

OUTLOOK

Condition B of the Binding Theory (BT) prohibits coreference between a pronoun and an antecedent in its local domain. (Chomsky, 1986; Büring, 2005; a.o.)

We argue that:

- i) Vietnamese is not subject to a grammaticized Condition B in its classic form, and
- ii) Vietnamese supports competition-based accounts of Condition B (Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2011; Safir, 2014).

BACKGROUND

Classic BT accounts (Chomsky, 1986; Büring, 2005; a.o.) treat Conditions A and B as universal, *independent* principles.

Competition-based BT accounts assume Condition A and model Condition B as a *side effect of the competition* between various pronominal forms (mainly reflexive vs. non-reflexive pronouns) for the same syntactic positions.

- This approach dates back to Reinhart (1983, 2006): the choice of *himself* over bound *him* is an instance of “minimizing interpretative options”. **Our proposal** follows and adapts Roelofsen (2010), a newer version of this pragmatic account.
- More recent approaches extend Reinhart (1983, 2006) to pronominal competition applying at a semantic (Schlenker, 2005) or a syntactic level (Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2011; Safir, 2004, 2014).
- Condition B is not hardwired in the pronominal forms of a language. “Dedicated reflexive pronouns”, like *himself*, encode reflexivity, regular personal pronouns, like *him*, (may) only have ϕ -feature presuppositions.

Modelling Competition:

We merge **Rule I** (Grodzinsky & Reinhart, 1993), Roelofsen (2010)’s **Coreference Rule** and Gricean pragmatic reasoning, and we adopt the following competition model at the level of meaning (Ivan, 2018):

(1) **GRICEAN COREFERENCE RULE**

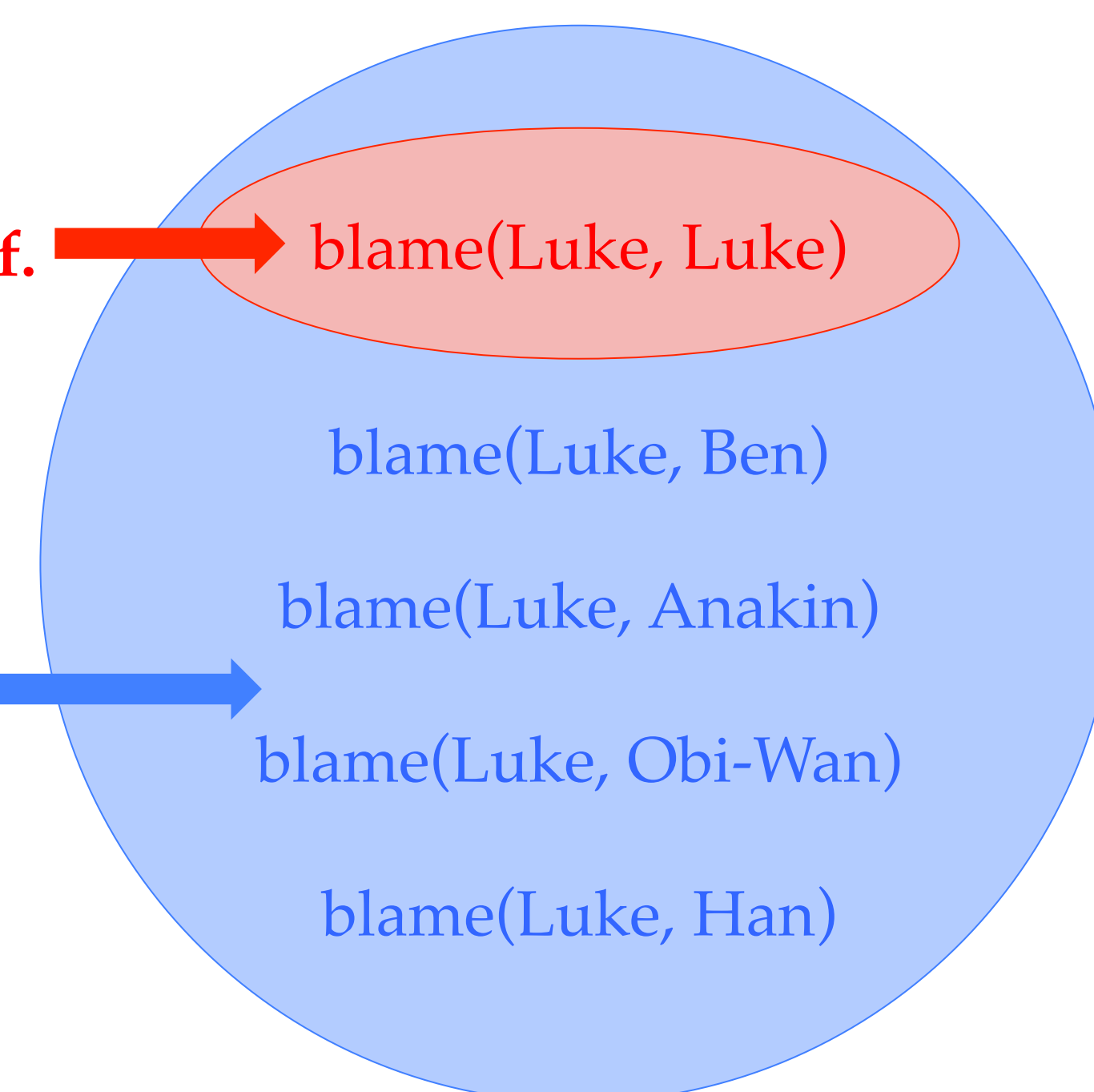
If S and S’ have indistinguishable interpretations in a context C, and the set of possible interpretations for S is a proper subset of the set of possible interpretations for S’, speak S.

