Donkey Pronouns: Void Descriptions?*

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1 Overview

In the traditional E-type approach to d-(onkey)-pronouns, these pronouns are interpreted as definite descriptions that contain a bound i-(ndividual)-variable (Evans, 1977; Cooper, 1979; Heim, 1990). Elbourne (2001, 2002); Büring (2004) have recently proposed a variant of the E-type approach which dispenses with i-variable binding for donkey anaphora resolution altogether, deriving covariance via s-(ituation)-variable binding. However, they still assume that d-pronouns contain descriptive content, while remaining somewhat vague with regard to what the content exactly is. I will clarify this point of vagueness, discussing examples of d-pronouns with multiple antecedents as well as ambiguous donkey-sentences. I will show that postulating descriptive content in d-pronouns is A) not necessary and B) problematic.

I.	Evans/Cooper proposal:	it = "the donkey owned by him_x"
II.	Elbourne/Büring proposal:	it = "the_s donkey"
III.	Present proposal:	it = "the_s entity"

I thus argue that d-pronouns are void of descriptive content. This has interesting consequences for the theory of situations.

2 Background

2.1 The Traditional E-type approach

Compare sentences (1) and (2).

(1)   Every student$_i$ wonders which plate he$_i$ should eat from.

(2)   [[Every farmer [who [owns [a donkey]]]] [beats [*it*]]].

(1) has a reading in which the referent of the pronoun *he* covaries with the subject of *wonder*. We say that *he* functions as an i-(ndividual)-variable that is bound by its antecedent. The possibility of such binding is contingent on a configuration in which the antecedent c-commands the pronoun. (2) is an example of a so-called "donkey sentence". The curious fact about such sentences is that the object pronoun of *beat*, *it*, covaries with the object of *owned*, *a donkey*, as if it were bound by it. Yet the antecedent *a donkey* is embedded in a relative clause and clearly does not c-command the so-called "donkey pronoun" *it*.

The traditional E-type solution to this problem consists of treating the d-(onkey)-pronoun (*it*) as a definite description that contains a context sensitive higher type variable (*R*) and an i-variable (*pro*) (Evans, 1977; Cooper, 1979), (3a) paraphrased in (3b):

(3)   a.   ... beats [the [$R_{<7,<e,et>>}$ $pro_{<1,e>}$]]   (Heim and Kratzer, 1998)

         b.   ... beats "the donkey owned by him_1"

R picks up a context salient function such as *donkey-owned-by*. The variable (him_1) within the d-pronoun can be bound by the c-commanding subject of *beats*, *farmer*. This assures that the pronoun covaries with farmers. Since the object of *owns* in the relative clause also covaries with the head of the relative clause, *farmer*, *a donkey* and *it* will covary with the same element, and thus with each other.

2.2   Some problems with the traditional approach

The approach outlined above has a number of shortcomings which have been pointed out over the years and have motivated substantial revisions.

The uniqueness presupposition problem   A definite description presupposes the uniqueness of its referent. On the analysis of d-pronouns outlined above this has the effect that the d-pronoun will have an interpretation of the form *the (unique) donkey owned by him*. In other words, the traditional approach predicts there to be a presupposition that the relevant farmers own exactly one donkey each. However, the sentence also applies to farmers who own more than one donkey. Heim (1982) takes this to constitute a lethal problem for the traditional E-type approach.

The situation solution   The problem with the uniqueness presupposition rests on the premise that the sentence in (2) involves quantification over worlds. If instead the universal is taken to quantify over something smaller, such as situations, the uniqueness presupposition would be restricted to situations (Berman, 1987; Heim, 1990). With quantification over situations, *every* in (2) has in its restriction a set of situations each containing single farmer-donkey pairs, but the same farmer can be part of several distinct situations, paired with a different donkey in each. Thus adopting a situation semantics (Kratzer, 1989) the uniqueness presupposition associated with definite descriptions is no longer a problem for the E-type approach.

The problem of the formal link   This concerns the *R* in (3), which is said to pick up a context salient function. Kadmon (1987); Heim (1990) suggest that *married man* in

(4b) makes salient a *wife-of* function, and *guitarist* in (4c) makes salient a *guitar-of* function.

(4)   a.   Every man who has a wife is sitting next to **her**.
              Judgment: (ok) ... *next to his wife*.
        b.   Every married man is sitting next to **her**.
              Judgment: * ... *next to his wife*.
        c.   Every guitarist should bring **it**.
              Judgment: * ... *bring his guitar*.

