David Pesetsky@60

Deconstructing the D in D-linking
Panel on Questions

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Pesetsky (1987) and the genesis of D-linking

"It is simply necessary to distinguish two types of wh – in-situ in terms related to discourse. One type moves, the other does not."   Pesetsky (1987:99)

- This gave *discourse* formal status in syntactic theory, under the now familiar term D-linking.

- Relevance of discourse:
  in the classification of wh phrases
  in the amelioration of superiority violations
  in LF/covert wh scope taking out of islands

Pesetsky (1987) and the genesis of D-linking

- Tri-partite Division among Wh Phrases

1a. Inherently D-linked wh: *which N*

  b. Non D-linked

     (but D-linkable with contextual support):

                                                      who, what

     and to a less degree   *when, where*

     and to an even lesser degree   *how, how many*

  c. Aggressively non D-linked: *wh the hell*

Pesetsky (1987) and the genesis of D-linking

- <u>Superiority</u>:

2a. Who read what?
  b. *What did who read?
  c. Which book did which student read?
  d. I know these three papers were written by these
      three students but I'm damned if I know
        what who wrote.

Pesetsky (1987) and the genesis of D-linking

- Baker Ambiguity (after Baker 1970):

3a.*/? [Which thing / what did [John know

[where Mary bought t]]]?

b.   Q: Who knows where Mary bought what / which thing ?

A-1: John knows where Mary bought what / which thing.

A-2: John knows where Mary bought the book and

Sue knows where she bought the pen.

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What is D-linking?

The morpho-syntactic basis: *which N* vs. *who/what*

The semantic-pragmatic basis: quantificational domain

What is D-linking?

Two ideas linking the two together and aligning D-linked wh phrases with definites:

(a) Knowledge about the identity of the set N: a set that is implicit in *who/what*, explicit in *which N*.

Pesetsky 1987

(b) Connection to partitivity: *which of the N*, **who/what* of the N*.

Comorovski 1989, 96

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

4a. _Context_: A man walks into an apartment building in front of two women who are conversing on the sidewalk. One woman says to the other:

b. Who just went into the building?

c. Which man just went into the building?

Kroch 1989

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

(4c) with *which man*, unlike (4b) with *who*, cannot be asked unless there is a contextually salient set of men in the common ground.

Which man just went into the building =

Which of the men just went into the building

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

- But is *which N* really the same as *which of the N* ?
- Is *who/what* really non D-linked ?

A minimally different situation from (4):

5a. Context: John returns from a shopping trip and says

"I bought a book to give to David on his birthday".

Sue asks:

b.   Which book did you buy?

c. #Which of the books did you buy?

d. #What did you buy?

ftnoted in Dayal & Schwarzschild 2010 in a different context

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

5a Context: "I bought a book to give to David".

   b.   Which book did you buy?

   c. #Which of the books did you buy?

   d. #What did you buy?

- There is no contextually salient set of books, so no set whose members could be in the common ground.

- The infelicity of the partitive is expected.
  The felicity of the D-linked *which N* and
  the infelicity of the non D-linked *what* are not.

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

- Why is *which N* acceptable with a non-salient set of books but not a non salient set of men?
- Is the difference based on animacy?

6a. Context: Speaker A, reading the newspaper says, a Nigerian has won the Nobel Prize for literature.

B responds:

b.   Which Nigerian won the Nobel prize?

c. # Which of the Nigerians won the Nobel prize?

d. # Who won the Nobel prize?

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

It seems *which N* is acceptable because any book/author named in the answer is potentially familiar; the same would not be true of an arbitrarily chosen regular person.

NON D-LINKED CONTEXTS	*Which N*	*Who/What*	*Which of the Ns*
A man enters the building -- no contextually salient set of men	NO	YES	NO
Someone goes shopping – no contextually salient set of books	YES	NO	NO

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

Switching to contextually salient sets is also interesting, for what is says about non D-linked *what.*

7a. Context: A bake-off where all contestants are
    supposed to make the same type of pie.
    A judge asks a contestant:
 b. Which pie did you bake?   *That one.*
 c. Which of the pies did you bake?   *That one.*
 d. #What did you bake?

based on Barros 2013

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

7a. Context: There are three pies of the same type.

  b. Which pie did you bake?   *That one.*

  c. Which of the pies did you bake?   *That one.*

  d. #What did you bake?

