History of Syntax

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History of Syntax

• Grammars and grammaticality
• *Syntactic Structures* and the Standard Theory
• Uniformity
• EST and REST
• GB and PPT
• The Minimalist Program
• Some critical branch points
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- Grammars and grammaticality
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• A central assumption of MGG (and other theories) is that a language is a set of strings of words and morphemes that meet a set of well-formedness conditions, expressible as RULES.
• These rules constitute the grammar of the language, and are part of the native speaker’s linguistic knowledge.
• One task of the linguist is to formulate and test hypotheses about what the rules of a language are, that is, to determine what the grammar is. The linguist’s hypothesis and the native speaker’s knowledge are both called the GRAMMAR.
• The evidence for a child learning a language consists minimally of examples of expressions of the language produced in context.
• On the basis of this evidence the learner ultimately arrives at a grammar.
• The grammar then provides the basis for the adult speaker to produce and understand utterances of the language.
The descriptive problem for the linguist is to correctly determine the form and content of the speaker’s grammar. Since *Aspects* (Chomsky 1965) it has been assumed in MGG that the grammar is only imperfectly reflected in what a speaker actually says.
• Absent from the CORPUS of utterances is a vast (in fact infinite) amount of data that the speaker could produce, but hasn’t produced, and could comprehend if exposed to it.

• It contains a substantial number of utterances that are not grammatical because they contain errors such as slips of the tongue, or are incomplete.

• Moreover, regular properties of the corpus such as the relative frequency of various expressions and constructions may not be relevant to the grammar itself (in either sense), but to social and cognitive effects on the way in which the language defined by the grammar is used.
• The classical approach to discovery of the grammar has been to take the judgments of a native speaker about the acceptability of an expression to be a reflection of the native speaker’s knowledge, that is, the grammar. In simple cases such an approach is very reliable. For instance, if we misorder the words of a sentence of a language such as English, the judgment of unacceptability is very strong, and reflects the grammatical knowledge of what the order should be (on the assumption that the proper order of constituents is the province of the grammar).
• E.g., (1b) is ungrammatical because the article *the* follows rather than precedes the head of its phrase.

(1) a. The police arrested Sandy.
b. *Police the arrested Sandy.
Other cases plausibly are not a matter of grammar. For instance, consider the sentences in (2).

(2)  
  a. Sandy divulged the answer, but I would never do it.
  b. *Sandy knew the answer, but I would never do it.

Intuitively, the difference between the two sentences is that *do it* can refer only to an action, *divulge* denotes an action, while *know* does not.

Since (2b) is ill-formed for semantic reasons, the burden of explanation can be borne by the semantics.
The distinction between grammaticality and acceptability was highlighted by Miller and Chomsky, 1963, who observed that a sentence can be well-formed in the sense that it follows the rules of linear ordering and morphological form, but is nevertheless unacceptable.

Canonical cases involve center embedding (3).

(3) The patient that the doctor that the nurse called examined recovered.

The unacceptability of center embedding has been generally attributed to processing complexity, and not to grammar (Gibson, 1998; Lewis, 1997).
The distinction between grammaticality and acceptability has not played a significant role in syntactic theorizing until recently, primarily because of the unavailability of theories of the mechanisms (e.g. processing) other than syntax itself that could explain the judgments.

The theoretical developments traced below are primarily anchored in the assumption that acceptability that cannot be attributed to semantics or pragmatics reflects properties of the grammar itself.
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Constituent structure

• In SS, syntax is understood to be the theory of the structure of sentences in a language.
• This view has its direct antecedents in the theory of immediate constituents (IC), in which the function of syntax is to mediate between the observed form of a sentence and its meaning: “we could not understand the form of a language if we merely reduced all the complex forms to their ultimate constituents” (Bloomfield, 1933:161).
• Bloomfield argued that in order to account for the meaning of a sentence, it is necessary to recognize how individual constituents (e.g. words and morphemes), constitute more complex forms, which themselves constitute more complex forms.
Constituent structure

- The application of such rules defines the IC structure of the sentence, e.g.,

(5)}
Transformations

• The fundamental innovation of SS was to combine IC analysis with Harris’ observation (e.g. Harris, 1951) that sentences with (more or less) the same words and meaning are systematically related.

