

PROLIFIC PERIPHERIES:
A RADICAL VIEW FROM THE LEFT

by

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation concentrates on movement dependencies under minimalist assumptions and suggests that the opposite of moving too far (standard locality) exists also, namely moving too closely: anti-locality. A theory of anti-locality will be developed that incorporates a tripartition of clause structure into Prolific Domains, areas of the clause that share a common “super-feature” or context value. The lowest Prolific Domain is responsible for thematic relations (θ -domain), the next one for agreement relations (ϕ -domain), and the highest one for discourse relations (ω -domain). Under this approach, anti-locality is expressed in terms of the Condition on Domain Exclusivity which simply bans Domain-internal movement. This ban is motivated on grounds of PF-legibility, much as deleting lower copies is driven by PF-requirements.

However, there are constructions which contain two elements that can be argued to be related by movement, the lower one pronominal in nature. The proposal is that in these cases, the lower copy of the movement dependency cannot simply be deleted, as in

other instances of movement, but must be spelled out to yield a drastic effect on the (PF) output. This strategy is referred to as Copy Spell Out and a number of potentially relevant and at first glance unrelated phenomena will be investigated (in particular, reflexivization and certain types of left dislocation).

Considering another empirical domain, one particular aspect of a tripartite clause structure can be applied to variation found in the syntactic formation and semantic interpretation of multiple Wh-questions across languages. The main thesis of this discussion is that German seems to behave syntactically like Bulgarian, in that it obligatorily moves all Wh-phrases into the ω -domain, while at the same time it also resembles Italian in not actually being able to ask a well-formed multiple constituent question to begin with. Rather, the two Wh-phrases are always D-linked and hence topic-like, a hypothesis that fits well with the overall framework.

The framework laid out here challenges some technical assumptions in current theory, yet maintains a distinct minimalist spirit in its approach. Moreover, the theory developed is independent of particular choices in implementing the syntactic tools made available in the minimalist program.