Here we have a contextually salient set of pies.

Which N and *Which of the N* are felicitous, as expected.

What, which is supposed to be flexible, is infelicitous.

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D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

CONTEXTS	Which N	Who/What	Which of the Ns
A man enters the building -- no contextually salient set of men	NO	YES	NO
Someone goes shopping – no contextually salient set of books	YES	NO	NO
Three pies of the same kind – Contextually salient set of pies	YES	NO	YES

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

A minimally different context makes *what* acceptable.

8a. Context: A potluck with several different dishes on
      the table. A asks B:
  b. Which dish did you bring?   *The stew.*
  c. Which of the dishes did you bring?   *The stew.*
  d. What did you bring?   *The stew.*

based on Barros 2013

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

8a. Context: Different dishes on the table.

  b. Which dish did you bring?

  c. Which of the dishes did you bring?

  d. What did you bring?

What, which was inflexible with a set of identical pies, shows its famous flexibility when confronted with distinct dishes.

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

CONTEXTS	*Which N*	*Who/What*	*Which of the Ns*
A man enters the building -- No salient set of men Person named in the answer may not be familiar and may not be accommodable	NO	YES	NO
A person buys a book – No salient set of books Book named in the answer may be familiar or can be accommodated	YES	NO	NO
Three pies of the same kind – Salient set of pies Cannot be differentiated by property/name	YES	NO	YES
Three different kinds of dishes– Salient set of dishes Can be differentiated by property/name	YES	YES	YES

WH Classification

So what can we say about how the three classes of wh phrases we've looked at relate to discourse?

The easiest case first:

A question with *which of the Ns* is felicitous iff
    there is a salient set N in the context
    (ie if the presuppositions of the inner definite are
        satisfied).

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

CONTEXTS	*Which of the Ns*
A man enters the building -- No salient set of men Person named in the answer may not be familiar and may not be accommodable	NO
A person buys a book – No salient set of books Book named in the answer may be familiar or can be accommodated	NO
Three pies of the same kind – Salient set of pies Cannot be differentiated by property/name	YES
Three different kinds of dishes– Salient set of dishes Can be differentiated by property/name	YES

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WH Classification

A question with *which N* is felicitous iff the domain of quantification has members that are potentially familiar; that is, *which N* is compatible with but not dependent on a contextually salient set *N*.

(cf. examples with non salient set of men vs. non salient set of books/authors)

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

CONTEXTS	Which N
A man enters the building -- No salient set of men Person named in the answer may not be familiar and may not be accommodable	NO
A person buys a book – No salient set of books Book named in the answer may be familiar or can be accommodated	YES
Three pies of the same kind – Salient set of pies Cannot be differentiated by property/name	YES
Three different kinds of dishes– Salient set of dishes Can be differentiated by property/name	YES

WH Classification

The hardest one to nail down turns out to be the non D-linked *who/what*.

The literature on *levels of individuation* provides some key insights: Aloni (2005), Heller (2005), Dayal and Schwarzschild (2010), Heller and Wolter (2011), Barros (2013).

D-linking: Identity and Partitivity

| CONTEXTS	*Who/What*
A man enters the building -- No salient set of men Person named in the answer may not be familiar and may not be accommodable	YES
A person buys a book – No salient set of books Book named in the answer may be familiar or can be accommodated	NO
Three pies of the same kind – Salient set of pies Cannot be differentiated by property/name	NO
Three different kinds of dishes– Salient set of dishes Can be differentiated by property/name	YES