• For example, the active and the passive, exemplified in (6), are essentially synonymous and differ only by the arrangement of the words and a few individual forms (be, the inflection on the main verb, by).

(6) a. The police arrested the students.
    b. The students were arrested by the police.

• For Harris, such relationships were captured through TRANSFORMATIONS of strings of words and morphemes.
Transformations

• In SS, such relationships among sentences are captured in terms of transformations of STRUCTURES.
• The passive transformation in SS, shown in (7), maps the structure of the active (e.g. (5)) into the structure of the passive.
• The object of the active, NP₂, occupies the subject position of the passive, and the subject of the active, NP₁, becomes the complement of the preposition by.
• A form of the verb be is inserted with the passive morpheme +en. A subsequent transformation attaches en to the verb.

(7)  \((\text{NP}_1) \ V \ \text{NP}_2 \Rightarrow \text{NP}_2 \ \text{be}+\text{en} \ V \ (\text{by} \ \text{NP}_1)\)
Transformations

• Chomsky notes in SS that the passive construction has distinctive properties:
  – the passive participle goes with *be*,
  – a transitive passive verb lacks a direct object,
  – the agentive *by*-phrase may appear in the passive but not in the active,
  – the exact semantic restrictions imposed on the object of the active are imposed on the subject of the passive,
  – and the semantic restrictions on the subject of the active are imposed on the *by*-phrase.
Transformations

• The passive could be described independently of the active, but such a description would be redundant and would not explicitly capture the relationship between the two constructions.

• Chomsky concludes (p. 43), “This inelegant duplication, as well as the special restrictions involving the element be+en, can be avoided ONLY [my emphasis – PWC] if we deliberately exclude passives from the grammar of phrase structure, and reintroduce them by a rule … .”
Transformations

• Much of MGG and alternatives follow from responses to this conclusion.
• Deriving the passive from the active by a RULE captures not only their synonymy, but also the distributional facts.
• Thus, Chomsky argued, phrase structure is not sufficient to characterize linguistic competence.
• A phrase structure characterization of the phenomena can capture the facts, but at the expense of generality and simplicity, as in the case of the English passive.
Transformations

• More complex sentences were derived in SS by the application of GENERALIZED TRANSFORMATIONS that applied to multiple simple sentences, as in (8).

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{the police arrested the students} \\
\text{the students were protesting}
\end{bmatrix}
\implies
\text{The police arrested the students who were protesting.}
\]
The shift to ST

- The shift from the SS theory to ST in Chomsky 1965 was marked by three innovations:
  - (i) since any order of application of the same rewrite rules produces the same structure, it is assumed in ST that phrase structure rules such as (4a-c) specify a set of rooted trees as in (5) (Lasnik and Kupin, 1977);
  - (ii) since the full expressive power of generalized transformations is not needed, it was assumed in ST that complex structures also fall under phrase structure component (referred to as the BASE COMPONENT), extended to allow for recursion, as in (9);

(9) \[ S \rightarrow NP \ VP \]
\[ VP \rightarrow V \ NP \]
\[ NP \rightarrow Art \ N \]
\[ NP \rightarrow Art \ N \ S \]
The shift to ST

– (iii) instead of rewrite rules, it was assumed that there is a LEXICON that specifies the properties of individual lexical items.

– A lexical item is inserted into a structure that is compatible with its properties, e.g. a transitive verb is inserted into a structure like (5) only if there is an NP in VP.
Levels of representation in ST

• Chomsky 1965 proposed that there are two levels of syntactic representation of a sentence, DEEP STRUCTURE and SURFACE STRUCTURE, related by sets of transformations.

• The meaning of a sentence, in particular the assignment of THEMATIC (θ) ROLES (e.g. Agent, Patient) to the arguments, is determined by deep structure, while surface structure corresponds to the observed form, including linear order (now called PHONETIC FORM (PF)).
Constraining movement

• A central consequence of the hypothesis that there are at least two transformationally related levels of syntactic representation is that constituents move from their underlying positions to their observed positions in the structure.

