# The grammar of exceptional scope

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Cornell Linguistics Colloquium · November 5, 2015

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# Goals for today

- Give a general theory of the **exceptional scope** behavior of indefinites, focus, and *wh*-in-situ.
- Based on a new kind of **alternative semantics**, where alternatives interact with their semantic context by **taking scope**.
- I'll argue that we should prefer this kind of approach to standard varieties of alternative semantics:
  - More compositional
  - Better predictions when multiple sources of alternatives
  - A more robust treatment of binding
  - Super modular, extensible (e.g., if we have time, to dynamics)

# Where we are

# Where we are

# Some data

- Each of the following can be interpreted in a way that gives the **bolded** thing apparent scope outside a syntactic ⟨island⟩.

(1) If ⟨**a rich relative of mine** dies⟩, I'll inherit a house. (∃ > if)

(2) I only complain when ⟨**BILL** leaves the lights on⟩.

(3) Taro-wa ⟨**dare**-ga katta mochi-o⟩ tabemasita ka?
Taro-TOP who-NOM bought rice cake-ACC ate Q
'Who is the x such that Taro ate rice cakes that x bought?'

[Examples after Reinhart 1997; Rooth 1996; Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002]

# What we might hope for

- Rooth (1985, 1992, 1996) developed a theory that countenanced island-sensitivity for focus (more on that theory shortly).
- However:

> The group of island-escaping operators does not appear to be an arbitrary one.... [Their] semantic similarity, together with the common insensitivity to scope islands, suggest that we should not be satisfied with a theory which treats focus as sui generis. (Rooth 1996)

- To date, hasn't happened:
  - Extant accounts are piecemeal accounts.
  - Even so, they over- and/or under- generate for their more narrowly construed empirical domains.

# Where we are

- Islands and alternatives
  - Exceptional scope
  - Standard alternative semantics
- Proposal: alternatives take scope
  - Basic pieces
  - Deriving exceptional scope
- Why scope?
  - Compositionality
  - Selectivity
  - Binding
- Horizons
  - Dynamics
  - Concluding

# Alternative semantics

- Some expressions introduce alternatives into the semantics, causing us to calculate a number of meanings in parallel.
- E.g., indefinites might be taken to denote **sets of individuals**:

$$[\![\text{a linguist}]\!]^g = \{x \mid \textsc{ling}\, x\}$$

- Cf. the standard generalized-quantifier semantics:

$$[\![\text{a linguist}]\!]^g = \lambda\kappa.\, \exists x.\, \textsc{ling}\, x \wedge \kappa\, x$$

# Composing alternatives

- **Compositional challenge:** $[\![\text{a linguist}]\!]^g$ is type $e \to t$, but occurs in places where something of type $e$ standardly expected.
- The usual way to go: first, suppose that **everything** denotes a set:

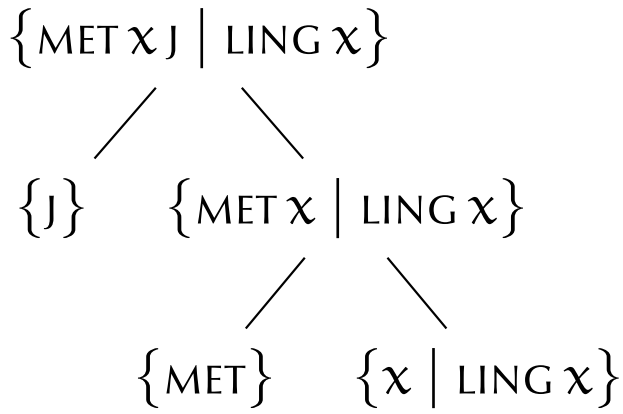
$$[\![\text{John}]\!]^g = \{\text{j}\} \qquad [\![\text{met}]\!]^g = \{\text{MET}\} \qquad [\![\text{a ling}]\!]^g = \{x \mid \text{LING}\, x\}$$

- Then, to compose these sets, use *point-wise* functional application (**PWFA**) (e.g. Hamblin 1973; Rooth 1985):

$$[\![\text{A B}]\!]^g = \{f\, x \mid f \in [\![\text{A}]\!]^g \wedge x \in [\![\text{B}]\!]^g\}$$

# An example

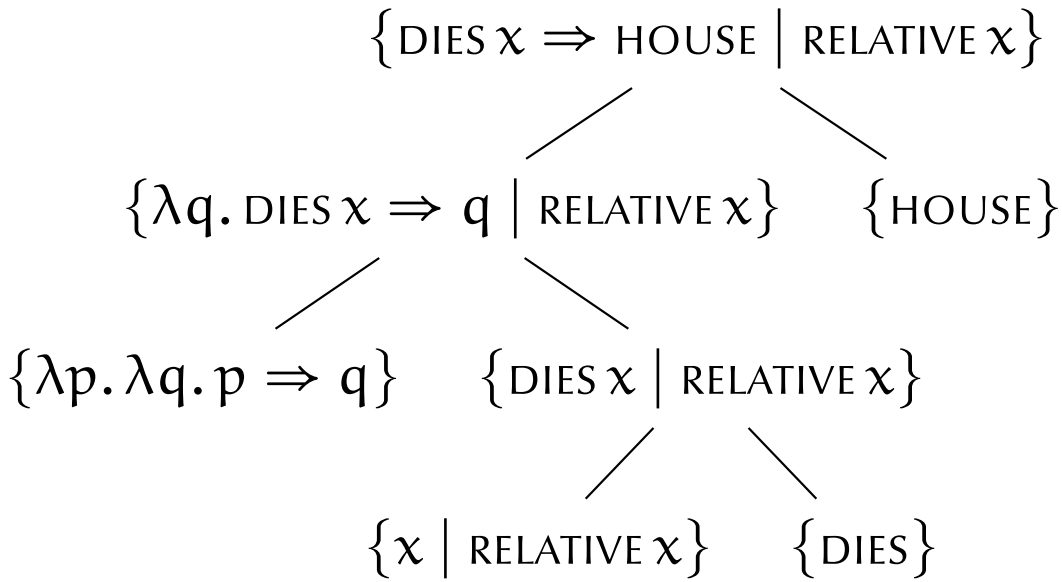
- A basic example, *John met a linguist*:




- As we climb the tree, the alternatives **expand**, eventually yielding a set of propositions, **one per linguist**.

