

Residues of Government - the PRO-Theorem

Gertjan Postma (Meertens Institute Amsterdam)

The concept of "government" played a key role in Chomsky's Government and Binding Theory as an impressive implementation of the Principles and Parameter approach of syntax. Government became an essential ingredient in our understanding of 1. Selection and other Locality effects, 2 Case Theory, 3. the ECP (and Connectedness effects), 4. Control Theory, the Binding Theory, 5. the Bounding Theory, 6. Incorporation (Baker 1988), , etc.

In the Minimalist Program, Government was removed as a leading concept and its empirical domain was covered by, feature checking operations under spec-head agreement and AGREE. This provided a rather simple and unified approach with a wide empirical coverage. However, not all phenomena which were previously covered found a new theoretical umbrella, e.g. the PRO-Theorem ("PRO is ungoverned") which rules the distribution of controlled arguments, incorporation, and cliticization. In this talk we present new highly-articulated morphosyntactic facts on possessor dissimilation in kinship terms. Person dissimilation, presence in for instance in Basque, is the phenomenon that person features are (phonologically) deleted in the presence of other person features (Arregi & Nevins 212).

We will use (among others) *de re* and *de se* contrasts as evidence that the hidden "dissimilated" pronoun is PRO and that PRO's distribution and interpretation is to be derived from interface principles of linearization. PRO typically occurs in configurations that lack an unambiguous linearization: to escape a linearization deadlock, natural language opts for leaving PRO silent and hence non-linearized.