• An example of movement is the derivation of the passive construction, in which the deep object moves to subject in surface structure.
Constraining movement

- Another is the movement of the English inflected auxiliary in subject Aux inversion (SAI) in (10b),

(10)  a.  Sandy will call.
    b.  Will Sandy ___ call.
Constraining movement

• Yet another example is seen in English wh-questions, where the interrogative phrase appears in a position distinct from the position that determines its syntactic and semantic function in the sentence (marked in (11) with underscore).

(11) What are you looking at ___?
Constraining movement

- The question then arose, What kinds of movements are possible – how can they be constrained?
- Emonds, 1970 observed that the passive transformation yields a structure that conforms to the general pattern of the language.
- Emonds proposed that all transformations except those like SAI that apply to the highest level of the structure (the **ROOT**) are necessarily **STRUCTURE PRESERVING**.
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• English wh-questions such as (11) exemplify a class of FILLER-GAP or A’ CONSTRUCTIONS in natural language.

• The wh-phrase is in an A’ position, that is, a position where its syntactic or semantic function is not determined.

• A’ positions contrast with A positions such as subject and direct object.
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• The contemporary analysis of A’ constructions in MGG posits a CHAIN that links the constituent in A’ position to a gap in the A position that defines its grammatical and semantic function.

• In what follows, the gap is marked with $t$ co-subscripted with the constituent in A’ position. Thus (11) is represented as $\text{What}_i \ are \ you \ looking \ at \ t_i$. 
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• A distinctive characteristic of such constructions in languages like English is that there is no principled bound on the length of the chain. The wh-phrase may be linked to a gap in the complement, as in (12a), or in a more distant complement, as in (12b).

(12)  a.  Who_i did you say [S you were looking at t_i]
   b.  Who_i did you say [S everyone thinks … [S you were looking at t_i]]

• The chain containing who_i and t_i is thus called a LONG DISTANCE DEPENDENCY (LDD).
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

- The broad theoretical significance for syntactic theory of LLDs was recognized as early as Chomsky, 1964. He observed that extraction of a wh-phrase from certain syntactic contexts is less than fully acceptable. Chomsky showed that while (13) is ambiguous, extraction of an NP corresponding to the boy as in (14) disambiguates – walking to the railroad station cannot be understood as a reduced relative modifying the boy.

(13) Mary saw the boy walking to the railroad station.
(14) Who did Mary see walking to the railroad station?
   a. ‘Who did Mary see while she was walking to the railroad station?’
   b. Not: ‘Who did Mary see who was walking to the railroad station?’
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

- Chomsky concluded that extraction of who must be constrained in the structure (15).

(15) Mary saw [NP [NP who ] [S walking to the railroad station ] ]
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• Chomsky’s characterization of the configuration blocking extraction in (15) is that a phrase of category NP dominates another phrase of category NP, and the violation results from the extraction of the lower NP.

• He proposed “a hypothetical linguistic universal”, subsequently referred to by Ross, 1967:13 as the A-OVER-A PRINCIPLE (16).

(16) If [a] phrase X of category A is embedded within a larger phrase ZXW which is also of category A, then no rule applying to the category A applies to X (but only to ZXW).
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• Ross (1967) showed that the A-over-A principle does not account for the full range of restrictions on A’ extractions in English.

• The configurations that inhibit extraction are called ISLANDS, and they are ruled out in MGG by ISLAND CONSTRAINTS.

• The reason why these must be expressed as constraints on rules (and not as rules of grammar themselves) is that the unacceptable examples are otherwise well-formed.
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

- For example, in a violation of the **Complex NP Constraint**, as in (17b), the form of the relative clause is not problematic, since the relative pronoun is in the proper position. The problem is configuration of the chain.

(17)  

a. The police arrested the protesters who surrounded Sandy.

b. *The person [**who**, the police arrested [NP the protesters [S who surrounded **t**]]] was Sandy.

- Moreover, the island constraints are arguably universal, and are thus not conditions on particular transformations.
Long distance dependencies and island constraints

• Then the question arises how this knowledge could become part of a learner’s grammar.

• Assuming that learners form grammars on the basis of the utterances they actually experience, it does not appear that there could be evidence that (17b) is ungrammatical, because it is well-formed from the perspective of structure (and rarely if ever produced).

