# The *other* reading of reciprocals in elliptical contexts

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Consider the following naturally attested dialogue:[1]

(1) a. Interviewer: Would you like to see each other again?
   b. Interviewee 1: I would $\Delta$.
   c. Interviewee 2: I would $\Delta$.

In (1) the putative ellipsis antecedent *like to see each other again*, contains a reciprocal, but the putative elided material cannot – $\Delta \neq$ *like to see each other again*. Rather in (1b), $\Delta =$ *like to see interviewee 2*, and in (1c) $\Delta =$ *like to see interviewee 1*. This is reminiscent of the fact that reflexives license strict readings under VP ellipsis (Hestvik 1995), as in (2a), where $\Delta =$ *defend him*$_J$. We note here that reciprocals also seem to license strict readings, as in (2b) where $\Delta =$ *defended them*$_{J+B}$. The reading in (1) is however clearly not reducible to a strict reading, since the putative elided material involves singular reference.

(2) a. John defended himself after Bill did $\Delta$.
   b. John and Bill defended each other after Bill did $\Delta$.

In order to account for the reading in (1), which we dub the *other* reading, we follow Heim, Lasnik & May (1991) in decomposing *each other* into a *distributor* (*each*) and a *reciprocator* (*other*) at LF. The distributor universally quantifies over the plural antecedent. The reciprocator takes a contrast argument $x$ bound by the distributor, and a range argument $Z$, coreferential with the plural antecedent. And universally quantifies over members of the range, distinct from the contrast.

(3) [ each [ John and Bill ]$^Z$ ] $\lambda x$ [ other$_{x,Z}$ ] $\lambda y$ [ $t_x$ defended $t_y$ ]
   $= \forall x \in J \oplus B, \forall y \in J \oplus B[y \neq x \longrightarrow x \text{ defended } y]$

[1] https://youtu.be/XI5142ZwTQ0

Our claim is that the *other* reading involves taking the scope of the distributor as the antecedent (see Merchant 2001 for a similar analysis of so-called E-type readings of quantifiers in elliptical contexts). The contrast argument of the reciprocator gets *re-bound* by the subject of the elliptical sentence, as illustrated in (4), which schematizes our analysis of (1). The interpretation of the elliptical sentence can be paraphrased as: *I would like to see each* $z \in Z$*, such that* $z \neq me$

(4) a. would [ each [ you ]$^Z$ ] $\overbrace{\lambda x \text{ [ other}_{x,Z} \text{ ] } \lambda y \text{ [ } t_x \text{ like to see } t_y \text{ ]}}^{\text{antecedent}}$

b. would I $\underbrace{\lambda x \text{ [ other}_{x,Z} \text{ ] } \lambda y \text{ [ } t_x \text{ like to see } t_y \text{ ]}}_{\text{ellipsis site}}$

As far as we can see, it is not clear how one could analyze the *other* reading were one to treat reciprocals as, e.g., polyadic quantifiers (see, e.g., Dalrymple et al. 1994), therefore, this data can be interpreted as an argument in favour of a decompositional approach.

## References


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