

Problem: There is an interesting fact about ever-Free Relatives (FRs) that has not been addressed in the literature (for an overview, see van Riemsdijk 2017, Caponigro 2018, and Šimík 2018). Ever-FRs that involve pied-piping might be ambiguous in their reference. Examples that illustrate this fact (1) are in the literature but there is no explicit discussion of this ambiguity.

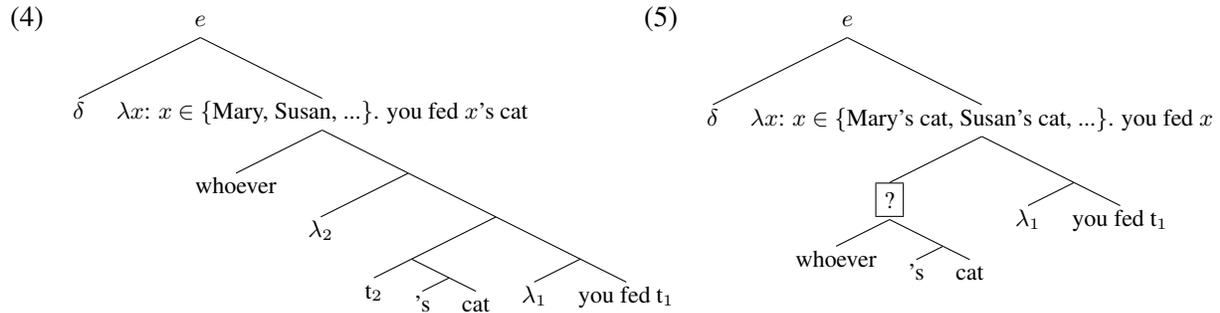
- (1) a. ?Whoever’s beer I stole can have it back. [Jacobson 1995; ex.33b]
 b. ?I am sure that my dad will pay for whoever’s car I damage. [Caponigro 2003; p.133, ex.8d]

The minimal pair below illustrates the ambiguity. While the FR in (2a) refers to *the cats’ human*, the FR in (2b) refers to *the cats*. The reading in (2a) mirrors what we have in externally headed relatives that involve pied-piping (3). Surprisingly, the reading in (2b) seems to be the result of **interpreting pied-piping at LF**, which von Stechow (1996) has argued to be impossible in wh-questions.

- (2) a. [FR Whoever’s cats you fed yesterday] **was** looking for you this morning.
 (She told me you were not supposed to feed them.)
 b. [FR Whoever’s cats you fed yesterday] **were** meowing outside this morning.
 (They must have liked the cat-treats!)

- (3) The woman [RC **whose cat** you fed yesterday] was looking for you this morning.

The ambiguity can be schematized as in (4) and (5). The LF in (4) employs sub-extraction of *whoever*, which results in a property of people required for the interpretation in (2a) [see also (3)]. The LF sketch in (5) shows the desired property that the FR in (2b) is based on. But it is not clear how this property is derived using the meaning of the pied-piped constituent labelled [?].



FRs like in (2) have NP denotations that are shifted (via δ) from derived property meanings (Jacobson 1995, Caponigro 2003). Then, the simplest hypothesis for wh-words in FRs is that they restrict these derived properties (Caponigro 2003), which is represented as domain-restriction in (6).

- (6) $\llbracket \text{who} \rrbracket = \lambda f. \lambda x: x \in \text{human}. f(x)$

However, as shown in (5), this meaning for wh-words does not let us assign the right meaning to the pied-piped constituent because the function that maps individuals to their cat never gets saturated. Different structures for the Saxon genitive suffer from the same problem. A non-FR analysis that treats the wh-ever as an indefinite further modified by a relative clause (Donati and Cecchetto 2011) also fails to account for the ambiguity (see also Caponigro 2018, fn. 15). The problem is not specific to English, either. Pied-piping construals in ever-FRs have been reported to be available in other languages as well, as illustrated by the Polish (7) example below. I was also able to elicit parallel data in Greek and Slovenian. Therefore, what we need is a compositional semantics for pied-piping in ever-FRs.

- (7) Jan podrobi **kogokolwiek podpis** Maria podrobiła
 Jan forge.3SG who.GEN.ever signature Maria forge.PST.3SG
 ‘Jan will forge whoever’s signature Maria forged.’ [Citko 2009; p61, ex36a]

