

The Interpretation of Pronouns in Proxy Counterfactual Statements
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This research focuses on a puzzle concerning the interpretation of pronouns in *proxy counterfactual* statements (i.e., counterfactuals with two individual-denoting DPs joined by the copula in the *if*-clause, as illustrated in (1)). The composite individual hypothesized in the *if*-clause shares properties of both DPs, posing some restrictions on the interpretation of pronominal subjects in the main clause. In general, the subject of the main clause must match the subject of the *if*-clause in phi-features, and cannot match the complement of the *if*-clause in phi-features (Lakoff 1968, Thomas 2009). Constructions similar to (1), but involving first and second person pronouns, have analyzed the pronouns as rigid designators (Thomas 2009). This accounts for their lack of interchangeability as the subject of the main clause. However, this analysis does not extend to third person pronouns and definite descriptions.

- (1) a. *If John were the queen, he would take pity on the king.*
b. *If John were the queen, the queen would take pity on the king.*
c. *#If John were the queen, she would take pity on the king.*

E-type analyses of pronouns (e.g., Elbourne 2005) have been proposed to account for the seemingly (semantically) bound interpretations of donkey anaphora which are not syntactically bound. Such an analysis gives a pronoun the same syntactic structure as a covert definite description. In other words, a third person pronoun is interpreted as a definite determiner, with phonologically null descriptive content as its complement. If the occurrence of *she* in (1c) were an e-type pronoun, it would be interpreted as something akin to *she queen*, where *queen* is deleted under identity, and so unpronounced. The conditions which allow this are somehow unmet in (1c), where an interpretation by which *she* is synonymous with *the queen* in (1b) is unavailable. Such an identification is required for an e-type interpretation of the pronoun, of the sort argued for by Elbourne (2005). An analysis of these constructions must account for the fact that the retrieval of the descriptive material of the pronoun (as a covert definite description) is constrained, while the same constraints do not apply to an overt definite description in the same position (as seen in (1b)). Work treating phi-features as presupposition triggers provides clues for the resolution of this puzzle (e.g., Cooper 1983, Sudo 2012, etc.). I hypothesize that the subject of the *if*-clause introduces a presupposition triggered by its gender feature. The failure of the subject of the main fails to confirm this presupposition results in a violation of Heim (1991)'s Maximize Presupposition. The solution is also related to the Formal Link condition (e.g., Evans 1977), which requires that an e-type pronoun have an overt antecedent. If the DP in the *if*-clause is interpreted attributively as a property rather than as a referential expression, then it cannot serve as a suitable antecedent for an e-type pronoun in the main clause.

References

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