A note on "command"

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Consider the following facts about identity:

(1) John scratched his arm and $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{so did Mary} \\ \text{Mary did (so) too} \end{Bmatrix}$.

The second clause of (1) is ambiguous - it could be derived from (2a) or (2b).

(2)   a. Mary scratched her arm (too).
        b. Mary scratched John's arm (too).

Thus it appears that linguistic identity is defined in such a way that the difference between his arm in the first clause of (1) and her arm in (2a) is "disregarded." However, it is not the case that/differences between pronouns can be
_{all}
disregarded: (3a) cannot be transformed into (3b).

(3)   a. John scratched his arm and the boy who knew Mary
           scratched her arm.

        b. John scratched his arm and the boy who Mary knew
           did so too.

These facts can be accounted for if the following definition of identity is adopted in the theory of grammar:

(4)   Constituents are identical if they have the same
        constituent structure and if they are identical
        morpheme-for-morpheme, or if they differ only as to
        pronouns, where the pronouns in each of the identical
        constituents are commanded[1] by antecedents in the non-
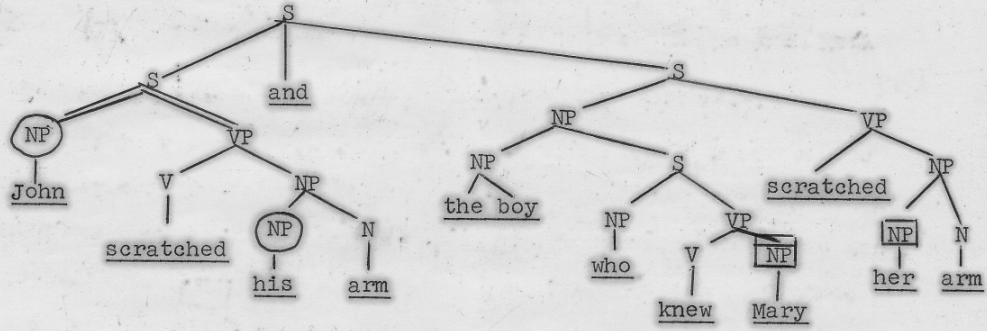   identical portions of the P-Marker.

So notice that in (1'), which underlies (1), the circled NP's John and Mary command the pronouns his and her, so deletion is possible.

2.

(1')
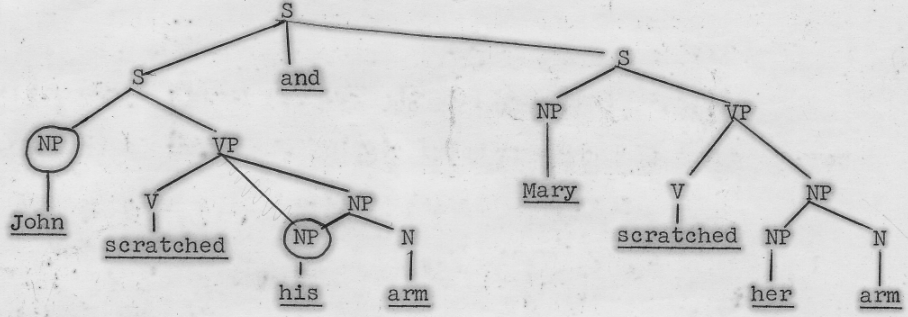
But in (3'), which underlies (3), John commands his, but the boxed NP Mary does not command its pronoun her, so (4) will not let the deletion go through.

(3')

The same facts obtain for right-to-left pronominali-zation: (5a) can be derived from (5b) or (5c), because the circled noun phrases command the pronouns which refer to them.

(5)   a. That the fuzz wanted to question him worried John but it didn't worry Mary.

b. That the fuzz wanted to question (him) worried (John), but
that the fuzz wanted to question (her) didn't worry (Mary).

c. That the fuzz wanted to question him worried John
but that the fuzz wanted to question John didn't
worry Mary.

Note, however, that (6a) does not become (6b).

(6) a. That the fuzz wanted to question (him) worried (John),
but that they wanted to question (her) didn't bother
the boy who [Mary] had seduced.

b. ...but it didn't bother the boy who Mary had
seduced.

So Langacker's notion of _command_ receives some addi-
tional empirical support, although the above facts are
presumably universal, so it may not be the case that _command_
is a predicate which is available within particular grammars.

One horrible problem is posed by the nonambiguity of
(7).

(7) The Poles kissed their wives and so did the Latvians.

For some mysterious reason, the second clause of (7) cannot
be derived from The Latvians kissed the Poles' wives.

One other place where _command_ plays a role: consider
the well-known restriction that excludes negatives in _than-_
clauses. Somehow, all the sentences in (8) must be excluded,
while the ones in (9) must be allowed.

(8) a.* John is prouder of having gone than nobody expected
        me to believe he would be.

     b.* ....than John didn't expect me to believe ...

     c.* ....than John expected nobody to believe ...

     d.* ....than John expected me not to believe ...

     e.* ....than John expected me to believe not all my
        friends were.

     f.* ....than John expected me to believe that he
        wasn't.

(9)q a. John is prouder of having gone than people who
        don't know him would expect me to believe he would
        be.

     b. ... than Sally expected Joan to believe that the
        man who didn't shave would be.

     c. ... than I expected you to believe he would be of
        not having fallen asleep.

In other words, to exclude all negatives from than-
clauses would be to incorrectly exclude the sentences in (9).
The difference between (8) and (9) can be expressed naturally
if negatives are features on verbs, and if quantifiers are
verbs of higher sentences, and if conditions on rules can be
stated which make use of Langacker's notion of command. To
exclude (8) it is sufficient to say "The feature [+negative]
may not command the compared adjective in the than-clause."

Since Spanish has sentences which translate word-for-
word into John is more intelligent than nobody (meaning "than
anybody"), it would seem that this restriction is idiosyn-
cratic to English, and that therefore the notion of command
must be available in particular grammars.

FOOTNOTES

1.   This notion is/discussed by Ronald Langacker, in his
                    introduced and
unpublished paper "On pronominalization and the chain of
command" (University of California at San Diego mimeograph,
1966). A commands B if B is dominated by the first S
node up the tree from A, and if neither node dominates the other.