• On the basis of such considerations, Chomsky (1965; 1973; 1981) argued that there are SYNTACTIC UNIVERSALS that constitute the human capacity for language.

• This is the ARGUMENT FROM THE POVERTY OF THE STIMULUS (APS)
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Interface uniformity

- INTERFACE UNIFORMITY (IU) is the assumption that sentences with the same meaning share a syntactic representation.
- If meaning is determined by deep structure, as in ST, sentences with the same meaning have the same deep structure representation.
- For example, the active and the passive are derived from the same representation, and the passive transformation does not affect their meaning.
- This point was generalized in MGG to the assumption that transformations in general do not add or change meaning (the Katz-Postal Hypothesis, Katz and Postal, 1964).
Interface uniformity

• Broad application of IU in the form of the Katz-Postal Hypothesis in the 1960s and early 1970s led to the emergence of Generative Semantics (GS).

• Consistent with ST, GS assumed two levels of syntactic representation, DS and SS.

• From the assumption that transformations do not change meaning, it follows that all meaning is determined at DS.

• Without a syntactic level of LF, GS assumed that DS was equivalent to the meaning.
Interface uniformity

• The decline of GS by the mid-1970s was propelled by a number of factors, most notably a failure to properly distinguish between genuinely syntactic and non-syntactic phenomena.

• All cases of unacceptability were taken to be a matter of grammar, regardless of the source (Katz and Bever, 1976).

• Failure to distinguish in the theory among syntactic ill-formedness, semantic anomaly, presupposition failure, pragmatic infelicity, and so on, made it impossible to construct an explanatory account.
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Structural uniformity

• STRUCTURAL UNIFORMITY (SU) requires that if two constituents in two different sentences have the same grammatical function, then they have the same underlying representation.
• The canonical application of SU is to wh-questions as found in English (18a) and similar A’ constructions, such as topicalization (18b) and relative clauses (18c).

(18)  
  a. Who_i did the police arrest t_i?  
  b. Sandy_i, the police finally arrested t_i!  
  c. I was introduced to the person who_i the police arrested t_i.
Structural uniformity

- Crucially, the filler has the same grammatical function as it (or a similar constituent) would have if it was in the position marked by the gap.
- SU thus REQUIRES that the filler occupy this position in deep structure.
- Classical MGG derivations apply MOVEMENT to map such a structure into one in which the filler is in the A’ position, forming a chain, as shown in (19).

(19) \([\text{the police finally arrested } Sandy_i\] \implies Sandy_i [\text{the police finally arrested } t_i]\)
**Derivational uniformity**

- Assuming that at least some structures are derived by transformations, sameness of structure is captured by assuming DERIVATIONAL UNIFORMITY (DU). A typical case is sluicing, exemplified in (20).

(20) The police arrested someone, but I don’t know who.
- The second clause means ‘but I don’t know who the police arrested’.
- By IU, the two questions must have the same syntactic representation.
- By DU, since the full question has wh-movement (an MGG assumption), so must the sluiced case.
- So the derivation of (20) involves at least wh-movement of who and deletion of the police arrested.
- Similar reasoning is applied in the analysis of a variety of ELLIPTICAL constructions – see Culicover and Jackendoff, 2005; 2012 for discussion.
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• EST and REST are characterized by
  – the recognition that some aspects of meaning are determined by derived structure (Jackendoff, 1972),
  – the introduction of the level of representation of LOGICAL FORM (LF),
  – placing the burden of constraining the output of a transformation on general principles rather than the description of the transformation,
  – constraining phrase structure through the X′ schema, and the introduction of TRACES.
S-structure and LF

• In REST, deep and surface structure are renamed D- and S-STRUCTURE. D-structure determines the thematic component of interpretation, through the assignment of $\theta$ roles to arguments in their underlying canonical position. LF is the representation of the logical properties of a sentence that depend on its syntactic structure – it is determined by transformations that apply to S-structure (May, 1985).
S-structure and LF

• For example, scope ambiguities such as (21) are derived by applying movement to the quantifier phrases to yield different hierarchical LF structures, as shown in (22).

• The traces $t$ in (22) mark the canonical positions of the extracted arguments.

