Hierarchy Effects.
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Abstract

Cross-linguistically, a number of different constructions are sensitive to the position of a nominal argument—or the relative ranking of two or more nominal arguments—along some proposed feature hierarchy (e.g. person, number, animacy, gender). In some environments, certain combinations of nominals may require special morphological forms or syntactic constructions, while in others, specific "hierarchy-violating" combinations may be simply ineffable. In this course we will dig into the research in this area, using hierarchy effects as a window into examining some foundational issues in syntactic theory, including: feature organization in nominals and probes; the nature and representation of dependencies between nominals; case and licensing of nominal arguments; whether and how hierarchies should be encoded in the grammar; and the nature of Agree.