The traditional approach, in which such functions can be picked up and (partially) determine the interpretation of the pronouns *her* and *it* respectively, predicts all sentences in (4) to have a donkey-reading. However, only (4a) does.

An NP-deletion solution   Elbourne (2001, 2002) proposes that there is no such function R present, but instead that d-pronouns are derived from full noun phrases, featuring a definite article and a noun (e.g. *the donkey*). Arguing that E-type pronouns are subject to essentially the same licensing conditions as NP-deletion, Elbourne proposes that E-type pronouns actually involve NP-deletion (i.e. deletion of *donkey*). *It* is argued to be the spell-out of the remaining definite article, akin in spirit to the famous proposal in Postal (1966) to assimilate pronouns to determiners. NP-deletion is claimed to be licensed either by the existence of an antecedent NP, or by an extremely salient property. These conditions are then argued to be met in (4a), but not in (b, c). Thereby the burden is shifted to the exact conditions under which NP-deletion is licensed.

I will elaborate on this point below in section 3.1, arguing that reference to NP-deletion is superfluous.

No need for i-binding   Recall that in order to solve the problem with the uniqueness presupposition, quantification over situations was introduced. Elbourne shows that quantification over situations does not just render the uniqueness presupposition harmless but turns it into a tool that derives the covariance between the donkey owned and the donkey beaten.

The semantics of the universal quantifier *every* is such that its restriction constitutes a set of base-situations s_b, and its nuclear scope constitutes an extended situation s_e for each s_b. Every s_b contains a farmer, a donkey and an owning relation between the two. And for every such s_b there is an s_e which contains a unique donkey. Since the donkey in s_e is the unique donkey in it, and s_e is an extended situation of the base-situation which contains a donkey, the two donkeys must be identical.

(5)   a.   [Every [$_{s_b}$ farmer who owns a donkey] [$_{s_e}$ beats it]].
        b.   Informal truth conditions:
              for every x, s_b such that x is a farmer who owns a donkey in s_b, there is an extended situation of s_b, s_e, in which x beats the unique donkey in s_e.

This allows Elbourne to eliminate the bound i-variable (*pro* in (3a), *him* in (3b)). In his (and similarly in Büring's) proposal the d-pronoun is a pure definite description.

No room for i-binding   I-(ndividual)-variable binding as in (3) is not only unnecessary for an account of donkey anaphora, it is empirically problematic. The problem concerns the availability of a sloppy reading of d-pronouns under VP-ellipsis (Elbourne, 2001, 2002; Büring, 2004). Consider the following examples:[1]

(6)   In this town ...

    a.   every farmer who owns a donkey beats **it**,
        and the priest does, too.   (strict / ?*sloppy)

    b.   every farmer who owns a donkey beats **the donkey**,
        and the priest does, too.   (strict / ?*sloppy)

    c.   every farmer who owns a donkey beats **the donkey he owns**,
        and the priest does, too.   (strict / sloppy)

The d-pronoun in (6a) patterns with the pure definite description (6b) in that a sloppy reading is very marginal in both. And it crucially patterns against the skolem description[2] *the donkey he owns* (6c), which straightforwardly allows a sloppy reading. While the traditional E-type approach (3) wrongly predicts that (6a) and (6c) should pattern together, the proposal that d-pronouns are pure definite descriptions makes the right predictions here.

Summarizing, a situation semantic E-type approach to d-(onkey)-pronouns, as developed in Elbourne (2002) and Büring (2004) is able to solve a number of problems associated with the traditional E-type approach. The main features of this new approach are A) that the d-pronoun is not a skolem description but a pure definite description, and B) that the antecedent is part of a situation, and the d-pronoun is hooked up to this situation (in Büring's proposal via syntactic binding of a s-(ituation)-variable, in Elbourne's proposal via the semantics of the universal quantifier). The d-pronoun, being a definite description, comes with a uniqueness presupposition which forces covariance on antecedent and d-pronoun. However, Elbourne leaves vague what the descriptive content of the deleted NP in the d-pronoun is and how NP-deletion is licensed. A possible view is that NP-deletion is licensed under syntactic/lexical identity (cf. Büring (2004) p. 36). In the remainder of the paper I will argue that such a view is not tenable. I further argue that d-pronouns (like any other pronouns) do not have any descriptive content.

3   *It* is not *the donkey*: the present proposal

In what follows I will show that the descriptive content of the d-(onkey)-pronoun both can (3.1) and must (3.2) be a superset denotation of all possible antecedent denotations.

