The Reduction of Condition A to the Chain Condition and Possessed Picture-NP's

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Revising Reinhart & Reuland (1993), Fox (1993) proposes that Condition A of Binding Theory be reduced to the chain condition. The idea is that anaphors in argument positions of a syntactic predicate, just like NP-traces, require a local antecedent by the chain condition, while anaphoric elements in other positions are what are often called logophors, which are exempt from such a condition. Fox, following Reinhart & Reuland (1993), assumes that holding a subject is a necessary condition for a head to form a syntactic predicate. Thus, in (1a) picture forms a syntactic predicate with John as a subject, and the sentence is correctly predicted to be awkward, because the anaphor is an argument of that syntactic predicate but does not have a local antecedent.

(1a) */?John knows that Mary's picture of himself was in the newspaper.
   b. John knows that a picture of himself was in the newspaper.

In the meantime, lacking a subject, picture in (1b) does not form a syntactic predicate, by virtue of which, even though herself is an argument of picture, it is not amenable to the chain condition, and the sentence is correctly predicted to be well-formed.

However, there still remain two problems unsolved. First, the ungrammaticality of sentences like (1a) is not so strong for some speakers, as noted by a number of researchers (e.g. Kuno 1987, Reinhart & Reuland 1993, Asudeh & Keller 2001, Keller & Asudeh 2001, Runner et al. 2002). Second, even within the same speaker, expressions like (1a) can induce different degrees of ill-formedness, depending on the head noun. For example, some speakers feel that (2) is much worse than (1a).

(2) *John knows that Mary's criticism of himself was videotaped.

Recently, Asudeh & Keller (2001), Keller & Asudeh (2001), and Runner et al. (2002) suggest that anaphors in possessed picture-NP's are also logophoric. Although their proposal may clean up the first problem, it does not provide an answer for the second. This paper argues that there are, in fact, two subtypes of possessed picture-NP's: one governed by the chain condition and the other exempted from such a condition but rather sensitive to logophoric or discourse factors.

Following Williams (1982), Barker (1995) and Asudeh & Keller (2001), I assume that the possessor DP (at least in English) is actually not a subject of the picture-noun. This assumption enables us to differentiate the two picture-NP's in question. The first thing to notice is that, while Mary is truly θ-related to criticism in (2), it does not bear that kind of relation to picture in (1a) in the strict sense. As for the latter, it makes no difference even if the possessor is interpreted so-called 'agentively', namely as the producer of 'the picture', just like Mary is not an argument of cake in Mary's cake even if it is interpreted as the producer of 'the cake'. Consequently, it is reasonable to postulate the structures for the relevant part of the two examples as shown in (3a) and (3b) respectively.

(3a) [DP Mary’s [NP picture of himself]]
    NOT SYNTACTIC PREDICATE (no subject)

   b. [DP Mary’s [NP t. criticism of himself]]
      SYNTACTIC PREDICATE

In (3a) Mary is directly base-generated as a possessor of the DP, whereas in (3b) it is base-generated inside the NP and subsequently moves to the possessor position. Thus, even with the assumption that the possessor is not a real subject, criticism in (2) still forms a syntactic predicate, since it has a subject, the trace of Mary. On the other hand, picture in (1a) does not, because it lacks a genuine subject. Then example (2) is grammatically ruled out, violating the locality imposed upon by the chain condition, whereas (1a) may be degraded for discourse reasons. Assuming, as is standard, that discourse conditions
are not universal or may even be subject to speaker variations, the unstable status of sentences like (1a) can be accounted for.

The proposed approach has other advantages as well. For instance, contrary to what is typically reported in the literature (and in accordance with Keller & Asudeh's (2001) findings), most of my informants accepted (4a), as opposed to sharply ungrammatical (4b).

(4)a. Mary's pictures of her,
   b. *Mary's criticism of her,

This contrast can be explained under the present analysis in conjunction with Reinhart and Reuland's (1993) version of Condition B as in (5).

(5) A reflexive semantic predicate is reflexive-marked. (Reinhart and Reuland 1993 (41) p.678)

A predicate is reflexive if and only if two of its arguments are coindexed. A predicate is reflexive-marked if and only if, either its head itself is lexically reflexive (as in the cases of behave and wash), or a compound reflexive like English oneself is used as one of its arguments. Furthermore, the structures for the two examples should be as given in (6a) and (6b) respectively.

(6)a. [DP Mary's [NP pictures of her]]
   REFLEXIVE SEMANTIC PREDICATE

b. [DP Mary's [NP t criticism of her]]
   NON-REFLEXIVE SEMANTIC PREDICATE

As can be seen, both picture and criticism form a semantic predicate, since the semantic predicate does not require a subject (Reinhart & Reuland 1993). But crucially, only the latter is reflexive. More importantly it is not reflexive-marked, because the pronoun her is used instead of herself, which leads to the violation of Condition B in (5). With respect to (4a), Condition B does not apply or is vacuously satisfied.

Fox, Daniel (1993). "Chain and Binding: A Modification of Reinhart and Reuland's "Reflexivity"." ms., MIT.