(2) **COMPETITION-BASED REASONING:**

- a. **Luke blames himself.**
→ *himself* may only refer to a local antecedent (only *Luke*)
- b. **Luke blames him.**
→ *him* may refer to any male in the context, including *Luke*.

S: **Luke blames himself.**

S’: **Luke blames him.**



The set of possible interpretations for **S** is a proper subset of those for **S’**.

- **S** must be spoken for *blame(Luke, Luke)*.
- By implicature, **S’** is taken to mean that Luke blamed some male other than himself.

VIETNAMESE VS. CLASSIC BT ACCOUNTS

Vietnamese is **not** subject to the classic versions of Conditions A and B.

- (3) a. **Ben₁ nói là Luke₂ trách mình_{1/2}.**
Ben say that Luke blame SELF
‘Ben said that Luke blames himself / him.’
- b. **Ben₁ said that Luke₂ blames himself_{1/2}.**
- (4) a. **Ben₁ nói là Luke₂ trách nó_{1/2}.**
Ben say that Luke blame 3SG
‘Ben said that Luke blames him / himself.’
- b. **Ben₁ said that Luke₂ blames him_{1/2}.**

- Unlike in English, *mình*, the equivalent of *himself*, **does not need** to be clause-bound.
- The personal pronoun *nó*, the equivalent of *him*, **can** corefer with local antecedents.

VIETNAMESE VS. COMPETITION-BASED BT ACCOUNTS

Competition-based BT accounts predict that the presence or absence of Condition B effects depends on whether a language has a **dedicated reflexive form** (Rooryck & vanden Wyngaerd, 2011).

- Recent data from Jambi (Cole, Hermon & Yanti, 2015) and Chamorro (Wagers, Chung & Borja, 2018) support this view: The absence of Condition B effects correlates with the absence of specialized reflexive anaphors.

We argue that this prediction is also met in Vietnamese: *mình* is not a dedicated reflexive, hence condition B effects are not predicted.

- (5) Ben₁ nói là **mình₁** sẽ thắng.
Ben say that SELF will win
‘Ben₁ said that he₁ / I will win.’

