Own

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1. Introduction

Own appears to be semantically redundant. The lexical meaning of own, namely, ownership or possession, is already expressed by the possessive morpheme that own necessarily follows. In the examples below, the addition of own to (1a) is somewhat arbitrary (1b).

(1) a. Mary used her pen.
   b. Mary used her own pen.

In (1b) above, own is added to emphasize the unique possession of a pen by Mary; thus, this paper analyzes own in one's own NP as a modifier of a possessive morpheme. I will argue that own contributes to the truth-conditional meaning of a proposition in a unique manner by restricting the free relation variable introduced by the possessive. John's own is a quantifier and that his own is a bound pronoun.

2. Syntax of Own

2.1 Own Needs to be Bound by a Possessive and Should Bind a Pronoun

Own has unique syntactic properties. Own cannot stand alone without a preceding possessive (2). A pronominal possessive + own (e.g., her own) needs a coreferential expression that is not necessarily in the c-commanding position within the sentence (3). On the other hand, a proper noun possessive + own (Mary's own) needs to bind a pronoun (4) that is not necessarily in the c-commanding position (5).

(2) a. Use *(your) own pen.
   b. Mary used *(her) own pen.
   c. [TP Mary said [CP Jim used *(his/her) own pen.]]
   d. [TP I want you use *(your) own pen.]

(3) a. {Mary/Everyone} used {her/j/*Sue's} own pen.
   b. Her (own) cat scratched Jill.
   c. I came by his (*own) car.

(4) a. Mary's (*own) cat disappeared.
   b. Mary's (*own) cat scratched Jill.
   c. Mary's own cat scratched {her/*Jill}.

(5) a. *Mary used Jill's own pen.
   b. [TP Mary [vP <Mary>[VP used Jill's own pen [PP against her]]]].

Safr (1996) points out that contrastive stress on own eliminates the need for its antecedent as in (6). Nevertheless, this paper will deal with own with a neutral focus.

(6) His OWN key is less important than Mary's.

2.2 Condition C or Strong Crossover

While an anti-c-commanding relation is not acceptable (7a), pronominal possessives that are not in a direct c-command relation with the coindexed proper nouns are allowed (7b−d). (7a) may show either a strong crossover effect assuming that Mary's own pen is a quantifier, or the Condition C effect.

(7) a. *She, used Mary's (own) pen.
   b. Her, friend used Mary's (own) pen.
   c. Her (own) cat scratched Mary's.
   d. Her mother's (own) cat scratched Mary.

2.3 One's own NP is a Quantifier and a Bound Variable with Sloppy Identity

John's own NP is a quantifier. While the regular possessive John's is ambiguous between a quantifier that binds the pronoun him and a referential expression, John's own is unambiguously a quantificational determiner and cannot be a referential pronominal. For example, both (8a) and (8b) allow sloppy readings, i.e., Mary's dog bit her, too, which is obtained only when him is a bound variable of John's (8a) and John's own (8b). On the other hand, (8b) does not have a strict reading of the elided VP, Mary's dog bit him, too, which is
possible when *him* is a referential pronoun that corefers with John. *John's dog* may or may not bind *him* but *John's own dog* necessarily binds *him* so that the elided VP in (8b) can only contain a bound variable. Therefore, *John's own dog* is comparable with *everyone*, which allows only sloppy reading (9).

(8)  a. John's dog bit him and Mary's did, too. [\*sloppy, *strict]
    b. John's own dog bit him and Mary's did, too. [\*sloppy, *strict]

(9)  a. Everyone called her mother and so did Sally. [\*sloppy, *strict]
    b. Everyone called her own mother and so did Sally. [\*sloppy, *strict]

While a possessive pronoun can be ambiguous between a bound variable and an ordinary pronoun (10a), *her own* is always a bound variable (10b). (10a) is two-way ambiguous: when *her* is a bound variable of Mary, the copied *her* in the elided VP (Sally called *her* mother, too) is also a bound variable of Sally; resulting in the sloppy reading, Sally called Sally's mother, is obtained. If *her* is an ordinary pronoun that is coreferential with Mary, *her* in the elided VP also refers to Mary, which is what we call the strict reading, Sally called Mary's mother. On the contrary, (10b) only allows sloppy reading.

(10)  a. Mary, called her, mother and so did Sally. [\*sloppy, \*strict]
    b. Mary, called her, own mother and so did Sally. [\*sloppy, *strict]

Paycheck pronouns (Karttunen1969) further show that *his own NP* is not a referential expression.

(11)  a. John spent his paycheck on books but Bill spent it on vacations. [\*sloppy, \*strict]
    b. John spent his own paycheck on books but Bill spent it on vacations. [\*sloppy, *strict]

Strict reading (Bill spent John's own paycheck) is not available for *one's own NP*. Strict reading is obtained when *his* is an ordinary pronoun that refers to John; however, this is not the case. Only sloppy reading can be obtained (i.e., Bill spent Bill's own paycheck) in which *his* is a bound variable and it is interpreted as being a bound variable (cf. Culicover and Jackendoff (1995) for something else as a paycheck pronoun).

2.4 *Own* is a Modifier of 's

A pronominal possessive licenses the coindexed *own* while a possessive itself is licensed by the coindexed referential expression. Such dependencies are captured by the following binding relations.

(12)  a. [\(\lambda x. \lambda y. \text{used } x \text{'s } x\text{-own pen.}\)]
    b. [\(\lambda x. \lambda y. \text{used } x \text{'s } x\text{-own pen.}\)]

*Own* is indirectly bound by the antecedent, *Mary* or *everyone*. In view of the dependencies of *own*, Safir (1996) proposes that two-place relational. The adjective *own* inherits its argument structure from the transitive verb *own* so that *own* takes the agent (possessor) and the theme (possessee) arguments.