WH Classification

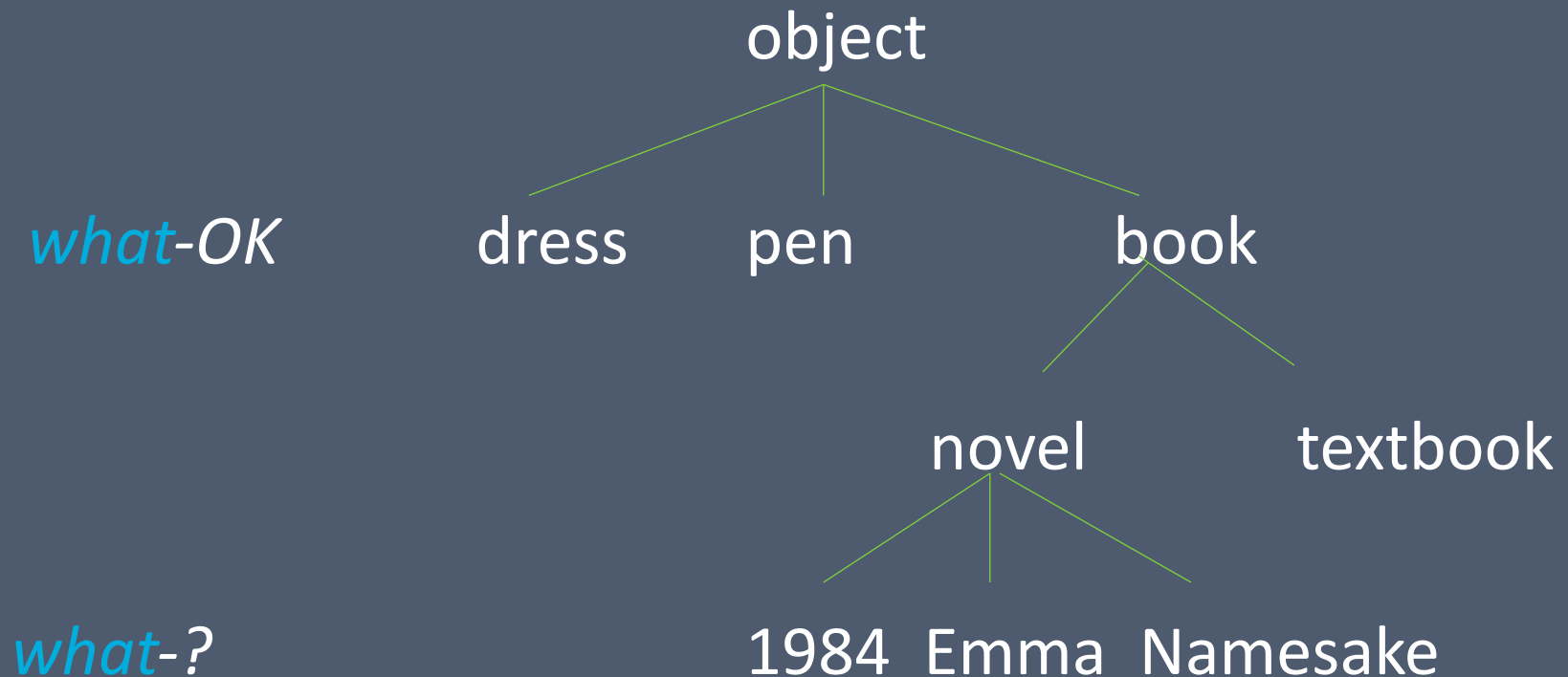Borrowing and adapting from Barros (2013) on sluicing:
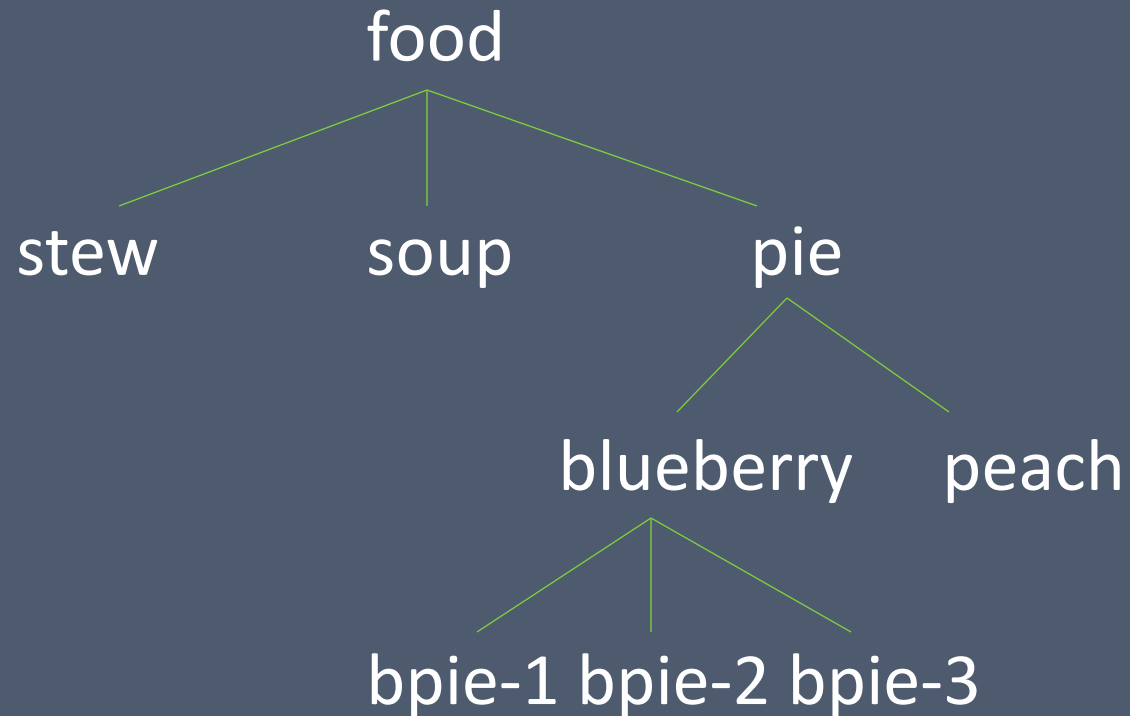
WH Classification