(21) Everyone speaks two languages.
  a. ‘There are two languages that everyone speaks’ [wide scope of two languages]
  b. ‘Everyone is bilingual’ [narrow scope of two languages]

(22) a. [two languages]$_j$ [$_S$ everyone$_i$ speaks $t_j$]
    b. [everyone]$_i$ [$_S$ $t_i$ speaks [two languages]$_j$]

• In GS the structures in (22) were taken to be the DS representations of sentence (21), which was derived by transformation (in this case, lowering of the quantifier phrase).
S-structure and LF

- Characteristic of EST/REST is the T-MODEL of derivation in (23).
Move $\alpha$

- A transformation in ST was constrained by conditions stated in its formal description.
- Chomsky, 1972 took a major step in shifting the burden of constraining transformations to general principles, by decomposing the passive into simpler movement operations that otherwise apply freely.
Move $\alpha$

- Central to this step was the analysis of English nominalization.
- It was assumed since Lees, 1960 that nominalizations such as (24a) should be derived from sentences (24b) on the basis of IU.
- The $\theta$ roles are essentially the same: *the enemy* is the Agent, and *the city* is the Patient.

(24)  
(a) the enemy’s destruction of the city  
(b) The enemy destroyed the city.
Move $\alpha$

- Applying DU, Lakoff, 1965 argued that the nominalization transformation should apply to the output of passive, on the basis of examples such as (25a,b).

  (25)  
  a. the city’s destruction by the enemy  
  b. The city was destroyed by the enemy.

- However, Chomsky showed that passive can be decomposed into a structure preserving movement of the object to the subject position in both S’s and NPs, satisfying SU.
Move $\alpha$

- (26) illustrates. ($[_{NP} e]$ denotes an empty NP position.)

(26) a. $[_{NP} e]$ destruction (of) the city (by the enemy)
   $\implies$ [the city] *(’s) destruction (*of) (by the enemy)

b. $[_{NP} e]$ (be) destroyed (*of) the city (by the enemy)
   $\implies$ [the city] (be) destroyed (*of) (by the enemy)
**Move $\alpha$**

- This analysis obviates the need for a nominalization transformation – the verb and its nominalization are related lexical items.
- But more importantly, on this analysis the transformations do not need to be stated in terms of the properties of the syntactic structures to which they apply.
- Crucially, the only structural condition that the movement in (26), called Move $\alpha$, must satisfy is that it is structure preserving, a general principle.
X’ theory

• Virtually all syntactic theorizing has proceeded from the assumption that languages have words, that a word is a member of at least one LEXICAL CATEGORY, and that at least some PHRASES are projections of lexical categories (the HEADS) and acquire their categories from them.

• Applying SU, MGG generalized in the observed relationship between the structure of S and the structure of NP.

• The result was X’ theory (Chomsky, 1972; Jackendoff, 1977).
X’ theory

- In the strongest form of X’ theory, every phrase of every category in every language has the structure in (27).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Spec} & \quad \text{XP} \\
\text{X}^0 & \quad \text{X’} \\
& \quad \text{Comp}
\end{align*}
\]
**X’ theory**

- $X^0$ is the **HEAD** of the phrase, Spec is the **SPECIFIER**, and Comp is the **COMPLEMENT**.
- Both Spec and Comp may be empty, or may consist of more than one constituent, depending on the selectional properties of the head.

![Diagram](image-url)
X' theory

• X' theory makes it possible to formulate a more uniform and constrained account of movement, on the assumption that all movement is structure preserving.

• Extending this view to wh-questions and inversion means that a landing site has to be found for the wh-phrase and for the inflected auxiliary.

• The wh-phrase must move to an available phrasal position, while the inflected auxiliary must move to an available head position.

• Chomsky 1981 proposed that the finite inflection (INFL=I') is the head of S (the projection is called IP) and the complementizer C' is the head of CP.
X’ theory

• The structure is given by the phrase structure rules in (28)-(29).

