

Fake nouns: Definite descriptions as minimal variables

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- **Fake nouns:** Bound expressions that contain nominal content do not project their nominal content to focus alternatives
- Analyzed as variables with use-conditional (UC) content; fakeness results from scopelessness of UC content

FAKE FEATURES AND NOUNS

• **Fake features:** Phi-features of pronouns observed to be systematically ignored in certain contexts [Kratzer 1998, Heim 2008, Bassi 2021]

- (1) Only Mary did her homework.
Others_i (**regardless of gender**) did their_i homework.
- (2) I did my homework, but you didn't [do **your** homework].

• **Fakeness as characteristic of ϕ -features**

- *Weak Projection:* ϕ doesn't project to alternatives because they are 'pure presupposition triggers' (no assertive content) [Sauerland 2013]
- *Minimal Pronoun:* ϕ is not present in LF; they are morphosyntactic items that are only needed for spell-out [Kratzer 2009, Bassi 2021]

→ ϕ fake because they are ϕ

Challenge: Fake nouns

Definite descriptions (English), bare nouns (Korean), and nouns marked with proprial article *si* (Tagalog) also show fakeness.

- (3) Only the linguist_F likes the book that the philosopher recommended to the linguist. = No one else (**linguist or not**) likes the book the philosopher recommended to them. [see Roeper 2006]
- (4) kyoswunim-man kyoswunim nonmwun twu-pen ilkcyo.
prof-only prof paper 2-CL read
'Only professor reads professor's paper twice.' (Others, **prof or not**, don't.)
- (5) Si guro lang po ang nagbasa ng papel ni guro.
SI teacher only HON ANG read NG paper NI teacher
'Only teacher read teacher's paper.' (Others, **teacher or not**, don't.)

• **Related data from Principle C violations**

– Thai R-expressions can be bound by identical R-expressions [Lasnik 1986] and allow sloppy readings [Chaipheth & Jenks 2021]

- (6) Mii khÊE Nít thîi khít wâa Nít chàlàat.
EXT just Nit REL think COMP Nit smart
'Only Nit thinks that she's smart.'

→ subset of R-expressions as person features; Nít: x_7 with Nít feature

→ **BUT!** Fake nouns in Korean and 'self' in English allow modifiers, challenging the feature-based story ('Only prof reads **awesome** prof's paper'/'Only Mary let the photographer take a photo of her **delicate** self.')

Issue 1: ι and focus semantics do not derive desired meaning.

Assumptions: 1. *prof* is a definite description [Lee 1992]; 2. *the* carries an index for the bound reading [Schwarz 2009]; 3. Roothian semantics [Rooth 1992]

sloppy reading does not give us fake readings

- (7) $[[the_5]] = \lambda s_r. \lambda P. \lambda y. \exists! x(P(x)(s_r) \ \& \ x = y). \iota x[P(x)(s_r) \ \& \ x = y]$
- (8) $[_{\alpha} \text{ Only } [_{\beta} \text{ professor}_F \ \lambda_5 \ t_5 \text{ reads professor}_5\text{'s paper}]]$
 - $[[[_{\beta} ..]]^{\circ} = \lambda w : \exists! x[prof(x) \wedge x=5].read(5, paper-of(\iota x[prof(x) \wedge x=5]))$
 - $[[[_{\beta} ..]]^f = \{\lambda w : \exists! x[prof(x) \wedge x=z].read(z, paper-of(\iota x[prof(x) \wedge x=z])) \mid z \in D_e\}$
 - $[[8]] = \text{No one else read the paper by the unique professor that is them}$

Issue 2: Existing theories do not extend to nouns

- Weak Projection → **Nouns are not pure presupposition triggers**
- Minimal Pronoun → **Nouns cannot be transmitted syntactically**

Proposal: It's not about phi. It's about having an index.

- **Fake nouns as indexed pronouns with use-conditional labels**
 - at the truth-conditional level, only a pronoun with index
 - UC content known to not project to focus alternatives [Potts 2005]

ANALYSIS: FAKE NOUNS AS PRONOUNS + LABEL

1. Attributive vs. Referential Descriptions

[Donnellan 1966]

(9) (looking at x_7 , who is a linguist) The astronomer is tall.

• In referential use, NP content is backgrounded [Ahn 2024]

- descriptive content (**astronomer(x_7)**) is independent from propositional content (**tall(x_7)**), like conventional implicature [Potts 2005]

NP content in referential use does not project to alternatives

- known for epithets: [Potts et al. 2009]

- (10) a. I saw the idiot in the park.
b. I did see the **idiot** in the park too (but I actually like him).

- but also referential definites: [see Ebert et al. 2019 for similar examples]

- (11) a. I saw the astronomer at the meeting.
b. I did see the **astronomer in the park** too (but she's a linguist).

2. Referential desc. as multi-dimensional

[Gutzmann & McCready 2014]

• adopting type-theoretic distinction between truth-conditional (TC; t) and use-conditional (UC; u) content and a $\langle et, eu \rangle$ type-shifter $*$

• UC content does not compose further (\bullet); conjoined at the matrix

$\alpha : \langle \sigma^t, \tau^u \rangle$ applied to $\beta : \sigma^t$ results in $\beta : \sigma^t \bullet \alpha(\beta) : \tau^u$

- (12) TC content $[[\cdot]^t = \{w_1, w_2, \dots\}$ S true in w_x iff $w_x \in [[S]]^t$
UC content $[[\cdot]^u = \{c_1, c_2, \dots\}$ S felicitous in c_x iff $c_x \in [[S]]^u$

- (13) $* = \lambda f_{et} \lambda x. f(x) : \langle \langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, u \rangle \rangle$