# Getting traction on island-insensitivity

- Island-insensitivity is a **consequence of PWFA**. Here's an alternatives-based derivation of the *relative-of-mine* conditional:




- The indefinite acquires a kind of "scope" over the conditional, yielding various conditional propositions "about" various relatives.

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# Proposal summarized

- In general, when we posit enriched meanings (e.g., sets of alternatives), we have a choice:
  - A fancier lexicon, enriched modes of composition (i.e., PWFA).
  - Greasing the skids some other way.
- My proposal: door #2. **No** PWFA, **no** ubiquitous lexical sets.
- Instead, resolve the type mismatch introduced by a set of alternatives by **scoping it** (cf. quantifiers in object position)!
- Allows us to reframe (and *generalize*) the compositional issue to a problem of integrating **fancy** things (e.g., things that denote sets) with **boring** things (e.g., things that do not).

# Greasing the skids

- All this requires is a couple **type-shifters**.
- First, $\boxed{\cdot}$ turns a boring thing into a (minimally) fancy thing:

$$\boxed{x} := \{x\}$$

- Second: $\cdot^\star$ turns a set $\mathfrak{m}$ into a scope-taker by feeding each member of $\mathfrak{m}$ to a scope $\kappa$ and unioning the resulting sets.

$$\mathfrak{m}^\star := \lambda\kappa.\bigcup_{x \in \mathfrak{m}} \kappa\, x$$

- $\boxed{\cdot}$ and $\cdot^\star$ entail PWFA:

$$\mathfrak{m}^\star\left(\lambda f.\, \mathfrak{n}^\star\left(\lambda x.\boxed{f\, x}\right)\right) = \{f\, x \mid f \in \mathfrak{m} \wedge x \in \mathfrak{n}\}$$

# Fancy, boring types

- Typing judgments, where $\mathsf{F}\alpha$ should be read as "a fancy $\alpha$". In this case, a fancy $\alpha$ is simply a set of $\alpha$'s, so $\mathsf{F}\alpha ::= \{\alpha\} ::= \alpha \to \mathsf{t}$:

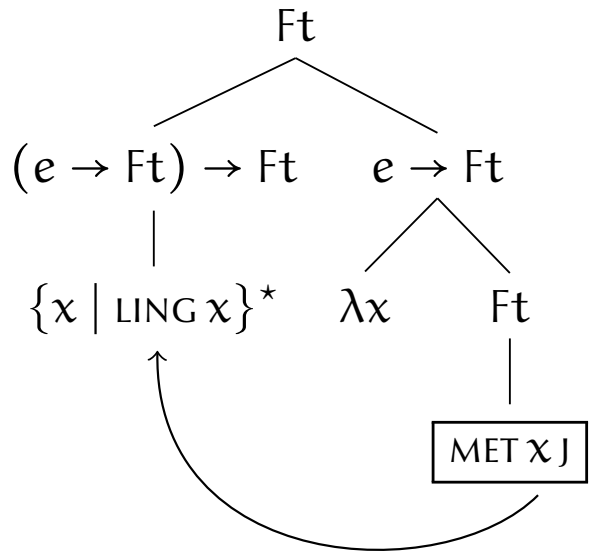
$$\boxdot :: \alpha \to \mathsf{F}\alpha \qquad \cdot^\star :: \mathsf{F}\alpha \to (\alpha \to \mathsf{F}\beta) \to \mathsf{F}\beta$$

- $\boxdot$ and $\cdot^\star$ build a bridge between fancy things (sets of alternatives) and boring things (familiar denotations). Schematically:

$$\underbrace{m^\star}_{(\alpha\to\mathsf{F}\beta)\to\mathsf{F}\beta}\overbrace{\left(\lambda x.\boxed{\ldots x \ldots}\right)}^{\alpha\to\mathsf{F}\beta}$$

# An example

- An example of how this works to derive the same result as PWFA for *John met a linguist*:




- Gives the expected set of propositions, about different linguists:

$$\{\text{MET } x \text{ J} \mid \text{LING } x\}$$

- This pattern will be repeated time and again. The alternative generator takes scope via $\cdot^\star$, and $\boxdot$ applies to its remnant.

# Multiple alternative generators

- Cases with multiple sources of alternatives such as *a linguist met a philosopher* require two applications of $\cdot^\star$, and two scopings:

$$\textsc{a-ling}^\star\left(\lambda x.\,\textsc{a-phil}^\star\left(\lambda y.\,\boxed{\textsc{met}\,y\,x}\right)\right)$$
$$= \left\{\textsc{met}\,y\,x \mid \textsc{ling}\,x \wedge \textsc{phil}\,y\right\}$$

- This is the same result PWFA would give.

