, *in-front-of*, or *to-the-left-of* introduce a relative location into the sentence, which must be evaluated with respect to some other location:

(20) *Disjoint principle for pronoun binding*

A pronoun must be bound outside of its Point of View Domain. A Point of View Domain is what is within the scope of an operator binding a point of view anchor.

3. SDPs improve when bound by the POV anchor

In Sections 1 and 2 we looked at one factor in the acceptability of SDPs in representational NPs, showing that SDPs are possible in NPs associated with a point of view. This was developed into the proposal that an operator with the feature [+sentience], located in a Sentience Projection on the NP, binds a variable for a point of view anchor within the NP, making the NP a binding domain for pronouns.

In this section we consider a second factor in the acceptability of SDPs in representational NPs: SDPs also improve when bound by the POV anchor itself. To make this observation we must examine lexical semantic verb classes. In this section we look at the interactions between the matrix verb and the representational NP.

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- (i) Olivia_i shoved the letter behind her_i
 Maggie_i heard her sister to the left of her_i.
 Alexander_i laid the paper in front of him_i.

An ambiguity reflecting relative location with respect to some sentient perceiver is possible, e.g., between the point of view of the (referent of the) subject and the speaker:

- (ii) The adults in the picture are facing away from us, with the children hidden behind them.
 (Cantrall 1974, p 46, #2)

If SDPs in locative and directional PPs also improve in the environment of a POV anchor, as these examples suggest, the analysis of the conditions governing the acceptability of SDPs in PPs and NPs will have much in common. See Tenny 2004a for further development of the PP facts.

The matrix verb contributes significantly to the acceptability of SDPs in NPs. Verbs that provide a sentient, perceiving antecedent are especially conducive to SDPs. This observation has been greatly discussed for anaphora but has been somewhat peripheral in studies of pronouns. However some authors have observed the contrast in the acceptability of SDPs between verbs having sentient arguments such as psych verbs or perception verbs (a); and verbs of creation (b):

- (21) a. Lucie_i saw a picture of her_i.
b. *Lucie_i took a picture of her_i.

- a. Max_i heard a story about him_i.
b. *Max_i told a story about him_i.

(Reinhart and Reuland 1993, #53-55, p. 685)

- (22) a. I_i hate the story about me_i that John always tells.
b. *I_i told the story about me_i that John likes to hear.¹⁴

(Jackendoff 1972, #4.274-4.275, p. 166)

- (23) *More verbs with sentient antecedents:*

Martha_i doesn't mind a joke about her_i now and then.

Jimmy_i hates stories about him_i told by his cousin.

The criminal_i saw descriptions of him_i that were posted at the station.

Evita_i would be shocked at a musical portrayal of her_i in the theaters.

Jack_i heard a rumor about him_i that his friends were circulating.

- (24) *More verbs of creation.*^{15 16}

¹⁴ The (b) sentence is acceptable according to the judgments of this author, because of the weight of information in the relative clause. The contrast between (a) and (b) is still clear however. Other readers might have the same judgments.

¹⁵ For brevity's sake, I will not discuss in this paper why creation verbs are inhospitable to SDPs. See Tenny 2004a for an explanation in terms of the possibility of argument structure reanalysis.

- *Hester_i painted a portrait of her_i.
- *Harry_i made up a description of him_i.
- *Andrew_i created a tale about him_i.
- *Marge_i sketched a likeness of her_i.

Kaiser, Runner, Sussman and Tanenhaus 2004 have demonstrated experimentally that ‘perceiver-of-information’ (sentient) antecedents are favored for SDPs over non-perceiver subjects. Subjects in their experiment chose SDPs more often when the antecedent was the perceiver of information.

4. A Proposal: Experiencers are lexically marked [+sentient]

In this section we take the proposal that referential items can be marked with the feature [+sentience] one step further, to propose that certain verbs mark their arguments with

¹⁶ Actually, matrix verbs can be divided into three classes, as far as their effect on SDPs in noun phrases is concerned. The third class is the agentive non-creation verbs. These verbs, which are neither perception/psych verbs, nor verbs of creation, show behavior intermediate between the creation verbs and the perception verbs. They are not as inhospitable to SDPs as are creation verbs, and they improve more readily under the right conditions. The psych verbs make SDPs better and the creation verbs make them worse. The agentive non-creation verbs are the neutral case, but they have not been recognized in the literature as such. The examples below include verbs of contact, verbs of imparting motion, and verbs of destruction. The author's judgments are marked below. Individual speaker judgments will vary here, but speakers of English will generally find that, like the creation verbs, these degrade as compared with the psych-verbs and perception verb examples; they are worse than psych verbs, better than creation verbs.

