

## SUMMER READING GROUP ON THE MINIMALIST PROGRAM 2001

### 1 Deeper *Why*-Questions

- Deeper *why*-questions: We can seek a level of explanation deeper than explanatory adequacy, asking not only *what* the properties of language are, but *why* they are that way. (p.2)<sup>1</sup>
- Language acquisition from  $S_0$  (UG) to L (particular grammar): (p.1)
  - (i) individual experience, which selects among the options allowed by  $S_0$
  - (ii)  $S_0$  itself, a product of evolution
  - (iii) general properties of organic systems  $\Leftarrow$  !
- $S_0$  can further be disaggregated: (p.3 (2))
  - (i) unexplained elements of  $S_0$   $\Leftarrow$  (must be empty, according to SMT)<sup>2</sup>
  - (ii) IC (the principled part of  $S_0$ )<sup>3</sup>
  - (iii) general properties

Principled explanation, going beyond explanatory adequacy, keeps to (ii) and (iii).

### 2 New and Important Claims

#### 2.1 The architecture

- No 'LF': There are no LF properties and no interpretation of LF, strictly speaking. The computation maps LA to <PHON, SEM> piece-by-piece cyclically. (p.5)  
→ One single cycle: Narrow syntax NS, the phonological component  $\Phi$ , and the semantic component  $\Sigma$  are cyclic.  $\Phi$  and  $\Sigma$  apply to units constructed by NS, and the three components of the derivation of <PHON, SEM> proceed cyclically in parallel. (p.4) (cf. *MI* and *DbP*)
- Duality of SEM: argument structure (theta-theoretic properties) and everything else (p.8)
- Word order: It is determined by  $\Phi$ : the head-parameter along with a principle that determines that SPEC precedes head. (p.8) (cf. *MP*)

#### 2.2 Structural relationship

- C-command: It functions at SEM (e.g. for binding theory), but perhaps not within NS. (p.6)

<sup>1</sup> Unless specified, all page numbers refer to Chomsky (2001b) *Beyond Explanatory Adequacy*.

<sup>2</sup> SMT: Language is an optimal solution to legibility conditions. (*MI* and *DbP*)

<sup>3</sup> IC = bare output conditions BOC (*MP*), legibility conditions (*MI*, *DbP*).

- M-command: There is a relation R(SPEC, H), but no R(LB, H). (p.6)
- Head-head relation: Apparent SPEC-H relations are in reality head-head relations involving minimal search (local c-command). (p.12 (9))  
→ P-G relation: P = H c-commands G. (p.12)<sup>4</sup> (=MI, DbP)
- A-A' -distinction: A-and A' -movement have no status. No principles can be formulated in terms of A-A' -distinction. (p.9 fn30)
- Set/paired-merge: simple structure vs. adjunction. (p.18)
  - Adjunction of  $\alpha$  to  $\beta$ : replace  $\beta$  by  $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$ . (*how*)
  - Richness of expressive power requires an operation of predicate composition (*why*).
  - When X c-commands  $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$ , X c-commands  $\beta$ , but not  $\alpha$ .
  - In  $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$ ,  $\alpha$  is spelled out where  $\beta$  is. (p.20 (12))

### 2.3 Operations

- TRANSFER hands  $D_{NS}$  over to  $\Phi$  and to  $\Sigma$ . (p.5 (4))<sup>5</sup>
- Uninterpretable features: They are without value [uF]. Valuation of [uF] is part of TRANSFER. (p.16) (cf. MP)

#### *Movement and Merge*

- No feature movement: Feature movement is a complex operation, requiring some notion of 'feature occurrence'. (p.6) (Contra MP)
- External/internal Merge:
  - external Merge:  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are separate objects (p.8)
  - internal Merge = displacement. It is 'not an "imperfection" of language; its absence would be an imperfection'. (p.8) To motivate and account for displacement is a 'mistake'. (p.8 fn29) Displacement comes 'free'. (p.17) (Contra MP, MI, and DbP) (QUESTION: How to account for 'MOM')
- Conditions on Merge: imposed at the C-I interface, as conditions on SEM: (p.9)
  - external Merge: argument structure
  - internal Merge: everything else (e.g. scopal and discourse-related properties)
- SIMPL: It is an optional operation that converts  $\langle \alpha, \beta \rangle$  to  $\{\alpha, \beta\}$ . It is part of TRANSFER. (p.19)

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<sup>4</sup> Properties of Agree: (p.14-15)

- The paired element (G or P) must be complete.
- P and G must be active.
- The P-G relation must be local.