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[1]The notions "strict" and "sloppy" correspond to the following readings:
 strict: the priest beats the farmers' donkeys
 sloppy: the priest beats his own donkey
[2]A "skolem description" contains a bound i-variable, a "pure description" does not, cf. Büring (2004).

And finally, I will address an interesting question, which the preceding investigations uncover, regarding minimal situations (3.3).

3.1 Donkey pronouns can be "donkey-free"

No need for NP-deletion   Elbourne rightly fully abandons the bound i-variable *pro* in (3). He simultaneously abandons the contextual predicate variable *R*, replacing it by an NP which is subject to NP-deletion. This, Elbourne claims, solves the formal link problem. It seems to me however that the problem of the formal link is already solved by the mechanism that ensures covariance in the Elbourne/Büring system, and therefore NP-deletion is superfluous in this respect.

While it is certainly true that *guitarist* in (4c) makes salient the concept *guitar*, it does not introduce an individual with the property of being a guitar. In the situation semantic approach à la Elbourne and Büring it is clear that only an individual can be a donkey-antecedent, since covariance is achieved by interpreting the referent of the d-pronoun as a unique entity (or "unique donkey" for Elbourne and Büring) in the extended situation and <u>therefore</u> identical to the donkey in the base-situation. If there is simply "donkeyness" or "guitarness" (as in (4c)) in the base-situation, the referent of the d-pronoun has nothing that the uniqueness presupposition could force it to be identical to. This forces the definite description (i.e. the pronoun) to be interpreted relative to a situation outside of the sentence, a situation which contains a suitable unique individual. Such a situation however, being outside the sentence, cannot be distributed over by *every*. Therefore no covariance is derived.

This is reminiscent of Büring (2004)'s discussion of sentences like *Every man in Athens worships the goddess* (p. 44-45). Although Büring does not actually claim that this solves the problem of the formal link, it does, as far as I can see.

Pronouns range over entities   Let me briefly show that descriptive content is not necessary to derive donkey-readings in the cases considered so far. To compare the old (informal) truth conditions with the new (informal) truth conditions we can simply replace *donkey* in (5b) by *entity*:[3]

(7)   a.   [Every [$_{s_b}$ farmer who owns a donkey] [$_{s_e}$ beats it]].

      b.   New informal truth conditions:
        for every x, s_b such that x is a farmer who owns a donkey in s_b there is an extended situation of s_b, s_e, such that x beats in s_e an entity in s_b which is unique in its minimal situation.

(7b) derives covariance in a manner parallel to (5b). There is an issue here regarding the relation between s_b and the minimal situation in which the entity is unique. This issue will be addressed in section 3.3.

To complete this subsection reconsider the sloppy-identity issue (which is really a variant of the problem of the formal link).

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[3]Elbourne and Büring differ with respect to the value which their semantics assigns to the s-variable on the d-pronoun. For Elbourne it corresponds to the s_e, for Büring to s_b. I am adopting Büring's variant.

(8)   In this town …

    a.   every farmer who owns a donkey beats **it**,
        and the priest does, too.   (strict / ?*sloppy)

    b.   every farmer who owns a donkey beats **the entity**,
        and the priest does, too.   (strict / ?*sloppy)

The paraphrase of the proposed meaning of the d-pronoun seems to match the actual d-pronoun quite closely.

Having shown that my proposal maintains the virtues of the proposal put forth by Elbourne and by Büring, I will continue by discussing advantages of my proposal.

3.2 Donkey pronouns must be "donkey-free"

In this section I will point out problems with the NP-deletion proposal and show that these problems do not arise on the present approach.

3.2.1 A first problem for NP-deletion

Relational donkey-antecedents   An NP-deletion approach to d-pronouns roughly says that d-pronouns are the result of manipulating the overt form of a noun phrase of the form *the NP* by applying NP-deletion to it, and spelling out the left over definite article as a pronoun. An a priori plausible assumption (which is sometimes explicitly made, e.g. Büring (2004) p. 36) is that the deleted NP is identical to its antecedent. This cannot be quite right in the light of the following examples.

(9)   a. ok Every man who has a wife is sitting next to **her**.

    b. ?* Every man who has a wife is sitting next to **the wife**.

NP-deletion a priori predicts that (9a) and (b) should pattern together, contrary to fact. (9a) is a perfectly well-formed donkey-sentence. (9b) (its alleged LF-equivalent) on the other hand is utterly odd.

