## **TOWARDS A UNIQUE ACCOUNT FOR PRO-DROP** Maia Duguine (UPV/EHU, HiTT & U. Nantes)

**Overview**. I argue in favor of a unified approach to the pro-drop phenomenon, in terms of the PF condition in (A), based on an deletion/ellipsis analysis of dropping (*cf*. Holmberg 2005).

(A) A DP can be deleted iff it stands in a c-command relation with a head with the same *p*(erson)-feature and the same index.

**P-valuation**. A head H will have the same p-feature as a DP by means of  $\varphi$ -AGREE. The assumption that transmission of the referential index is part of  $\varphi$ -AGREE (*cf.* Sigurðsson 2004, Bianchi 2006) ensures that (A) concerns only the DP that entered the AGREE relation with H.

Advantages of (A). An account of pro-drop based on p-AGREE has different advantages:

(i) The majority of the world languages (89% of those reported in Haspelmath et al. 2005; *cf*. also Gilligan 1987) are Null Subject Languages: more than an exception, pro-drop is the rule.

(ii) It gives a uniform account of pro-drop (no need for dividing 'rich agreement-based pro-drop' and 'no-agreement-based/discourse-based pro-drop'; *cf.* Jaeggli & Safir 1989).

(iii) It spells out the intuition that 'it is only nuclear grammatical functions that can be interpreted as *pro*' (Mohanan 1983).

**Two ways of blocking pro-drop.** (A) is a PF a post-syntactic condition based on the syntactic operation AGREE. Thus, DP-deletion will be blocked either (i) if the DP does not enter a  $\varphi$ -AGREE relation or (ii) if a morphophonological operation previous to (A) affects the p-feature on H. I show that both can in fact be observed:

*i. Not AGREEING.* Pro-drop is not a *uniform* phenomenon in pro-drop languages: it is not the case that 'droppable' arguments can always drop freely. I discuss three such cases. In Tagalog and Malagasy (1)-(2), external and internal arguments can be dropped, but not automatically (Himmelman 1999, Pearson 2005). DPs in Bantu languages are subject to a similar alternation (Baker 2003). Finally, in Basque dative objects are overall subject to pro-drop (Ortiz de Urbina 1989), but as I show, that is not always an option (3).

I show that in these alternations, pro-drop is possible *only* when a head enters a  $\varphi$ -AGREE operation with the DP (*i.e.* that (A) holds). I present two types of evidence:

(i) The strong implicative relationship between  $\varphi$ -AGREE and agreement: in languages with overt agreement, the pro-drop alternation patterns exactly with the agreement alternation; *i.e.* the absence of agreement morphology corresponds the impossibility of pro-drop (3).

(ii) The fact that DP-movement is a corollary of  $\varphi$ -AGREE (Chomsky 2000): in languages with DP-movement, the pro-drop alternation patterns with the movement alternation; *i.e.* the impossibility of movement corresponds to the impossibility of pro-drop. This is illustrated in Malagasy (4) with a NPI signaling the vP boundary (Paul & Travis 2006): the DPs to its right correspond to the ones that can be dropped, and the ones to its left to those that cannot (*cf.* the word order and the pro-drop pattern in (1)-(2)).

*ii Impoverishing the p-feature.* The case of non-pro-drop languages such as German (5) is also accounted for by (A). In a Distributed Morphology approach, Müller (2005) argues that *impoverishment* operations on agreement morphemes (such as German (6) for instance) affect pro-drop. I adapt this analysis by proposing that the impoverishment of p-features drives the condition (A) not to hold. For instance, in German, an agreement morpheme with the  $\varphi$ -specification (7b) which is the result of AGREE with the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural DP *wir* (7a) ends up as in (7d) after impoverishment by (6) (Müller 2005), *i.e.*, with a p-feature that does not correspond to that of the DP. Thus (A) does not hold and the DP cannot be deleted. This result converges with Rohrbacher's (1999), where the *person* feature is shown to be crucial for pro-drop.

**Summarizing**, the present work develops a theory of pro-drop (i) that does not rely on the existence of different types of pro-drop languages and (ii) that straightforwardly signals which DPs will be the possible targets of dropping and which will not. Data from alternation structures

in different languages are discussed; these structures, as they constitute minimal pairs, provide evidence in favor of condition (A).

(1)	a.	Mamangy an'i Tenda izy/[e]. b. Vangian-ny/*[e] i Tenda	Malagasy
		AT.visit Obl.Det Tenda he TT.visit he Det Tenda (I	Pearson 2005)
		'He is visiting Tenda.' 'Tenda, he is visiting.'	
(2)	a.	. Vangian'-i Naivo izy/[e]. b. Mamangy azy/*[e] i Naivo.	Malagasy
. ,		TT.visit Det Naivo him AT.visit him Det Naivo (1	Pearson 2005)
		'Him, Naivo is visiting.' 'Naivo is visiting him.'	,
(3)	a.	Jonek haurrei/[e] dirua eman die.	Basaue
		Jon.ERG children.DAT money.ABS give 3sgAbs.have.3sgErg.3plDat	I.
		'Ion gave money to the children/to them.'	
	b	Jonek haurrei/*[e] dirua eman du	
	0.	Ion ERG children DAT money ARS give 3sgAbs have 3sgFrg	
		'Ion gave money to the children/to them '	
(A)	c	Tsy nananaka ity hazo ity tamin'ny antsy intsony i Sahondra	Malaaasy
(-)	u.	NEC DET AT CUIT this tree this DET $P$ CEN DET $knife$ NDI Schondra	(P&T 2006)
		'Sabondra no longer cut this tree with the knife '	(101 2000)
	Ь	Trav potapahin'i Sahondra tamin'ny antra introny ity hazo ity	
	υ.	. The per mention of the per D on per legit on this tree, this	
		NEG PS1.11.Cul.GEN.S. PS1.P.GEN.DET KIIITE NPI UIIS LEE UIIS	
	*т	Saliolidia no longer cut uns tree with the kinne.	Course are
(5)	т1 т	Ich denke, dass [e]gesungen habe ]]	German
	1 	I think that sung have	(Muller 2005)
$\langle C \rangle$	T i	think that I have sung.	
(6)	[±	$\pm 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{O}/[-2,+p1]$	
(7)	a.	. [+1, -2, +pl] (wir 'we' DP)	
	b.	a. [+1, -2, +pl] (abstract agreement morpheme after AGREE with wir)	
c. [-2, +pl] (abstract agreement morpheme after impoverishment by (6))			
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