# Getting closure

- We can define a categorematic **closure** operation to extract a truth-condition from a set of propositions:

$$!\mathfrak{m} \coloneqq \exists \mathfrak{p} \in \mathfrak{m}.\, \mathfrak{p}$$

- For example, applying ! to what we obtained for *a linguist met a philosopher* yields:

$$\exists \mathfrak{x}.\, \textsc{ling}\, \mathfrak{x} \wedge \exists \mathfrak{y}.\, \textsc{phil}\, \mathfrak{y} \wedge \textsc{met}\, \mathfrak{y}\, \mathfrak{x}$$

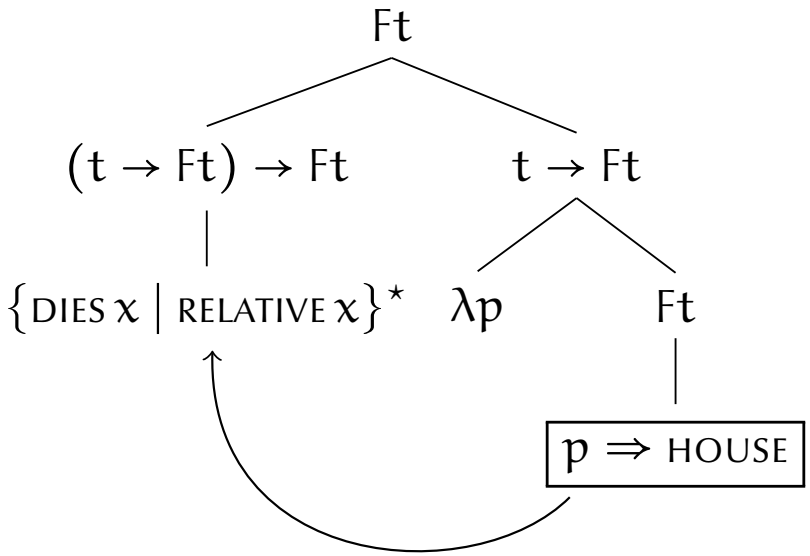
# Where we are

# Exceptional scope?

- Since we manage alternatives via scope, it may appear as if we have given up an account of exceptional scope-taking:

  (4) If ⟨**a rich relative of mine** dies⟩, I'll inherit a house.

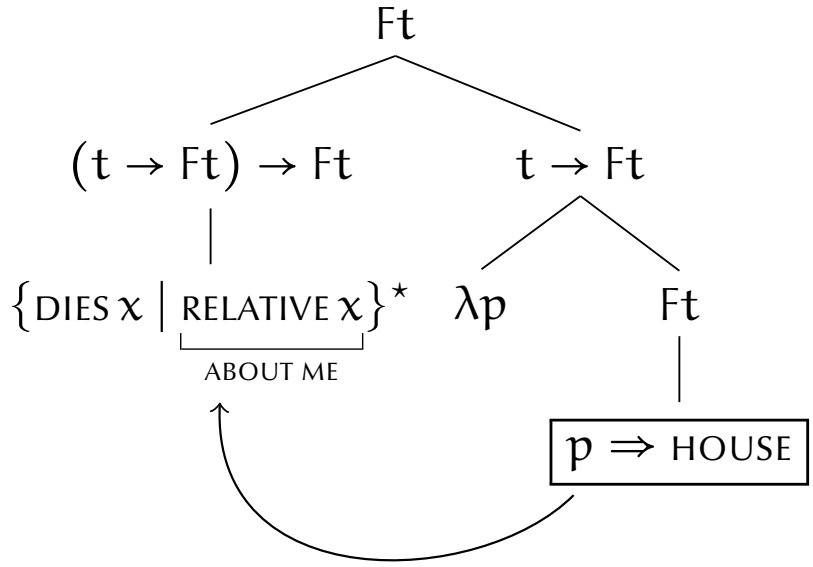
- In fact, this is not so! The grammar generates an exceptional scope reading for this case by *scoping the island*:




- The result is the same set of alternatives derived by PWFA:

$$\{\text{DIES } x \Rightarrow \text{HOUSE} \mid \text{RELATIVE } x\}$$

# Why does this work?




- The alternativeness induced by the indefinite is inherited by the island, and then transmitted to the conditional via $\cdot^\star$.
- In other words, the island is "about" relatives in **the same way** as the indefinite! $\cdot^\star$ simply passes this aboutness to the conditional.
- So we explain exceptional scope as the result of **LF pied-piping** (Nishigauchi 1990; von Stechow 1996): movement of the island gives the appearance of exceptional scope for things on the island.

# Antecedents

- These shifters are already familiar!
- $\boxdot$ is Karttunen 1977's $C_o$, aka Partee 1986's IDENT.
- $\{x \mid \textsc{ling}\, x\}^\star = \lambda\kappa.\bigcup_{\textsc{ling}\, x} \kappa\, x$ is the meaning Cresti 1995 assigns to *which linguist* (see also Heim 2000; Ciardelli & Roelofsen 2015).
  - But none of these folks factor out $\cdot^\star$ separately.

# The Monad Slide

- $\boxed{\cdot}$ and $\cdot^\star$ are decompositions of LIFT (e.g. Partee 1986):

$$\boxed{x}^\star = \text{LIFT}\, x = \lambda\kappa.\, \kappa\, x$$

- They also form something known in category theory & computer science as a **monad** (e.g. Moggi 1989; Wadler 1992, 1995).
  - In general, monads are *really* good at allowing (arbitrarily) fancy things to interact with boring things.
  - See e.g. Shan 2002; Giorgolo & Asudeh 2012; Unger 2012; Charlow 2014 for discussions of monads in natural language semantics.