I take this contrast to constitute a first, strong argument against the idea of deriving d-pronouns by NP-deletion under identity with an antecedent NP.

3.2.2 Coordinated donkeys

Now that we know that the relation between the descriptive content of the pronoun and that of its antecedent NP cannot be required to be one of identity, we continue by asking what the relation exactly is. Crucial insight into this matter comes from different kinds of structures that supply multiple antecedents for a d-pronoun. Such sentences involve coordination. I will assume the following semantics of coordination, based on Partee and Rooth (1983)'s Generalized conjunction:

(10) $[\![\text{and}]\!] = \lambda f_{<et,t>}.\lambda g_{<et,t>}.\lambda Q_{<e,t>}.f(Q)\&g(Q)$

According to this definition, *and* combines with two generalized quantifiers, *f* and *g* one after the other, and gives an expression of the type of a generalized quantifier

($<<e,t>,t>$). Then it takes a predicate Q (of type $<e,t>$) and gives a truth value. When taking the predicate (i.e. the VP) it "feeds" it to each conjunct (i.e. the two generalized quantifiers that it has previously combined with). For our donkey-sentences this has the effect that formally the same VP is interpreted in the scope of each of the conjoined generalized quantifiers. Thus whatever requirements the VP may have on its subject must be fulfilled in both conjuncts.

Concretely, since d-pronouns need suitable donkey-antecedents, each conjunct will need to provide a donkey-antecedent for the pronoun to be able to receive a donkey-reading.

Donkey-owners and non-owners   Consider first an example in which a possible donkey-subject[4] and an impossible donkey-subject are coordinated:

 (11)   [Every farmer who owns a donkey **and** every butcher] beats **it**.

In (11) *it* does not have a donkey-reading, i.e. the sentence does not have a reading on which *it* covaries with *a donkey* (or with farmers, or butchers, or farmer-butcher pairs etc). But instead *it* must be referential, referring to some discourse-salient object (e.g. *the priest's goat*).

I claim that the lack of a donkey-reading of *it* in (11) is due to the fact that the VP *beats it* does not have a possible donkey-antecedent for *it* in the second conjunct. According to the semantics of coordination adopted here, the VP is interpreted in each conjunct. The fact that (11) does also not have a reading on which *it* is interpreted as a d-pronoun in the first conjunct but as referential in the second falls out naturally, if we assume that the distinction between bound and non-bound s-(ituation)-variable on *it* is structurally encoded on the VP-level (Büring, 2004).[5]

Coordinated donkey-owners and goat-owners   Consider next an example in which two possible donkey-subjects are coordinated, but where the descriptive content of the antecedents is distinct (*donkey* vs *goat*).

 (12)   [Every farmer who owns a donkey **and** every priest who owns a goat] beats **it**.

This sentence is judged to have a donkey-reading of *it*. The sentence can mean that the farmers beat their donkeys and the priests beat their goats. This is expected with

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[4]I call a "possible donkey-subject" a DP which as a subject can provide an antecedent for a d-pronoun. Concretely, *Every farmer who owns a donkey* is a possible donkey-subject, while *Every farmer* by itself is not:
    (i)   Every farmer who owns a donkey beats **it**.   (*donkey-reading available*)
    (ii)   Every farmer beats **it**.   (*No donkey-reading available*)
[5]The structure of the VP with a situation binder is:
    (i) $\Sigma_1 [_{VP} \leq [$ beats the$_{\sigma 1}$ donkey$]]$
  Σ is a situation binder which grabs the situation index from its specifier (the subject) and transmits this index to the s-variable σ on the definite article (or pronoun respectively). The s-variable of the pronoun therefore is either bound to the subject (in both conjuncts) or it is free. $\leq$ is a situation-extending operator, which takes a predicate (i.e. the VP) and an individual, puts the individual in the base-situation and the predicate in an extended situation thereof. In other words, a VP prefixed with $\leq$ no longer maps an individual to a set of situations in which s/he Vs, but onto a set of situations that can be extended to one in which s/he Vs. See Büring (2004) p. 37ff.

regard to the availability in each conjunct of a donkey-antecedent. What is interesting about this sentence is that *it* cannot have the same descriptive content as its antecedent, since there are two distinct antecedents. Concretely, if *it* were *it donkey*, then *a goat* in the second conjunct couldn't be its antecedent. And if *it* were *it goat*, then the exact same problem would arise in the first conjunct, with the antecedent *a donkey*.