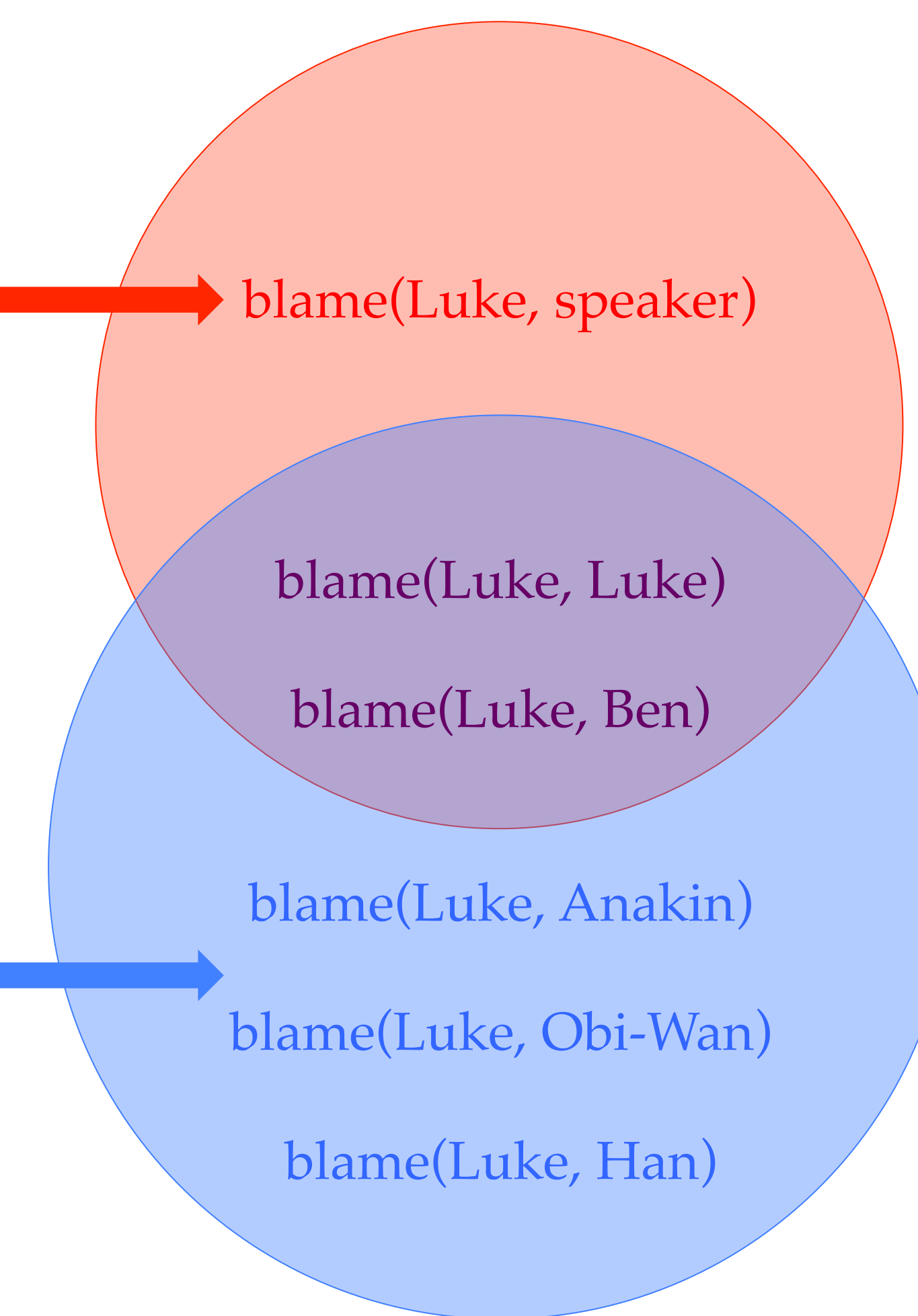
- (5) illustrates ***mình* is a logophor**: It can pick out the perspective center (including the speaker), and either local or non-local antecedents.

mình is subject to a specialized discourse-related Condition A (Charnavel & Sportiche, 2016), but it is not a ‘dedicated reflexive’. Its competition with the personal pronoun *nó* does not yield Condition B effects.

Under this view, the competition between the two pronouns never leads to a set-subset relation of possible interpretations, hence both forms survive for locally bound readings.

S: **Ben said that Luke blames mình.**

S’: **Ben said that Luke blames nó.**



The set of possible interpretations for **S** is not a proper subset of those for **S’**.

- Either **S** or **S’** can be spoken for *blame(Luke, Luke)*.

SUMMARY

The novel data discussed here fill a typological gap in the literature on Binding Theory. We show and argue that:

- the classic take on Condition B cannot capture the Vietnamese coreference patterns.
- *mình* is a logophor (like Mandarin *ziji* – Huang & Liu, 2001) subject to a discourse sensitive Condition A (Charnavel & Sportiche, 2016), hence *mình* is not a “dedicated reflexive” in the sense of Rooryck & vanden Wyngaerd (2011).
- the competition between *mình* and the personal pronoun *nó* does not yield a ban on local coreference.
- the Vietnamese data, like Jambi and Chamorro, provides an argument in favor of competition-based BT accounts.

Related Questions:

- Like Rule I, the *Gricean Coreference Rule* concerns non-quantified DP antecedents. Condition B effects can still exist in Vietnamese when it comes to proper (quantifier) binding. See **Thuy’s talk on Sunday** for an argument in favor of this split!
- Do other mechanisms for reflexivity exist in Vietnamese? Yes, but no “dedicated reflexive” like *himself*.
- Do languages like Mandarin and Icelandic allow local coreference for personal pronouns? More work is to be done.

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