



Department of
Linguistics and Modern Languages

語言學及現代語言系

Null Arguments in Eastern Tamang

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Abstract

I investigate null arguments in Eastern Tamang, showing that null objects arise by argument ellipsis (AE) and that null subjects arise by *pro*. It is well known that Japanese allows AE in both subject and object position, while Chinese appears to allow AE only in object position (Huang 1984; Huang 1991; Oku 1998; Saito 2007). Takahashi (2014) argues that this asymmetry follows from the presence of abstract subject agreement in Chinese and its absence in Japanese. Sato (2019) rejects this approach and argues that the lack of AE in Chinese follows from the fact that subjects in Chinese are obligatorily topics and that AE arises by LF copy. Neither approach works for the facts below. Instead, I argue that PF deletion is responsible for AE in Eastern Tamang. It will be shown that null subjects have a strict reading only while null objects have a strict or sloppy reading. Takahashi (2014) argues for abstract subject agreement in Chinese based on blocking effects in long-distance anaphora, but such blocking effects are absent in Tamang. Turning to Sato's (2019) analysis, we see that his proposal rests on the fact that overt subjects in Chinese are topics and that AE arises by LF copy. Indefinite subjects are possible in Eastern Tamang, however, and indefinite nominals cannot be topics. Null subjects are instances of *pro*, while null objects are instances of AE arising by PF copy deletion.

Speaker

Professor Michael Barrie is a professor in the English Department at Sogang University, Seoul, Korea. He is interested in syntactic theory, the syntax-semantics interface and the syntax-prosody interface. His work covers a diverse range of languages, including Iroquoian, Algonquian, English, Cantonese, Korean, Tamang, Tagalog, Mongolian, and Romance languages. One of his notable works is his 2021 monograph *Dynamic Antisymmetry and the Syntax of Noun Incorporation*. Professor Barrie also serves as the research director for *The Journal of Studies in Language*, as a chief editor for the book series *Studies in Generative Grammar*, and as an editorial member in many other prestigious journals (e.g., *Korean Journal of Linguistics*, *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, and *Cadian Journal of Linguistics*).

All Are Welcome

Enquiries

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