There must be a nameworthy/clasificatory property distinguishing members of the set quantified over.

food

what-OK　　stew　　soup　　pie

blueberry　peach

what-bad　　bpie-1 bpie-2 bpie-3
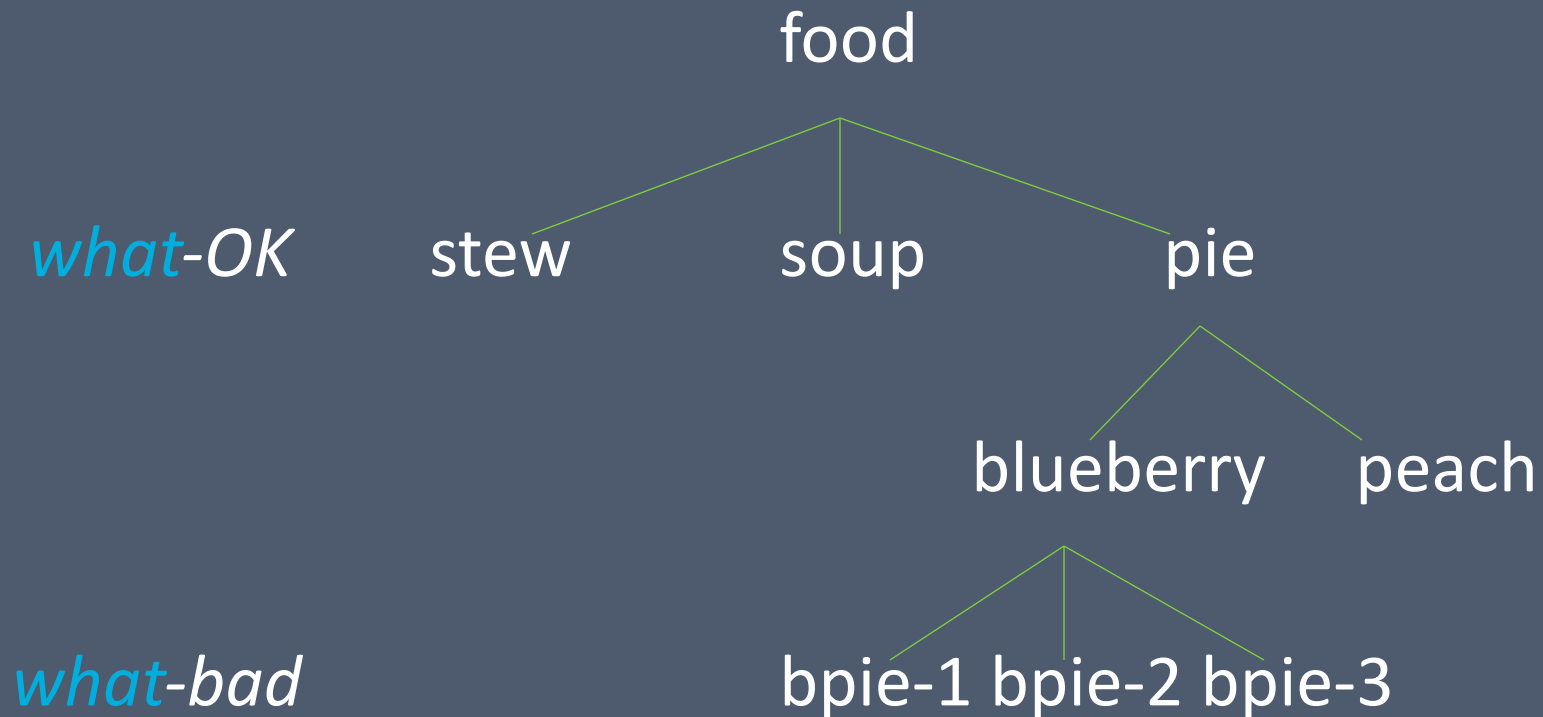
WH Classification