This I take to be a strong argument in favor of the main claim of the present paper, which is that d-pronouns must be void of descriptive content, and thus essentially have the same interpretation as *the entity*.[6]

Coordinated donkeys and goats   Another type of multiple antecedent structure results when two noun phrases are coordinated by a disjunction as in (13b).[7]

(13)   a.   If Mary sees a donkey, she waves to **it**.

       b.   If Mary sees [a donkey or a goat], she waves to **it**.

       c.   # If Mary sees a donkey or a goat, she waves to **the goat**.

Recall that a situation semantic approach as in Elbourne (2002) assures that if *it* in (13a) is interpreted as *it donkey* it can covary with the object of *sees*, because there is going to be an (extended) situation containing both *the (unique) donkey in s* and the base-situation which contains *a donkey*. Thus the two donkeys must be one and the same.

Note now that (13b) also has a donkey-reading, i.e. *it* covaries with whichever animal Mary sees. (Sometimes it happens to be a donkey, sometimes a goat.) It is trivial that my proposal in which *it* is interpreted as *the (unique) entity* directly accounts for this, in a fashion entirely parallel to (13a). If on the other hand the pronoun contains a noun *donkey* (or *goat*), (13b) would wrongly be predicted to have a reading (strictly speaking two readings) comparable to the fairly awkward (13c).[8]

"Singular non-donkeys"   Consider next the behavior of a donkey-goat conjunction.

(14)   a.   Every farmer who owns [a donkey and a goat] beats **it**.

       b.   Every farmer who owns [a donkey and a goat] beats **the donkey**.

(14a) does not have a donkey-reading, unlike (14b). Here clearly the d-pronoun does not pattern with the (contentful) description *the donkey*. The noun *donkey* and even an actual individual *donkey* are both present in the base-situation as potential

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[6]In example (12) it would be possible to assume the d-pronoun to be interpreted as *it animal*. But it is easy to come up with structurally similar examples in which the two donkey-antecedents do not share such a close common denominator. The NP-deletion idea rests on NP-licensing under identity or very high salience of the relevant property. However, if the common denominator of, say *a cat* and *a TV set* in (i) below is salient enough to license NP-deletion, I would assume it to be salient enough also in ordinary donkey-sentences.

    (i)   Every boy who bought a cat and every girl who ordered a TV set paid for it with a credit card.

[7]The example is taken from Elbourne (2002) who credits Bernard Schwarz for it.

[8]Elbourne mentions the possibility that the pronoun could itself contain a disjoint NP, like *it donkey or goat*. It's true that this would be able to derive the right reading for (13b), as far as I can see. However, such a move would again put a heavy burden on a (yet to be developed) theory of NP-deletion licensing. See Elbourne (2002) section 2.7.2 for some discussion regarding these issues.

antecedents. It is not clear to me how under an Elbournian NP-deletion analysis one would rule out a reading parallel to (14b) for (14a).

If the pronoun is analyzed as lacking any descriptive content on the other hand, a donkey-reading of (14a) is ruled out, because there is no base-situation which contains only one of the two animals. This is so under the assumption which I claim to be correct: that there is no syntactically represented situation in (14a) that contains a donkey but not a goat and vice versa.[9]

With a plural pronoun instead of *it* a donkey-reading is available:

(15)   Every farmer who owns [two donkeys and a goat] beats **them**.

Note that, on a donkey-reading, all three animals (per owner) get beaten. There is no (out-of-the-blue) reading on which only the donkeys get beaten but not the goat.

This is exactly what is predicted if *them* is interpreted as *the entities in s_b*, where s_b contains all the individuals referred to by the object of *owns* (in addition to the subject, see section 3.3).

Murderer sentences   I call "murderer sentences" examples in which a d-pronoun is interpreted within a VP-ellipsis site. Examples like the one below are discussed in Tomioka (1999) and Elbourne (2001).

(16)   Every police officer who arrested a murderer insulted **him**, and
        every police officer who arrested a burglar did, too.

The sentence features two d-pronouns, one is the overt *him* in the first conjunct and the other is within the VP-ellipsis site. Assuming the antecedent VP and the elliptical VP to be identical (Sag, 1976), the question is what the interpretation of the pronoun is such that it can covary with murderers in the first conjunct and with burglars in the second. Tomioka treats *him* as *the person he arrested*, i.e. as a skolem description, in a way very close to the traditional E-type analysis. Above we have seen arguments against such an analysis (see the discussion around example (6)). So Tomioka cannot be quite right. However, he recognizes the kind of problem the present paper claims to solve, and he makes a move in the right direction, in taking the descriptive content of the pronoun to be less specific than the descriptive content of the antecedent (i.e. *person* rather than *murderer*).