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- Selectivity
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# Compositionality (YMMV)

- The semantics is more compositional than PWFA-based grammars, which rely on syncategorematic rules for (e.g.) closure operations (see e.g. Rooth 1992; Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002):

$$[\![!X]\!]^g_{\text{PWFA}} := \{\exists p \in [\![X]\!]^g . p\}$$

- The reason: PWFA-style grammars are simply *built to point-wise compose sets*. If ever you want to do anything else (like quantify over a set), you need a new composition rule.
  - Cf. Simons 2005; Rooth & Dong 2011.

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# Selective exceptional scope for indefinites

- Datum: indefinites can take *selective* scope outside islands. E.g., the following allows an any-old-lawyer, one-rich-relative reading:

  (5) If ⟨**a good lawyer** visits **a relative of mine**⟩, I'll get a house!

- The reading of interest, truth-conditionally:

$$\exists y.\ \textsc{relative}\ y \wedge \Big( \big( \exists x.\ \textsc{lawyer}\ x \wedge \textsc{visits}\ y\ x \big) \Rightarrow \textsc{house} \Big)$$

# Selective exceptional scope for focus

- A closely related case in the domain of focus interpretation (cf. examples in Rooth 1996; Wold 1996; Beck 2006; Krifka 2006):

(6) A: [John only gripes ⟨when MARY leaves lights on⟩]$_3$.
B: No, $C_3$ ~ [he only gripes ⟨when SUE leaves lights on⟩].

# Selective exceptional scope for *wh*-in-situ

- It's possible for a *wh*-island-bound in-situ *wh* to take matrix scope, even as the other island-bound *wh* takes local scope (Baker 1970):

  (7) *What do you know ⟨who bought _⟩?

  (8) Who knows ⟨who bought what⟩?

  *A knows who bought X, B knows who bought Y, …*

- Possible even in *wh*-in-situ languages with otherwise robust *wh*-island effects (Dayal 1996; Nishigauchi 1999). E.g., Japanese:

  (9) Dare-ga ⟨Mary-ga doko-de nani-o katta ka⟩ sitte imasu ka?
  who-NOM Mary-NOM where-at what-ACC bought KA know be-HON KA
  'Who knows where Mary bought what?'

# Selectivity and PWFA

- Repeating the example with multiple indefinites:

  (5) If ⟨**a good lawyer** visits **a relative of mine**⟩, I'll get a house!

- Considering examples like these, Rooth concludes:

  > [Their] theoretical imact is quite dramatic: the recursive definition of alternatives [SC: i.e. PWFA-based semantics] has no advantage over the scoping approach to the logical form of focus. (Rooth 1996)

- PWFA doesn't do selective scope-taking, since it only generates **flat** alternative sets. E.g., for our multiple indefs example:

$$[\![\langle \cdots \rangle]\!]^{g}_{\text{PWFA}} = \{\textsc{visits}\ y\ x \mid \textsc{lawyer}\ x \wedge \textsc{relative}\ y\}$$

- Using this set, there's no way to give one indefinite scope over the conditional without bringing the other along for the ride.[1]

[1] Though you *could* posit an existential closure operator somewhere inside the island in (5), this isn't a general solution.

# How about our theory?

- It might seem that we're similarly out of luck.
- Suppose we derived a meaning for *a persuasive lawyer visits a relative of mine* along these lines:

$$\textsc{a-relative}^{\star}\left(\lambda y.\,\textsc{a-lawyer}^{\star}\left(\lambda x.\,\boxed{\textsc{visits}\,y\,x}\right)\right)$$
$$= \left\{\textsc{visits}\,y\,x \mid \textsc{lawyer}\,x \wedge \textsc{relative}\,y\right\}$$

- But LF pied-piping this meaning over the conditional gives **both** indefinites widest scope!

$$\left\{\textsc{visits}\,y\,x \mid \textsc{lawyer}\,x \wedge \textsc{relative}\,y\right\}^{\star}\left(\lambda p.\,\ldots \Rightarrow \ldots\right)$$

# Selectivity lurks

- However! An alternative derivation for the island lurks.

$$\textsc{a.relative}^{\star}\left(\lambda y.\boxed{\textsc{a.lawyer}^{\star}\left(\lambda x.\boxed{\textsc{visits}\ y\ x}\right)}\right)$$

- The key bit is the extra $\boxdot$. This gives rise to a *higher-order* alternative set, type FFt (cf. e.g. Dayal 1996, 2002; Fox 2012):

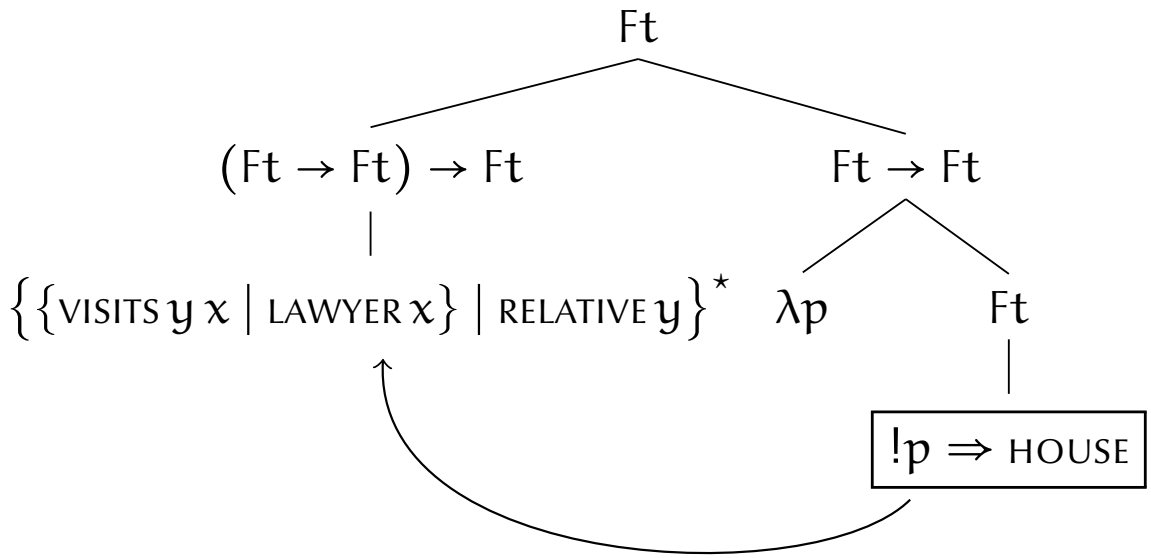
$$\left\{\left\{\textsc{visits}\ y\ x \mid \textsc{lawyer}\ x\right\} \mid \textsc{relative}\ y\right\}$$