<sup>5</sup> Spell-Out S-O: the mapping to  $\Phi$ . It removes from NS all features that do not reach SEM. (p.5 and fn14)

### External Merge

- S-selection: It is eliminated. (p.10) → redundant, no head-to-SPEC relation, cyclicity, the type of s-selectional features.

### Internal Merge

- Overt/covert movement: Internal Merge before TRANSFER (overt) or after TRANSFER (covert). (p.9) Covert movement is not long-distance agreement. (p.9 fn32) (QUESTION: Why do we need covert movement?)
  - no covert Object-Shift OS: If (covert) OS is Case-driven, then there is sequence of operations: Agree( $v$ , Object), TRANSFER, OS. \*Agree both before and after TRANSFER. (p.14)
  - covert *wh*-movement: It is okay because it is driven by a different feature. (p.14)
- Copy: K is a copy of L if K and L are identical except that K lacks phonological features of L. (p.9 (7)) Reconstruction is not an operation. (p.9) Copy is asymmetrical: Copy( $\beta$ ) is  $\beta$  stripped of its phonological features, either the trace of  $\beta$  or covertly-raised  $\beta$ . (p.20 fn63)
- OCC: = EPP-features. OCC should be available only when necessary, i.e. when it contributes to an outcome at SEM that is not otherwise expressible. OCC has the function of providing new interpretations. (p.11) (QUESTION: Not free?)
  - OCC/Move = Agree + Pied-piping + Merge (p.13)
  - OCC at T/EPP: perhaps universal, perhaps not. (p.16)

### Abbreviations used in Chomsky 2001b

|            |                               |           |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| $\Phi$     | phonological component        | p.4       |
| $\Sigma$   | semantic component            | p.4       |
| ACD        | antecedent-contained deletion | p.22      |
| ADJ        | adjunct                       | p.17      |
| C          | universal conditions          | p.13 fn46 |
| C-I        | conceptual-internal system    | p.3       |
| D          | derivation                    | p.3       |
| <i>DbP</i> | <i>Derivation by Phase</i>    | p.3 fn8   |
| EA         | external argument             | p.12      |
| EXPL       | expletive                     | p.13      |
| F          | features                      | p.4       |
| FL         | Faculty of Language           | p.1       |
| G          | goal                          | p.12      |
| HNPS       | Heavy-NP-Shift                | p.22      |

|                |   |         |
|----------------|---|---------|
| IA             | internal argument                         | p.10    |
| IC             | interface condition                       | p.2     |
| L              | language                                  | p.1     |
| LA             | lexical array                             | p.4     |
| LB             | label                                     | p.6     |
| LEX            | lexicon                                   | p.4     |
| <i>MI</i>      | <i>Minimalist Inquiries</i>               | p.3 fn8 |
| MLC            | Minimal Link Condition                    | p.24    |
| MLIs           | modified lexical items                    | p.6     |
| NS             | narrow syntax                             | p.4     |
| OBJ            | object                                    | p.23    |
| OCC            | $\alpha$ is an occurrence of some $\beta$ | p.11    |
| OS             | Object-Shift                              | p.14    |
| P              | probe                                     | p.12    |
| PH             | phase                                     | p.5     |
| PIC            | Phase Impenetrability Condition           | p.5     |
| PLD            | primary linguistic data                   | p.1     |
| REL            | relative clause                           | p.20    |
| S <sub>0</sub> | initial state                             | p.1     |
| SIMPL          | simple                                    | p.19    |
| SM             | sensorimotor system                       | p.3     |
| SMT            | strong minimalist thesis                  | p.3     |
| S-O            | Spell-Out                                 | p.5     |
| UG             | Universal Grammar                         | p.1     |

## References

- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. Categories and transformation. In *The Minimalist Program*, 219-394. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press. (=MP)
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