Pushing Tomioka's dilution of the descriptive content to its extreme and combining it with the approach to covariance proposed by Elbourne and Büring, leads directly to the present proposal, according to which (16) at the relevant level looks like:[10]

(17)   Every police officer who arrested a murderer insulted **him**$_{entity}$, and
        every police officer who arrested a burglar did <*insult **him**$_{entity}$*>, too.

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[9]Note that this is not a given. As far as I understand there is no consensus about the size of situations nor about how they are syntactically represented. The data discussed here suggests that coordinated individuals that together constitute a single argument of the verb share a minimal situation.

[10]Of course, *him* also encodes the features *masculine* and *human*. This is an issue that needs to be looked into further, especially also with regard to languages like German which have grammatical gender distinctions for non-animate objects.

3.3 Who is which donkey?

There is yet another kind of problem with sentences which are ambiguous between multiple donkey-readings. The problem is to ensure that d-pronouns can pick out the right antecedents. Consider the following examples:

(18)   Whenever a police officer arrests a burglar, **he** insults **him**.

(19)   If a woman talks to a rabbi while a priest is present, **he** gets mad.

These sentences have two distinct donkey-readings each. (18) can mean that officers always insult burglars, and it can mean that burglars always insult officers. However, the sentence, while ambiguous, is not vague, i.e. it cannot mean that sometimes burglars insult officers and at other times officers insult burglars. Similarly for (19).

The ambiguity of these sentences shows that we need to make sure that the participants can be distinguished. Since the covariance with d-pronouns is achieved via a s-variable and since there is no descriptive content in the d-pronoun that could distinguish between potential referents[11], it must be that *rabbi* and *priest* are in distinct situations in (19), and equally for *officer* and *burglar* in (18).

This, if I am right, suggests a hierarchy between the existence presupposition and the uniqueness presupposition that seems fairly natural. The existence presupposition that goes with definites establishes the identity of the referent with a suitable antecedent in s_b (or in the discourse).

Once this relation is established, the uniqueness presupposition of the definite has the effect of zooming in on situations containing the antecedent identified until the antecedent is unique in a situation.

It is worth noting that this then makes a claim about how minimal a (linguistically created) situation can be.[12] Specifically, coordinated noun phrases that together constitute an argument of a verb seem to be sharing a minimal situation (cf. (14) above). In this respect very close paraphrases like (20a) and (20b), contrast sharply:[13]

(20)   a.   When a butcher and a baker collide, **he** gets mad.   (**donkey-reading*)

         b.   When a butcher collides with a baker, **he** gets mad.

We observe that in (20a) the two noun phrases share a single theta role and a single Case, and they cannot provide a donkey-antecedent for a singular pronoun. On the present analysis this indicates that the butcher and the baker in (a) are part of the same minimal situation which does not have a subsituation containing only one of them.

(20b), on the other hand, does have a donkey-reading. More precisely it is ambiguous between two donkey-readings. This may be correlated with the fact that in (20b) the two noun phrases receive a different Case each. If this is right, Case may be argued to be interpretable and function as some sort of existential quantifier for situations.

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[11]This fact assimilates these examples to the bishop-sentences discussed in Heim (1990), Elbourne (2002).

[12]It is possible that situations created by the non-linguistic context have somewhat different properties from linguistically created ones.

[13]Thanks to Lisa Levinson for pointing me to these examples.

Another possibility is that the two noun phrases in (20b) are in distinct situations as a function of their having distinct theta roles.[14]

I have to leave this intriguing issue for future research.

4 Conclusion

I have clarified a point left vague in recent situation-semantic E-type analyses of donkey pronouns (Elbourne, 2001, 2002; Büring, 2004), regarding the descriptive content of donkey pronouns. Investigating structures in which a donkey pronoun caters (either simultaneously or ambiguously) to two distinct antecedents, I have reached the conclusion that donkey pronouns must be void of descriptive content.[15] In doing so I have uncovered an issue regarding the size and the syntactic representation of minimal situations.

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[14]While it is certain that the DPs are assigned Case individually in (20b) as opposed to (20a), the distinctness of the two examples with regard to theta roles may be less obvious (cf. Kayne (1994) p. 63ff. and the references there).

[15]This essentially assimilates d-pronouns to ordinary pronouns.

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