I bought a book. # What did you buy?

The novels are certainly distinct. What is going on here?

                                    object

what-OK   dress   pen   book

                                          novel   textbook

what-?   1984 Emma Namesake

WH Classification

I bought [a book]$_F$. # What did you buy?

Maybe the antecedent highlights a level of individuation, so the follow up question is already answered.

```
                        object
              _____|_____
             /            |            \
           dress         pen          book
                                    ____|____
                                   /         \
                                 novel      textbook
                              ____|____
                             /    |    \
                          1984  Emma  Namesake
```
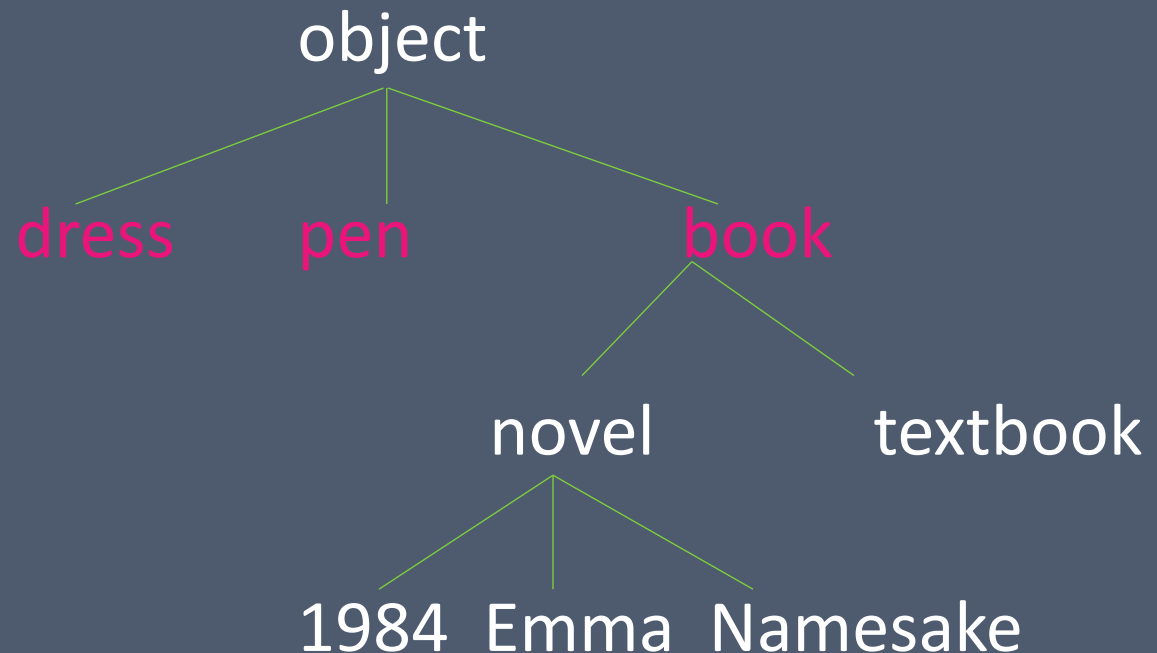
WH Classification

The behavior of *what* varies. It is felicitous

- when it is in an out-of-the-blue question and there is no salient set N

- when it is in a follow-up question and there is no salient set N; the antecedent sets the level of individuation and a follow-up is difficult (though not impossible)

- when there is a salient set of objects that can be distinguished on the basis of a classificatory property.

