

Minimizing Government

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Innateness claims are based on arguments from the poverty of the stimulus: if one can show that a person's experience is not rich enough to determine certain mature properties, one postulates intrinsic, native properties to bridge the gap. This has been a productive basis for grammatical theories, because we can determine quite a lot about childhood experience and observe that adults attain systems which are uniform in certain ways and vary significantly depending on initial conditions. A child raised in Tokyo speaks some form of Japanese and a child raised in Sheffield speaks a form of Yorkshire English.

Recently, under the Minimalist Program, new criteria have been introduced for the form of innateness claims, that they meet criteria of economy and elegance, some of which go well beyond standard Occam's Razor clippings and are based on the way in which the language organ must function with regard to other mental organs. One victim of these economy notions is "government", once a simple and central part of grammatical theorizing, then steadily enriched, and now condemned to oblivion on broad methodological grounds: it constitutes an elaboration of bare phrase structure and is therefore minimalistically suspect.

We used to have conditions on movement operations and on the residues (traces) of movement (like the Empty Category Principle, appealing to government). Now the Minimalist Program postulates that there is no movement, hence no traces, hence no conditions on traces. I argue that copied elements are deleted by a process of cliticization, which captures the desirable effects of government and unifies "government" phenomena with many other phenomena. The proposal has obvious implications for parsing, facilitating a parsing model which exploits our grammatical analyses.

The central idea is that cliticization requires a certain kind of host in a certain structural relationship and that deleted copies occur in those environments. Consequently, to delete is to cliticize a complement (or the topmost element of a complement) to an overt, adjacent word to the left. This explains why complementizers like *that* may not be deleted in contexts like *that Kay left was obvious; Fay believes, but Kay doesn't, that Ray is smart; Fay said Ray left and Tim that Jim stayed*. Correspondingly, one does not find **which man did Jay introduce to Ray and which woman (did) Jim to Tim?*; **Jay is known to have left but he isn't to have gone to the movies*, and much more. It also explains why *the picture of Jay's* is only two-ways ambiguous (Jay is the owner or the agent) while *Jay's picture* is three-ways ambiguous (Jay may be the owner, agent or the sitter). It also unifies deletion possibilities with obvious cliticization phenomena, explaining the non-occurrence of reduced 's (instead of the full *is* form) in *Kim was happier than Tim is; I wonder what that is up there; John hasn't been watching TV but now Mary is*. The upshot is that deletion sites are highly constrained and this facilitates parsing.

The paper will conclude with a discussion of the role of acquisition, economy-elegance and parsing in driving proposals about UG. Despite its demise, government had explanatory power. My paper provides some new explanations for what government explained and they entail carving up the grammatical world differently. To the extent that the claims are successful, they will bolster the general methodological principles which made government a suspect notion.