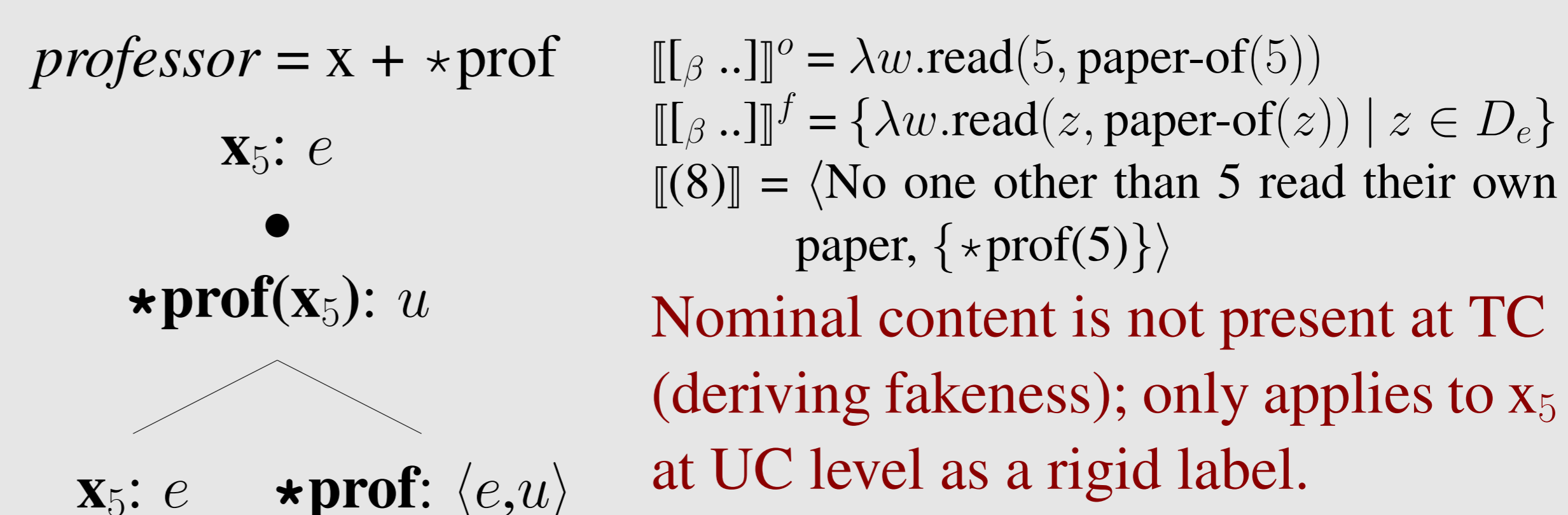
- (14) $the_7 \text{ astronomer} = x_7; e + * \text{astronomer}(x_7) : \langle e, u \rangle$

- a. $[[9]] = \langle \text{tall}(x_7), \{ * \text{astronomer}(x_7) \} \rangle$

true if x_7 is tall; felicitous if x_7 is an astronomer

Deriving fake nouns

- (8) $[_{\alpha} \text{ Only } [_{\beta} \text{ professor}_F \ \lambda_5 \ t_5 \text{ reads professor}_5\text{'s paper}]]$

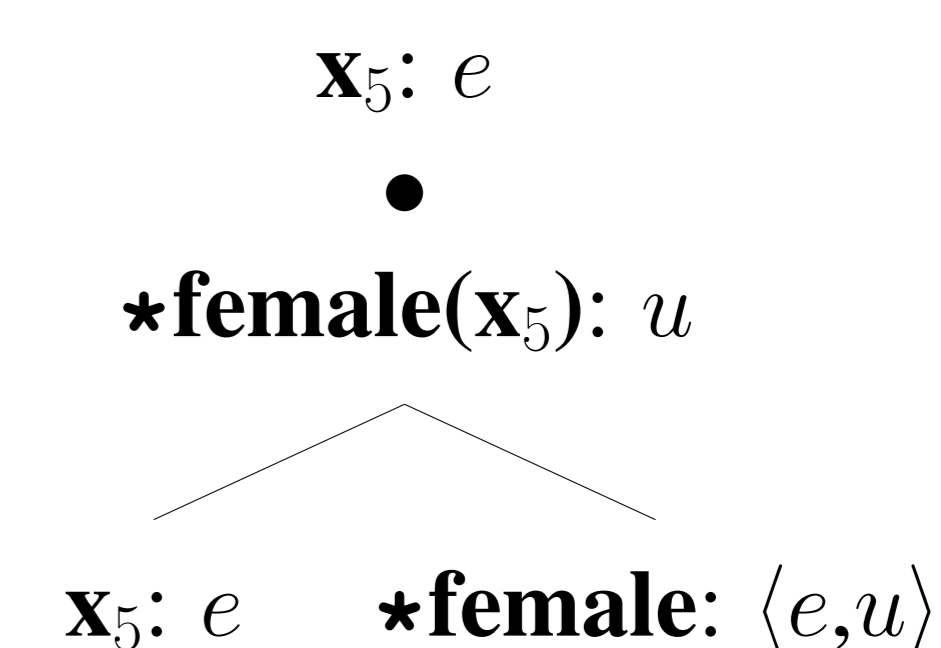


Subsuming fake features under UC scopelessness

• If ϕ is analyzed as UC content [G&M'14], fake feature is captured exactly as in (8).

$her = x + * \text{female}$

$[[1]] = \langle \text{No one else other than 5 did their homework, } \{ * \text{female}(5) \} \rangle$



CONSEQUENCES

1. **Broader fakeness.** Any expression with an index* is expected to show fakeness due to UC content (*For UC content to apply, index must be available at the matrix level; not all bound variables work)

2. **Boundary between pronoun and description blurred.** The only difference is a) attributive vs. referential use and b) how conventionalized their content is

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