

Title: Anaphora with and without C-command: where do we stand?

Abstract: The debate on pronouns and binding has characterized the history of generative grammar since its inception. The Binding Theory (BT), which focusses on C-command anaphora, has acquired its currently stable form in the early 80's. At around the same time, the first robust exploration of non C-command anaphora came about, in the form of theories of 'Indirect' or 'E-type binding' (e.g. Evans 1980), Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp 1981, Heim 1982, Ch. 2), Dynamic Semantics (Heim 1982, Ch 3); slightly later, Situation based semantics flourished (e.g. Heim, 1990 Elbourne 2005). All these approaches sought to unify views of anaphora and presupposition projection. Unlike the classical BT, the debate on non C-command anaphora remains deeply divided. The research on C-command vs. non C-command anaphora have intersected with each other in minimal part, something that I think has slowed progress down. In the present minicourse, I will attempt a balance of where we stand in our understanding of pronoun binding and sketch a path forward ("with the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will").

Seminar I (Monday)

Part A: Reflecting on the empirical landscape. We will go over the classic data of non non C-command anaphora, namely:

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) a. everyone who has a cat pets it | D(eterminer) quantifier- anaphora |
| b. A friend of mine lives in a village. It is pretty | Discourse sequencing |
| c. If a friend of mine lives in a village, it is usually pretty | A(dverb) quantifier anaphora |

We will argue that a novel architecture suggests itself, namely that (1a) should be dealt with in terms of a canonical, Tarskian theory of quantification + a theory of E-type anaphora, while (1b-c) calls for going beyond that (e.g., in the direction of DRT or Dynamic semantics).

Part B: We will go over the classical BT, especially crossover phenomena like those in (2)

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| (2) a. *He ₁ complained to every student _i | Strong Crossover |
| b. Her _i mother burst into tears in front of every student _i | Weak Crossover |

We will try to make a case that every theory of non C-command anaphora that doesn't deal with phenomena such as those in (2) doesn't stand much of a chance at getting a general enough approach.

Seminar 2 (Wednesday)

Part A: we will **informally** sketch a 'nimble' dynamic semantics (NDS). Like classic dynamic approaches, our NDS will provide a presuppositional account of pronouns, where impossible anaphoric links amount to presupposition failures; but unlike the classic approach, NDS gives up on the ambition of providing a unified theory of anaphora and presuppositions.

Part B: We will sketch how NDS accounts for the data outlined in Seminar I and compare the results to whatever recent approach you'd care to discuss (e.g., Rothschild 2017, Mandelkern 2022, Spector 2024, Heim 2024, Chatain 2025, Anvari 2025 a.o.).

What is at stake in this inquiry is the very nature of the natural language counterpart of quantification and variable binding, a fundamental plank of the capacity for logic gifted to us by our language faculty.