(28) \( IP \rightarrow \text{Spec } I' \)
    \[ I' \rightarrow I^0 \text{ VP} \]
(29) \( CP \rightarrow \text{Spec } C' \)
    \[ C' \rightarrow C^0 \text{ IP} \]
X’ theory

- The wh-phrase moves to the specifier of C⁰ and I⁰ moves to C⁰ in SAI; both movements are structure preserving.

\[
(30) \quad [\text{CP} \ [\text{SPEC} \ e] \ C^0 \ [\text{IP} \ \text{NP} \ I_0^j \ \ldots \ \text{wh-XP}_i \ \ldots]] \\
\implies \\
[\text{CP} \ [\text{SPEC} \ \text{wh-XP}_i] \ I_0^j \ [\text{IP} \ \text{NP} \ t_j \ \ldots \ t_i \ \ldots]]
\]
Traces

• Wasow, 1972; 1979 proposed traces as a way to solve a puzzling binding fact noted by Postal, 1971.

(31)  
a. *He$_i$ thinks that Mary loves John$_i$.

b. *Who$_i$ does he$_i$ think that Mary loves $t_i$?

• The copy of who$_i$ and John$_i$ bear the same syntactic relationship to he$_i$.

• Wasow showed that (31b) can be ruled out by the same principle as (31a) if movement leaves a trace that is coindexed with the moved constituent.
Traces

• Traces were ultimately extended in REST and GB to all movements, so that the underlying structure is reflected in the derived structure.

• With traces, or more generally, gaps linked to extracted elements, it then becomes possible to interpret sentences fully on the basis of surface structure.

• This fact played a central role in the development of non-movement accounts of A’ constructions as early as Brame, 1978 and Koster, 1978, and was later given a comprehensive formal development in HPSG and LFG.
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• The shift to GB and PPT is characterized by the modularization of syntactic theory and by the introduction of the core-periphery distinction.
Modularity

- MODULARITY is the idea that there are distinct components of the grammar, each of which obeys its own principles. Among the main components are: (i) X’ theory, θ theory, Case theory, binding theory, bounding theory, control theory and government theory.
Modularity

- **θ THEORY** concerns the correspondence between syntactic structure and the θ roles governed by a head.
- **CASE THEORY** regulates the movement of arguments to positions where they can be assigned case.
- **BINDING THEORY** concerns the syntactic relationships between referentially dependent elements (such as pronouns) and their antecedents.
- **BOUNDING THEORY** is a reformulation of the island constraints.
- **CONTROL THEORY** concerns the interpretation of verbal complements lacking overt subjects.
- **GOVERNMENT THEORY** regulates the functions of these component, e.g. θ roles are assigned by a governor, Case is assigned by a governor, bounding constrains what a governor may govern, and the binding relation is constrained within a syntactic domain specified by a governor.
Core-periphery

• The core-periphery distinction holds that all languages share a common CORE GRAMMAR which is uniform up to parametric variation (e.g. in the relative order of head and complement).
Extensions of X’ theory

• Lack of time precludes a review in detail of the main features of each of the components of GB theory, which are complex in their own right and in their interactions.

• Many of these grew out of earlier proposals.

• To take just one case, Pollock, 1989, in a very influential article, observed that English and French differ systematically in a number of respects, most notably that:
Extensions of X’ theory

• the constituent that undergoes inversion in English questions must be a tensed auxiliary verb, while in French it may be a tensed main verb;

(32)  a. English: He will go ⇒ Will he go?; He goes ⇒ Does he go?/*Goes he?

b. French: il va ⇒ va-t-il

   he goes   goes-t-he

   ‘Does he go?’
Extensions of X’ theory

• *not* in English follows an auxiliary verb, while in French negative *pas* follows a tensed main verb;

(33)  a. English: He will not go. *He goes not.

b. French: Il (ne) va pas.

‘He doesn’t go.’
Extensions of X’ theory

- adverbs in French immediately follow a tensed transitive main verb, while in English they follow the VP, not the verb.

(34)  a. English: John (often) kisses (*often) Mary.

        John    often       kisses       often

             Mary

        (34)  b. French: Jean (*souvent) embrasse (souvent) Marie.