(i) ??*Anna_i hid a snapshot of her_i under the linoleum.

*James_i dropped a bust of him_i on his foot and broke a toe.

*?Julie_i hauled a painting of her_i upstairs into the attic.

*?Jessie_i stole a photo of her_i out of the archives.

the feature [+sentience]. This constitutes a very reasonable logical extension of the idea, since we already know of syntactic features that are associated with lexical items (tense, agreement, etc.). The *experiencer* thematic role associated with psychological predicates (a role that necessarily implies sentience) has many peculiar properties. The peculiar binding properties of psychological predicates have been long discussed in the literature (Postal 1970 and 1971, Giorgi 1984, Pesetsky 1987, Belletti and Rizzi 1988, Stowell 1986 among others, for some earlier examples).

If we take seriously the idea of a feature-driven minimalist syntax, and we take seriously the idea of a Sentience Projection and a feature [+sentience], then we must expect that movement of experiencers to the Sentience Projection is possible at some interpretive level. This is not a new idea; Stowell (1986) and Campbell and Martin (1989), in the context of Government and Binding Theory, proposed an Experiencer-Raising operation to account for a range of binding problems posed by experiencers. If experiencers are lexically marked as [+sentient] by the verb's argument structure, then they must relate to the Sentience Projection. We have the proposal that:

(25) *Sentience Raising*

- (i) Experiencers are lexically marked [+sentient]
- (ii) NPs that are lexically marked as [+sentient] can raise at an interpretive level to the specifier position of the Sentience Projection, giving them their extraordinary binding privileges.

This is illustrated below. (For simplicity, a Sentience Projection on the NP is omitted.)

(26) [_{SentienceP} Sondra_i [+sentient] [t_i [likes [_{NP} stories about her_j]]]

Tenny 2002 has proposed that the long distance anaphor use of *jibun* in Japanese also follows from *jibun* being lexically marked [+sentient].

5. Summary

This paper has outlined two factors in the acceptability of SDPs in representational NPs. The first, that SDPs are possible in NPs associated with a point of view, was developed into the proposal that an operator with the feature [+sentience], located in a Sentience Projection on the NP, binds a variable for a point of view anchor within the NP, making the NP a binding domain for pronouns.

The second factor in the acceptability of SDPs in representational NPs, that SDPs also improve when bound by the POV anchor itself, led to the proposal that experiencers are lexically marked as [+sentient], forcing them to raise to the Sentience Projection.

The paper has provided an analysis for these two factors that integrates proposals for a sentence projection and a grammatical feature for sentience.

Summary of proposals

- (i) There is an Sentience Projection available near the top of the CP.
- (ii) Referring expressions (including variables and operators) can be specified with the feature [+sentient].
- (iii) The Sentience Phrase is a projection for the feature [+sentient].
- (iv) The specifier of the Sentience Projection hosts referential items with the feature [+sentient], including operators representing POV anchors and binding POV

variables.

(v) Under a feature-driven minimalist syntax, we can have movement of referential items marked [+sentient] to the specifier of the Sentience Projection.

(vi) An optional Sentience Projection is available on the NP, and instantiated when a variable for a POV anchor is introduced into the NP.

(vii) *Disjoint principle for pronoun binding:*

A pronoun must be bound outside of its Point of View Domain. A Point of View Domain is what is within the scope of an operator binding a point of view anchor.

(viii) Experiencers are lexically marked [+sentient]

(ix) *Sentience Raising:*

NPs that are lexically marked as [+sentient] can raise at an interpretive level to the specifier position of the Sentience Projection, giving them their extraordinary binding privileges.

This paper has been a sketch, or promissory note, leaving aside some argumentation for the various proposals which can be found in other works, and focusing instead on the integrated picture we get when these simple ideas are put together. They lead us to a clear, coherent picture: a first sketch of a Grammar of Sentience. And they raise deeper questions about the nature of pronouns, which I leave the reader to think about.

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