- I.e., if the lawyers are $L_1$ and $L_2$, and my relatives are $R_1$ and $R_2$:

$$\left\{\left\{\textsc{visits}\ R_1\ L_1, \textsc{visits}\ R_1\ L_2\right\},\right.$$
$$\left.\left\{\textsc{visits}\ R_2\ L_1, \textsc{visits}\ R_2\ L_2\right\}\right\}$$

# How it works

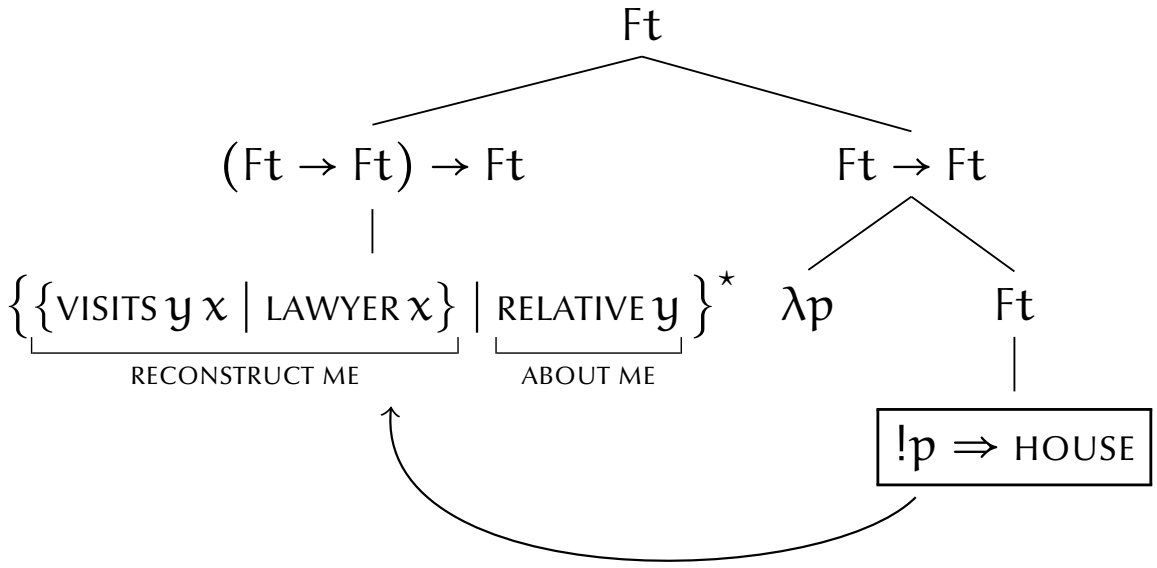
- LF pied-piping the higher-order alternative set derives the selective exceptional scope reading:




- The result is exactly what we're looking for (any-old-lawyer, one-rich-relative):

$$\left\{(\exists x.\ \textsc{lawyer}\ x \wedge \textsc{visits}\ y\ x) \Rightarrow \textsc{house} \mid \textsc{relative}\ y\right\}$$

# Why it works




- The finely-articulated higher-order alternative set lets us separate the relative-alternatives from the lawyer-alternatives.
- The island, when derived in this way, **is "about" relatives in a way it *isn't* "about" lawyers**. $\cdot^\star$ spreads this aboutness to the conditional.
- The inner layer of alternatives **semantically reconstructs** (Cresti 1995) — i.e., gets sent back down the tree to meet !.

# Where we are

# Abstraction

- Binding creates headaches for PWFA (e.g. Shan 2004; Romero & Novel 2013; Charlow 2014; Ciardelli & Roelofsen 2015).
- E.g., Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002's abstraction definition, below, over-generates alternative functions. $[\![\mathfrak{n}\ X]\!]^g$ is no longer guaranteed to be "about" the same things as $[\![X]\!]^g$.

$$[\![\mathfrak{n}\ X]\!]^g_{\text{PWFA}} := \{f \mid \forall x.\, f\, x \in [\![X]\!]^{g[\mathfrak{n} \to x]}\}$$

- Problematic prediction: *nobody met a linguist* can mean that nobody met *every* linguist. See Charlow 2014 (§5.5) for details.
- Jettisoning PWFA in favor of standard FA (with $\boxdot$ and $\cdot^\star$ greasing the skids) gives us access to a standard abstraction operation.

# Glass houses, etc.

- Yet it may appear that we have binding issues of our own.
- Ex. (10) has a reading giving the island-bound indefinite widest scope, even as the pronoun on the island is bound by the subject.