        Jean    often       kisses       often

             Marie
Extensions of X’ theory

• Pollock proposed that the main difference between English and French, then, is that in English, only auxiliary verbs attach to I⁰, while in French main verbs do as well.
Extensions of X’ theory

• Analysis of additional details of verb-adverb ordering led Pollock to propose an ‘exploded’ Infl, in which each feature is associated with a different head (AgrS, AgrO, and T(ense)).
• Extending Pollock’s analysis (again following DU), Chomsky, 1991; 1993 proposed that all movements to Spec positions are motivated by FEATURE CHECKING.
Extensions of $X'$ theory

- A feature on a head is CHECKED or DISCHARGED if there is a constituent in its Spec that agrees with it, as in (35).
- If a feature is not checked, the resulting derivation is ill-formed.

(35)
Extensions of X’ theory

• For example, in English a wh-phrase moves to Spec,CP in order to discharge the feature [WH] on C0.

\[(36) \ [_{CP} \ [_{SPEC} \ e] \ C^0[WH] \ [_{IP} \ NP \ I^0 \ \ldots \ \ XP[WH]_i \ \ldots ]] \implies \]
\[ [_{CP} \ [_{SPEC} \ XP[WH]_i] \ C^0[WH] \ [_{IP} \ NP \ I^0 \ \ldots \ t_i \ \ldots ]] \]
Extensions of X’ theory

• Abney, 1987 extended the application of functional categories to the NP and the parallelism with IP, arguing that $N^0$ is head of NP and the determiner is head of DP (37). DP is currently the standard notation in MGG for what was called NP in ST and EST.

(37)

• Abney also proposed that a possessive DP originates in Spec,NP and moves to Spec,DP to discharge a feature of $D^0$. This assumption allows all of the $\theta$ roles of $N^0$ to be assigned within its maximal projection NP.
Extensions of X' theory

- Extending this analysis to the sentence means that the subject DP originates as Spec,VP and moves to Spec,IP (see (38)).

(38)
Extensions of X’ theory

• This is the VP INTERNAL SUBJECT HYPOTHESIS. McCloskey, 1997 argues that there is evidence for the internal subject positions predicted by the exploded Infl of Pollock, Chomsky and others, as shown in (39).

(39)
Extensions of X’ theory

- Applying DU, the exploded Infl/feature checking analysis was extended in GB to the derivation of the passive.
- AgrS was assumed to be associated with a CASE FEATURE (as is AgrO in the transitive sentence).
- In the passive, the Case feature on the direct object is discharged if the direct object moves to Spec,AgrS.
Binding and movement

• A major innovation in GB was to propose a tight interaction between binding and movement.

• Chomsky, 1980 proposed that the distribution of referentially dependent elements such as pronouns and anaphors (such as reflexives and reciprocals) is governed by principles that have essentially the following content.
Binding and movement

• Assume that coindexing of two expressions in the syntactic representation marks the coreference.

• Assume also that a constituent $\alpha$ BINDS a constituent $\beta$ if $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are coindexed and $\alpha$ C-COMMANDS $\beta$ (i.e. if the constituent immediately dominating $\alpha$ dominates $\beta$).

• Then these principles hold:
  - (A) a reflexive must be locally bound,
  - (B) a pronoun cannot be locally bound,
  - (C) a pronoun cannot bind its antecedent.

• Locality here is defined in terms of X’ theory – it is essentially the XP headed by a governor, with some extensions.
Binding and movement

- Constraining A movements was reconceived in GB in terms of conditions on the distribution of the trace in terms of binding theory.
- A movements are local, as is the binding of anaphors, suggesting that the trace of A movement is an anaphor.
- Non-local A movement violates Principle A of the binding theory since it is not locally bound.
Control

• An important consequence of Uniformity is that it motivates abstract invisible constituents, which were introduced in REST and extended in GB/PPT.

• For example, the two sentences in (40) are synonymous.

(40) a. Susan \textsubscript{i} expects [S that she\textsubscript{i} will win].
   b. Susan expects to win.
Control

• If she is coreferential with Susan (marked with coindexing), and she bears the semantic role of Winner, IU and SU lead to the conclusion that the structure of (40b) is (41), where PRO is an invisible pronominal (Chomsky 1981).