(13)  a. \(\lambda x. \lambda y. x \text{'s own } y\)
    b. \(\lambda x. \lambda y. x \text{'s own } y\)

We assume that *own* is the modifier of the possessive morpheme's (14) based on the constituency test (15).

(14)  [\(\lambda x. \text{used } x \text{'s own pen}\)]
(15)  a. Jim used his own pen and Mary used her own \(\lambda\).
    b. *Jim used his own pen and Mary used her \(\lambda\).

The fact that *own* is anaphoric to the possessive suggests that the binding of *own* involves two steps.

(16)  a. Mary's \(\lambda x. x\text{-own}\)
    b. Mary used her own pen: Mary \(\lambda x. \text{used } x\text{'s y-own pen}\)

(17)  Heim and Kratzer (1998)'s style tree:
\(\lambda x. \text{used } x\text{'s own pen}\)

Alternatively, we might consider *his own* as a lexical item for *hisself* or subscribe to Kayne (2002) and assume that antecedent-pronoun relations require movement out of the constituent of a form such as [John-he].

(18)  scratched [\(\lambda x. \text{Mary's own her cat}\)]

The problems seem to be that *Mary's own* and *cat* form a constituency and that *scratch* needs to assign the theta roles to *Mary's own cat* and *her*.

3. Semantics of *Own*

3.1 Truth-Conditional Meaning of *Own*

The addition of *own* changes the truth condition of a proposition.

(19)  a. Mary used her own pen.
b. Mary used her pen.

(20) a. You must use your own pen.

(19a) is false if the hearer uses someone else's pen; however, (19b) can be true if Mary uses a pen that happens to be in her hand, e.g., if she uses a pen she has borrowed from someone next to her. When own is embedded in a deontic modal, it restricts the accessible worlds. From the worlds in which (20a) holds, the world in which the hearer uses someone else's pen is not deontically accessible. However, from (20b)-worlds, those in which the hearer uses someone else's pen are accessible (cf. Kratzer 1991). Therefore, the addition of own excludes other owners’ pens. Intolerance of other people’s possessions is part of the truth-conditional meaning of own.

(21) a. \[ |\text{Mary uses her pen} | = 1 \text{ iff } |\text{use}(|\text{Mary}|, |\text{her pen}|) = 1 \text{ iff } \forall x [\text{pen}(x) \& R(x)(\text{mary}) \rightarrow \text{use}(x)(\text{mary})] \]

b. \[ |\text{Mary uses her own pen} | = 1 \text{ iff } \forall x [\text{pen}(x) \& \text{own}(x)(\text{mary}) \rightarrow \text{use}(x)(\text{mary})] \& \forall y [\text{pen}(y) \& \neg \text{own}(y)(\text{mary}) \rightarrow \neg \text{use}(y)(\text{mary})] \]

(21a) simply implies that Mary uses a pen that has some contextually given relation with. The R-relationship is not limited to the ownership relation but can be contextually supplied (Partee 1997, Barker 1995). If the pen is borrowed from someone else, R is the temporary possession relation. Moreover, (21a) does not restrict Mary from using other pens that do not have any possessive relations with her. On the other hand, the relation between Mary and the pen is restricted to the ownership relation and the use of other people's pens is not allowed in (21b). (21b) implies that if there is any pen that Mary does not own, she does not use it. Thus, own disambiguates the R relation in (19) but not in (22).

(22) John has his (own) book.

In (22), John can be either the author or the possessor of the book regardless of the presence of own. Therefore, while the exclusion of other people’s possession is the truth-conditional meaning of own, the possessive relation that one’s own expresses varies.

3.2 One’s Own NP is an Indefinite Description

Saxon (1990) points out that the use of his own key in (23b) does not necessarily imply the existence of a key. While his key in (23a) has wider scope than the negation in that the existence of John’s key is presupposed, (23b) is ambiguous between the two readings (i) John has never had his own key (never > his own key) and (ii) John’s own key is lost and he has been using someone else’s key lately (his own key > never).

(23) a. John will never have his key.

b. John will never have his own key.

Such ambiguity is comparable to an indefinite DP. John did not read a book is ambiguous between (i) John did not read any book (not > a book) and (ii) there is a particular book that John did not read (a book > not).

3.3 Hamblin Alternatives and Plurality

Since John’s own pen contrasts with other people’s pens, we wish to derive the alternative set of John’s pen, Mary’s pen, Sue’s pen,... (24). We do not wish to derive the set of other stationery (25), nor do we wish to derive the set of different owners with the identical pens (26).

(24) \[ |\text{John’s own pen} | f = \{\text{John’s pen}1, \text{Mary’s pen}2, \text{Sue’s pen}3,...\} \]

(25) \[ |\text{John’s own pen} | f =/= \{\text{John’s pen}, \text{Mary’s pencil}, \text{Sue’s eraser}, \text{Jim’s scale},...\} \]

(26) \[ |\text{John’s own pen} | f =/= \{\text{John’s pen}1, \text{Mary’s pen}2, \text{Sue’s pen}3,...\} \]

This suggests that John’s is focused and enables us to obtain the alternative set of possessors (John’s, Mary’s, Sue’s,...) and pen is pluralized into pen1, pen2, pen3,... If only the possessive John’s is focused, different pens for each owner will not be derived. If own associates with John's pen, we obtain (25) which is incorrect. Rather, own provides the focused set of possessors and the pluralized pen' John's penMary's penSue's pen... à la Link (1983).

4. Conclusion

This paper examined the syntactic behavior and the meaning of own. Own is a determiner modifier. One’s own NP is a sort of an indefinite quantifier. Own emphasizes a possessive relation and excludes other owner's objects as part of the truth-conditional meaning. Own sorts the possessum entities.