WH Classification

The behavior of *what* varies

- out-of-the-blue question & no salient set N

- a follow-up question & no salient set N; the antecedent sets the level of individuation and a follow-up is difficult (though not impossible)

- a salient set of distinguishable objects.

Further questions:

Is *which N* sensitive to out- of-the-blue vs. follow-up Q?

Does *who* behave the same as *what* ?

WH Classification

Is *which N* sensitive to out- of-the-blue vs. follow-up Q?

It doesn't appear to be so.

Context: *no salient set of Danish students*

9a. #Which Danish student went into the building?

  b. A Danish student went into the building.

    # Which Danish student went into the building?

WH Classification

Does *who* behave the same as *what* ?

In the sluicing literature who is noted to be more liberal in relating back to an indefinite DP with a contentful noun:

10a. Joan talked to a phonologist but I don't know who
   (exactly) she talked to.
  b. John bought a book but I don't know what
    *(exactly) he bought.

Chung et al 1995, Romero 1998, Dayal and Schwarzschild 2010, Barros 2013 (among others)

WH Classification

With contextually salient sets, even if the names are not known, it is possible to use *who*.

11a. Context: A line-up of actors who have auditioned

    for a part. One casting director asks another:

  b. Which actor are you going to vote for? *That one.*

  c. Which of these actors are you going to vote for?
                            That one.

  d. Who are you going to vote for?   *That one.*

WH Classification

11a. Context: A line-up of actors who have auditioned

for a part. One casting director asks another:

d. Who are you going to vote for?   *That one.*

Does *who* differ from *what* in not requiring the members of the set to be distinguishable?

Or is it in the nature of its argument term, humans, that we always think of them as distinguishable?

WH Classification

12a. Context: A set line-up of three humans who are clones of each other, so three identical individuals named Francisco. A can only take one of the clones on a trip. B asks:

b. Which clone will you take on your trip?

c. Which of the clones will you take on your trip?

d. #Who will you take on your trip?

Paradigm due to Nicolaus Schrum (p.c.), constructed in class yesterday and "confirmed" by a class of 21 undergrads.

WH Classification

Which of the N has the same presuppositions as the N.

Which N requires that the members of the set be potentially familiar.

Who/what requires that the members of the set be distinguishable on the basis of some classificatory property; its behavior in follow-up contexts is due to independent factors. It doesn't really ever become D-linked.

D-linking and Grammar

Who/what are not differentiated from *which N* (purely) on the basis of the familiarity of the set N.

And yet specifying the members of the set N helps Superiority violations with *who/what* while

And it is also true that although we don't perceive as clear a difference between *who/what* and *which N* in the case of pair-list answers across islands, those answers depend on a set whose members are salient in the context.

D-linking remains an important tool in understanding these phenomena (and many others) though the questions that are being asked now are different.

D-linking and Grammar

13a.   What goes where?

   b. *Where does what go?

   c. I know that we need to install transistor A, transistor B, and transistor C, and I know that these three holes are for transistors, but I'll be damned if I can figure out from the directions **where what** goes.

Pesetsky 1987:109

D-linking and Grammar

- What seems to be critical is the dependency relation between two distinct sets of individuals.

- Specification of the set N is needed to highlight these sets in the case of *who/what*, something that comes for free with *which N*.

- The discourse conditions under which a superiority violating structures are appropriate seem to be worth probing further.

D-linking and Grammar

The crucial role of discourse specification in the amelioration of superiority violations with non D-linked wh remains relevant thirty years since the claim was first made in Pesetsky (1987).

The new questions have to do with possible constraints on D-linked wh and superiority violations, such as single vs. multiple pair answers -- a distinction that was not really center stage in 1987.

Pesestsky@60

D-linking was proposed by Pesetksy@30 to shed light
on differences within the class of wh phrases

on superiority effects

on ways of covert scope taking out of islands

These are all issues that continue to energize the field
even today -- with a little help from Pesetsky@40,
Pesetsky@50!