

Precede and command / notes

Bruening, Benjamin. 2014. Precede-and-command revisited. *Language* 90.2. 342-88.

Bruening proposes to substitute the notion of c-command with the notion of *phase-command*.

(1) **Phase-command**: X phase-commands Y iff there is no ZP, ZP a phasal node, such that ZP dominates X but does not dominate Y.

*Phasal nodes: CP, vP, NP

Similarly, he reformulates the definition of *binding*.

(2) **Binding**: A binds B iff A and B are coindexed and A precedes and phase-commands B.

*Precedence – left-to-right order.

Condition C: a referential expression must not be bound.

Example:

- (3) a. *She₁ likes Bernice₁'s friends.
b. *Her₁ mother likes Bernice₁'s friends.
c. *I met him₁ in Ben₁'s office. (coreference is banned)

Some problems for c-command that can be overcome by precede-and-command

PPs

- (4) a. *Sue spoke to him₁ about Bill₁'s mother.
b. *Mary danced in it₁ with the owner of the hall₁.
c. *Mary played quartets with them₁ at [John and Sue]₁'s party.
d. *I threw the ball to him₁ on Friday during John₁'s speech.

← Precede-and-command predicts this

Adjuncts

- (5) a. *Sue spoke to him₁ about Bill₁'s mother.
b. *Mary danced in it₁ with the owner of the hall₁.
c. *Mary played quartets with them₁ at [John and Sue]₁'s party.
d. *I threw the ball to him₁ on Friday during John₁'s speech.
e. Sue spoke to Bill₁'s mother about him₁.
f. Mary danced in the mayor₁'s ballroom with him₁.

Ditransitives

- (6) a. *Sally showed him₁ Dan₁'s picture.
b. That mistake cost Sally₁'s husband her₁. (stress on her)

Possible arguments against precedence (←Reinhart)

Fronted PPs

- (7) a. Near him₁, Dan₁ saw a snake.
b. *Near Dan₁, he₁ saw a snake.

→ modified c-command (for adjuncts) can explain this, but not this:

- (8) a. *In Ben's picture of Rosa₁, she₁ found a scratch.
b. In Ben's picture, which Rosa₁ loves, she₁ found a scratch.

← reconstruction can deal with this

Adjunct reconstruction principle: An adjunct must reconstruct to the edge of the phase where it is semantically interpreted.

- (9) *In Dan₁'s apartment, he₁ practiced some new tricks.

Deriving Precede-and-command: left-to-right processing

(10) **Discourse set D:** Consists of all referents in the current discourse.

Discourse set C: Consists of referents represented by NPs in the sentence currently being processed.

(11) **Processing principle:** Move discourse referent R denoted by NP N out of active set C and into set D at the right edge of a phasal node that dominates N.

+ Principle C (*Minimize restrictors*): A definite description of the form the A may not refer to a discourse referent in active set C if A could be dropped without affecting either (i) the denotation of the description or (ii) its various pragmatic effects.

Principles A and B under precede-and-command

(12) a. We talked to Bobby₁ about himself₁.

b. *We talked to Bobby₁ about him₁.

(13) a. You can depend on Martina₁ to behave herself₁.

b. *You can depend on Martina₁ to behave her₁.

For anaphors – add the **Discourse set A** (the local set). This set consists of referents represented by NPs in the local argument domain currently being processed.

(14) **Processing principle 1:** Move discourse referent R denoted by NP N out of local set A and into the active set C at the left edge of an argument domain that does not include N.

*An argument domain is the set of elements that includes a predicate P and all the arguments of P.

(15) **Processing principle 2:** Move discourse referent R denoted by NP N out of sets A and C and into set D at the right edge of a phasal node that dominates N.

(16) **Binding principle B:** If a newly processed NP N is to be interpreted as denoting a discourse referent R already in set A, then N must have the form of a local anaphor.

Binding principle A: If a newly processed NP N has the form of a local anaphor, it must denote a discourse referent in set A.

Zwart, Jan-Wouter. 2015. Precede-and-command revisited. *Language* 91(3). 169-178.

Zwart's examples to support the idea that **phases are irrelevant**

What is relevant then? Pragmatics?

(17) a. *He₁ flunked when John₁ cheated.

b. %He₁ usually flunks when John₁ tries to cheat.

(18) a. *He₁ was just a little boy when I saw John₁.

b. %He₁ was just a little boy when I first saw John₁.

(19) a. *I bought him₁ the house that John₁ wanted.

b. %I bought him₁ the house that John₁ always wanted.

(20) a. *He₁ looks at the wall and John₁ throws the ball at it.

b. %He₁ looks at me and John₁ goes out of his mind.

(21) a. *Either he₁ eats or John₁ sleeps.

b. %Either he₁ does what I say or John₁ loses his job.

(22) a. *He₁ is not to be believed when John₁ tells a story.

b. %He₁ is not to be believed when John₁ tells a crazy story like that.

(23) a. *He₁ didn't mind, when I blamed John₁ for it.

b. %He₁ didn't seem to mind, when I blamed John₁ for it.

(24) a. *He₁'s going to be flunked, if John₁ cheats.

b. %He₁'s going to get flunked, if John₁ cheats.

(25) a. *It surprises him₁ that John₁ is so well liked.

b. %It surprised him₁ that John₁ was so well liked.