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Problominalization

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Squibs and Discussion

PROBLONINALIZATION

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Assumption 1: Every sentence and every deep structure terminal string is finite in length.

Assumption 2: Pronominalization is a transformation. An NP_1 may pronominalize an identical NP_2 if NP_1 is to the left of NP_2 under any conditions, or if NP_1 is to the right of NP_2 and NP_2 does not command NP_1 .

Assumption 3: Pronominalization operates on full NPs (including relative clauses). This assumption is supported by examples like the following:

My neighbor_i who is pregnant said that she_i was very happy.

*My neighbor_i who is pregnant said that he_i was very happy.

Now consider sentences like:

The man who shows he_i deserves it_j will get the prize, he_i desires.

Consider the underlying form of this sentence:

The man who shows that the man deserves the prize that the man who shows that the man deserves the prize that the man . . . (ad infinitum) will get the prize that the man who shows that the man deserves the prize that the man who shows . . . (ad infinitum)

One of the three assumptions must go. Since finite length seems indispensable and we had trouble with pronominalization already (on completely independent grounds),¹ I conclude that Assumption 2 must be abandoned (avoiding the necessity of explaining the *neighbor* sentences in some non-

¹ Editors' note: The reference is to an ordering paradox in German pointed out by Bach. We have not reproduced the argument here because it is now of only marginal interest. This squib, on the other hand, though of the same vintage, is still of interest because of the electrifying effect it has had on the study of pronominalization. It has led to the abandonment of the assumption that the facts of pronominalization are statable solely by means of a pronominalization transformation.

syntactic way and preserving the idea that the pronominalized NP may contain a relative clause). Note also that if we do not include the relative under this account we have to somehow prevent sentences like this:

*The man_i who lives next door said that he_i who lives next door would mow my lawn during vacation.

Other examples of *reductio ad infinitum*:

I gave the book that he wanted to the man who asked for it.

The girl who was asking for him finally found the man she wanted.

One conclusion might be that there is no such thing as pronominalization except as a name for a semantic relation between independently chosen NPs and pronouns (from the base), a relation which must then be determined (at least) on the basis of surface structure relations. This conclusion must obviously stand or fall together with other such putatively surface-structurally determined semantic relations. This would destroy the relevance of the *Oscar* + *realizing* sentence² for the question of whether or not there is a cycle, but would leave possibly a harder question to answer; namely, how would the semantic theory account for the interpretations of *that* sentence?

AN ARGUMENT AGAINST PRONOMINALIZATION

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This argument presupposes a cyclic rule of There-Insertion, a transformation with a regrettable derived structure. Nevertheless, it is implausible that *there* is present in deep structure, and there are arguments that There-Insertion is cyclic. For example, consider the sentences (due to Haj Ross):

There was believed to have been a tiger shot.

There was a tiger believed to have been shot.

and the awkward but apparently grammatical

There's a man from Berkeley believed to be proving there to be no real numbers.

There-Insertion, as usually formulated, precedes Adverb-Preposing, because the latter destroys its environment; and Adverb-Preposing precedes Pronominalization, for otherwise one can't get:

If Tom_i can go, he_i will go.

Finally, it is useful to note that There-Insertion occurs before

² See John R. Ross (1967) "On the Cyclic Nature of English Pronominalization," in *To Honor Roman Jakobson*, Mouton and Co., The Hague, reprinted in D. Reibel and S. Schane, eds. (1969), *Modern Studies in English*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.