

Binding, Coreference, and Presuppositions in the Binding Theory

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The classical binding theory (e.g., Chomsky 1981) did not distinguish between binding and coreference. Its binding principles regulated both of them, by imposing restrictions on coindexing. Reinhart (1983 and subsequent) proposed that the binding theory should regulate only syntactic binding and not coreference, and most of the field appears to have followed her lead. I re-evaluate this proposal and suggest that, in fact, the binding conditions should regulate both binding and coreference, as the classical binding theory had it. Reinhart’s approach predicts many more exceptions to the binding conditions than actually exist, and the systematic exceptions that do exist can be accommodated within a version of the classical binding theory without overgenerating. Reinhart’s approach also requires two separate sets of principles, syntactic and pragmatic, with the latter partially duplicating the former. A binding theory with only one set of syntactic principles is simpler and captures the facts better. I propose a new binding theory that combines the presuppositional approach to Condition A of Sauerland (2013) with the precede-and-command approach of Bruening (2014). In this new binding theory, the requirements of Binding Conditions A, B, and C are presuppositions. The grammar keeps track of NPs introduced in a left-to-right fashion but according to syntactic boundaries; the binding conditions are presuppositions on newly introduced NPs concerning their ability to be covalued with these previously introduced NPs. This account has numerous advantages, including explaining strict and sloppy readings, apparent violations of the binding conditions under focus and in ellipsis (without the need for vehicle change), strong crossover and its insensitivity to focus, and the behavior of epithets.