  (10) Every linguist$_i$ is overjoyed whenever ⟨**a famous expert on indefinites** cites her$_i$⟩.

- How is this consistent with our theory? Shouldn't scoping the island over the quantifier unbind the pronoun?

# Binding reconstruction

- It's true: we can't handle data like this if binding requires LF c-command (as in e.g. Heim & Kratzer 1998). Given the situation with two indefinites on an island, this comes as a surprise.
- What we require is a (minimal) shift in perspective, to a semantics that allows **binding reconstruction** à la Sternefeld 1998, 2001.
- The key is allowing things to denote *functions from assignments* into values (cf. Montague 1974; Bennett 1979; Rooth 1985[!]).
- An example of how this goes for *her$_i$ mother, Polly$_i$ likes*:

$$\Big(\underbrace{\lambda F.\,\lambda g.\,\textsc{likes}\,(F\,g[0\to \textsc{p}])\,\textsc{p}}_{\text{Polly}_0\text{ likes }\_}\Big)\,\underbrace{(\lambda g.\,g_0\text{'}\textsc{s mom})}_{\text{her}_0\text{ mom}}$$

$$= \lambda g.\,\textsc{likes}\,(\textsc{p's mom})\,\textsc{p}$$

# Generalized fanciness

- Implementing this perspective simply means tweaking our notion of what a "fancy" meaning is.
- Echoing the theory of binding reconstruction, we'll now take fancy $\alpha$'s to be **functions from assignments** (type $s$) into sets of $\alpha$'s.

$$F\alpha ::= s \to \{\alpha\}$$

- This in turn implies minimally tweaked versions of $\boxed{\cdot}$ and $\cdot^\star$:[2]

$$\boxed{x} := \lambda g.\, \{x\} \qquad\qquad m^\star := \lambda \kappa.\, \lambda g.\, \bigcup_{x \in m\, g} \kappa\, x\, g$$

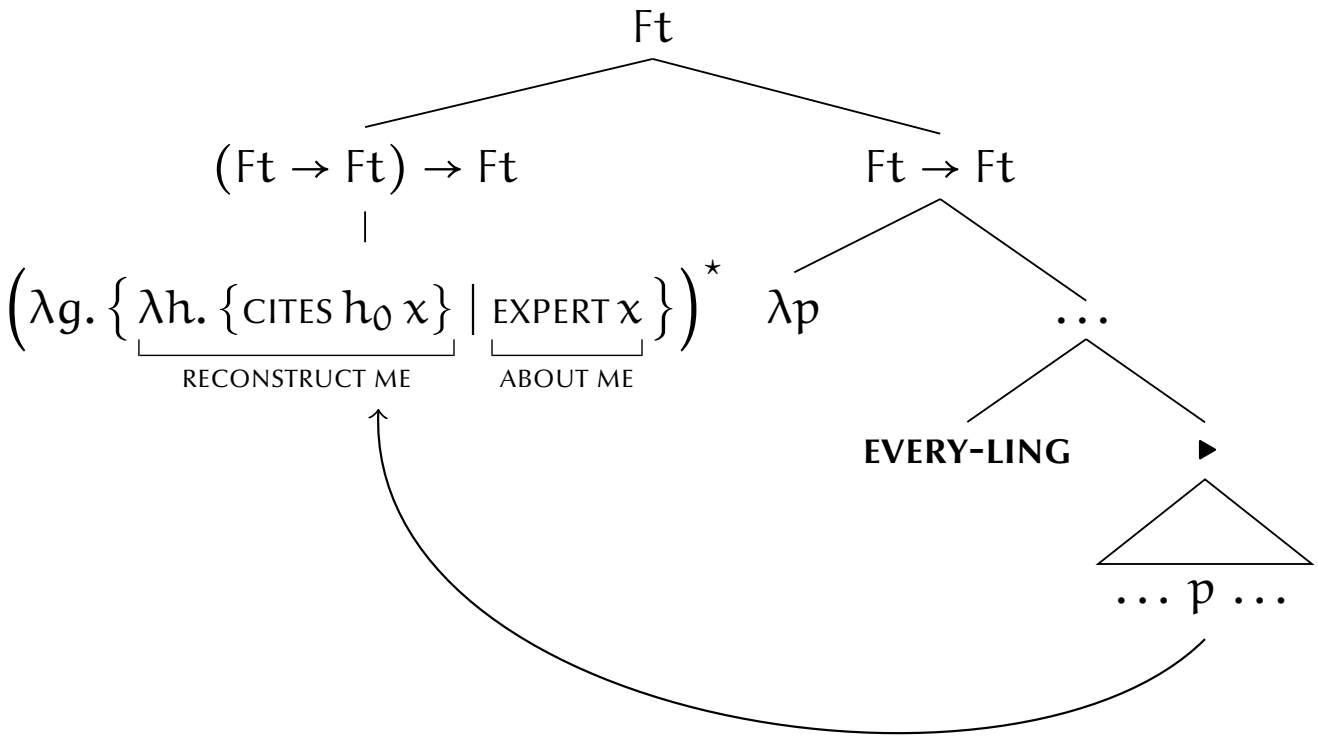
- Such that (cf. $[\![A\ B]\!]^g_{\mathrm{PWFA}} = \{f\, x \mid f \in [\![A]\!]^g \wedge x \in [\![B]\!]^g\}$):

$$m^\star \left(\lambda f.\, n^\star \left(\lambda x.\, \boxed{f\, x}\right)\right) = \lambda g.\, \{f\, x \mid f \in m\, g \wedge x \in n\, g\}$$

[2] Still a monad, still decompositions of LIFT!

