A node $\alpha$ binds a node $\beta$ if

i. $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are co-indexed,

ii. $\alpha$ c-commands $\beta$.
Co-indexation

- The boy$_i$ pinched himself$_i$.

Coindexation indicates co-reference.

C-command

A node $\alpha$ c-commands a node $\beta$ iff:

i. the first branching node that dominates $\alpha$ also dominates $\beta$; and

ii. $\alpha$ does not dominate $\beta$ and $\beta$ does not dominate $\alpha$

For details, see entry on c-command.
**C-command**

- B c-commands C, E and F.
- C c-commands B and D.
- D c-commands C, E and F.
- E c-commands F only.
- F c-commands E only.

**Example of Binding**

*Brandon* binds *him*

Brandon wants Dawn to pinch him.
A Different Definition

A node $\alpha$ syntactically binds a node $\beta$ if

i. $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are co-indexed,

ii. $\alpha$ c-commands $\beta$,

iii. $\alpha$ is in an A-position, and

iv. $\alpha$ does not c-command any other node which is also co-indexed with $\beta$, c-commands $\beta$, and is in an A-position (i.e. nothing between $\alpha$ and $\beta$ that fulfills (i-iii)).

Heim & Kratzer (1988:261)

Also, see entry on A-position.

Schematic Representation

By H&K’s definition,

$\gamma$ binds $\beta$ but $\alpha$ does not bind $\beta$

We leave it to you to explore the motivations behind H&K’s definition.
Why ‘binding’?

- Binding is useful for stating anaphoric relations.
- Words like *him, her, herself, itself, each other*, etc often require antecedents.
- Binding allows us to state the syntactic conditions for identifying appropriate antecedents.

Further reading

The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. Cheung (2009)
An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.
Hong Kong Baptist University.