# How this works

- The derivation of (10) is **entirely parallel** to the two-indefinites case. We build a higher-order FFt and reconstruct the inner layer:




- The tree invokes ▸, a placeholder for your fave way to do binding (e.g. Partee 1973's Derived VP Rule, Büring 2005's β-binding).

# Roofing

- We shouldn't be able to wide-scope the indefinite in **roofing** configurations (e.g. Schwarz 2001; Brasoveanu & Farkas 2011):

  (11) No candidate$_i$ submitted a paper he$_i$ wrote.

- We make the correct prediction. Here's how we'd go about trying to give this indefinite scope over the subject:

$$\Big(\overbrace{\lambda g.\,\{y \mid \underbrace{\textsc{wrote}\; y\; g_0}_{\textsc{about me}}\}}^{[\![\text{a paper he}_0\text{ wrote}]\!]}\Big)^{\star}\;\Big(\lambda y.\,\textbf{NO-CAND}\;\big(\lambda x.\,\boxed{\textsc{submitted}\; y\; x}\big)^{\blacktriangleright}\Big)$$

- The resulting set of propositions are "about" things that $g_0$ wrote (given an assignment $g$). Binding fails!

# Roofing (cont.)

- This improves on choice-functional accounts of exceptional scope (e.g. Reinhart 1997), which can assign roofed indefinites a kind of wide scope (Schwarz 2001; see also Geurts 2000):

$$\exists f.\ \textbf{NO-CANDIDATE}\left(\lambda x.\ \textsc{submitted}\left(f\left\{y \mid \textsc{wrote}\ y\ x\right\}\right)x\right)$$

$$\approx \textsc{no candidate submitted } \textit{every} \textsc{ paper he wrote}$$

- About which Heim 2011 remarks:

> We may have to concede what Fodor and Sag and most subsequent authors wanted to avoid: indefinites are existential quantifiers that enjoy a greater degree of scopal mobility... (Heim 2011: 1022)

- I hope to have shown that we *don't* have to concede this.

# Where we are

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# Basic data

- A familiar data point: Indefinites behave more like names than quantifiers with respect to anaphoric phenomena.

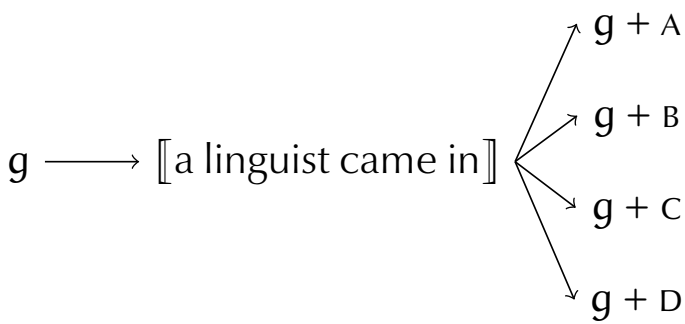
  (12) {Polly$_i$, a linguist$_i$, *every linguist$_i$} came in. She$_i$ sat.

# Discourse referents

- Dynamic semantics: sentences add discourse referents to the "conversational scoreboard" (e.g. Groenendijk & Stokhof 1991):

$$g \longrightarrow [\![\text{Polly came in}]\!] \longrightarrow g + \textsc{p}$$

- Indefinites (but not quantifiers) also set up discourse referents. In case four linguists came in — A, B, C, and D — we'll have:




- Formally captured by modeling meanings as relations on states. For example, here is a candidate meaning for *a linguist came in*:

$$\lambda g.\,\{g + x \mid \textsc{ling}\, x \wedge \textsc{came}\, x\}$$

# Incorporating dynamics

- Dynamics relies on the ability to output modified assignments (indeed, given indefinites, to output *alternative* assignments).
- One way to think of this is in terms of a new "fancy" type:

$$\mathsf{F}\,a ::= s \to \{\langle a, s\rangle\}$$

- The relevant $\boxed{\cdot}$ and $\cdot^\star$ again essentially follow from the types:[3]

$$\boxed{x} := \lambda g.\,\{\langle x, g\rangle\} \qquad\qquad m^\star := \lambda \kappa.\,\lambda g.\bigcup_{\langle x,h\rangle \in m\,g} \kappa\,x\,h$$

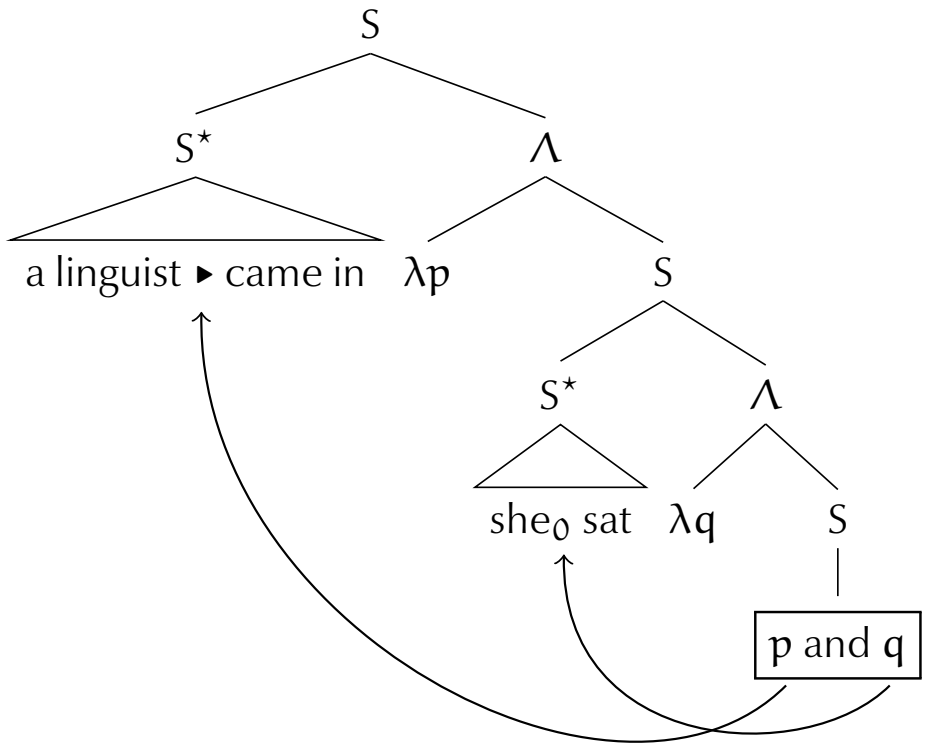
- Gives the following enriched functional application:

$$m^\star\left(\lambda f.\,n^\star\left(\lambda x.\boxed{f\,x}\right)\right) = \lambda g.\,\{\langle f\,x, i\rangle \mid \langle f, h\rangle \in m\,g \wedge \langle x, i\rangle \in n\,h\}$$

[3] *Still* a monad, *still* decompositions of LIFT!

# Dynamic binding via LF pied-piping

- Remarkably, rejiggering the semantics in this way predicts that dynamic binding *also* arises via a kind of LF pied-piping:




- Unlike standard dynamic approaches, this derivation doesn't require a notion of dynamic conjunction.
  - In keeping with the approach I've been advocating, conjunction is boring and interacts with fancy things via $\boxdot$ and $\cdot^\star$.

# Dynamics and exceptional scope: binding and sloppiness

- Proper names can bind pronouns, no matter how embedded:

  (13) If e.o. ⟨who hates Walt$_i$⟩ comes, I'll feel bad for him$_i$
  If e.o. ⟨who hates PETE$_j$⟩ comes, I won't (feel bad for him$_j$).

- Predicted: so long as the ⟨island⟩ can scope over the pronoun, the proper name can bind the pronoun.

# Dynamics and exceptional scope: max discourse anaphora

- **Maximal drefs** contributed by deeply embedded quantifiers:

  (14) Everyone heard the rumor that ⟨at most six [senators]$_i$ [supported Cruz's filibuster]$_j$⟩. It turned out to be erroneous: they$_{i \cap j}$ numbered at least ten.

- Suggests even quantifiers take a kind of exceptional scope.
- Predicted if quantifiers introduce maximal drefs, as is standard in modern dynamic semantics (Kamp & Reyle 1993):

$$\textsc{at-most-six-senators} = \lambda\kappa.\,\lambda g.\,\left\{\left\langle |\textsc{sen} \cap X| \leqslant 6,\, g + X\right\rangle\right\} \quad \text{where } X = \textsc{sen} \cap \{x \mid \exists\langle p, h\rangle \in \kappa\, x\, g.\, p\}$$

# Summing up

| $F\alpha$ | $\boxed{x}$ | $m^\star$ | $[\![\text{a linguist}]\!]^{Fe}$ | $[\![\text{she}_0]\!]^{Fe}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\alpha$ | $x$ | $\lambda\kappa.\,\kappa\,m$ | N/A | $g_0$ |
| $\{\alpha\}$ | $\{x\}$ | $\lambda\kappa.\bigcup_{x\in m}\kappa\,x$ | $\{x \mid \text{LING}\,x\}$ | $\{g_0\}$ |
| $s \to \{\alpha\}$ | $\lambda g.\{x\}$ | $\lambda\kappa g.\bigcup_{x\in m g}\kappa\,x\,g$ | $\lambda g.\{x \mid \text{LING}\,x\}$ | $\lambda g.\{g_0\}$ |
| $s \to \{\langle\alpha, s\rangle\}$ | $\lambda g.\{\langle x, g\rangle\}$ | $\lambda\kappa g.\bigcup_{\langle x,h\rangle\in m g}\kappa\,x\,h$ | $\lambda g.\{\langle x, g\rangle \mid \text{LING}\,x\}$ | $\lambda g.\{\langle g_0, g\rangle\}$ |

Progressively enriching a grammar with alternatives, alternatives + assignment-sensitivity, and alternatives + assignment modification.

# Where we are

# Concluding

- My bottom line: use alternatives, and let them take scope.[4]
- $\boxdot$ and $\cdot^\star$ allow a robust account of alternatives, avoiding many of the pitfalls of PWFA (and other theories of exceptional scope).
- The approach is **really** flexible:
  - Folding in dynamics is a piece of cake.
  - Suggests that dynamic and alternative semantics have all along been palping different parts of the indefiniteness elephant.

[4]The centrality of scope-taking to natural language semantics has likewise been emphasized in work on *continuations* (e.g. Barker & Shan 2014).

# Last words

- I focused on English indefinites, but the same strategy allows us to give parallel, empirically robust accounts of focus and in situ *wh* (and, potentially, of how they *interact*):

> The group of island-escaping operators does not appear to be an arbitrary one.... [Their] semantic similarity, together with the common insensitivity to scope islands, suggest that we should not be satisfied with a theory which treats focus as sui generis. We would like to replace the focus-specific definition with a theory in which focus is one of a family of island-insensitive operators which, roughly, use restricted variables to name families of propositions, open propositions, and/or their existential closures. It is not at all clear to me how this should be done. (Rooth 1996)

- I hope to have shed some light on this. Thanks!

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