(41) Susan$_i$ expects [$_S$ PRO$_i$ to win].
Control

- Control theory is concerned with the distribution of PRO.
- Case theory plays a role in accounting for this distribution – PRO cannot be Case-marked.
- Government theory determines Case assignment – Case is assigned to a constituent that is governed.
- Hence PRO cannot be governed.
Antisymmetry

- In MGG, from SS onward, linear order is represented explicitly in the PSRs.
- An influential proposal at the end of the GB/PPT era is antisymmetry theory, due to Kayne, 1994.
- Kayne proposed to remove observed linear order as a grammatical primitive and to treat it as dependent on configuration.
- On Kayne’s proposal, linear order is determined by the structure in (27) and the Linear Correspondence Axiom (42).
Antisymmetry

(42) Linear Correspondence Axiom
Let X, Y be non-terminals, and x, y terminals such that X dominates x and Y dominates y. Then if X asymmetrically c-commands Y, x precedes y.
(Kayne 1994: 33)
Antisymmetry

(43) C-Command
X c-commands Y iff X and Y are categories and X excludes Y and every category that dominates X dominates Y. (Kayne 1994: 16)

Asymmetric C-Command
X asymmetrically c-commands Y iff X c-commands Y and Y does not c-command X. (Kayne 1994: 4)
Antisymmetry

• It follows from the LCA that underlying syntactic structure is uniformly binary branching and branches in the same direction (to the right, by stipulating ‘precedes’ in (42)).

• Multiple branching precludes antisymmetry, and lack of antisymmetry results in no linear order by the LCA.
Antisymmetry

- E.g.,

\[(44)\]

- Since YP, ZP and WP c-command one another, there is no asymmetric c-command.
- Then there is no linear ordering defined between y, z and w.
- Hence XP is an impossible structure (according to the LCA).
Antisymmetry

• Since observed linear order is often not of the form Spec-\(X^0\)-Comp, the LCA forces an account of many orders in terms of movement.

• For instance, in a verb final language such as Japanese all complements and adjuncts of V must follow V and move to the left.

• On the additional assumption that all phrasal movement is structure preserving, there must be Spec landing sites for all leftward movements.
Antisymmetry

• Moreover, there must be syntactic features on functional heads that guarantee derivation of the overt order, by feature checking.

• A typical derivation is given in (45). The derived order NP-V-I\(^0\)-C\(^0\) is that found in Japanese.

• Moving IP to Spec,CP correctly blocks wh-movement, which does not occur in Japanese and similar V-final languages.
Antisymmetry

(45)

[Diagram with symbols and arrows representing a tree structure in syntax.]
History of Syntax

• Grammars and grammaticality
• *Syntactic Structures* and the Standard Theory
• Uniformity
• EST and REST
• GB and PPT
• The Minimalist Program
• Some critical branch points
The Minimalist Program

- Chomsky’s goal in the Minimalist Program (MP) is
  - to reduce GB/PPT as much as possible to general principles of economy,
  - to reduce derivations to their most primitive components,
  - and to eliminate as much as possible the many formal devices that had developed around the MGG approach (as summarized in the preceding sections).
The Minimalist Program

• For instance, phrase structure rules were eliminated in favor of a primitive MERGE operation that combines two objects (words or phrases) into a new object.

• The properties of lexical items constrain the outputs of this operation, feature checking plays a major role in filtering out illegitimate derivations, there are no distinct levels of syntactic representation such as D- and S-structure, no government relation and no indices in syntactic representations.
The Minimalist Program

• There are no island constraints in MP; rather, movement is constrained by DERIVATIONAL ECONOMY: each movement operation, or the length of each operation, or both, contributes to the complexity of a derivation (Chomsky, 1995; Zwart, 1996).

• Certain derivations can then be ruled out (in principle, at least) on the grounds that they are preempted by less complex derivations (see Johnson and Lappin, 1997; 1999 for a critique).
The Minimalist Program

• Note that the Merge operation resembles how structures are generated in HPSG. In HPSG, heads have valence features that specify how they combine with phrases to form more complex structures.
The Minimalist Program

- A transitive verb like *arrest* has two such features, SUBJ and COMPS, as shown in (46).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{arrest} \\
\text{SUBJ \ [1]} \\
\text{COMPS \ [2]}
\end{array}
\]

- The phrase that satisfies the COMPS is the direct object, which corresponds to Patient, and the one that satisfies the SUBJ feature is the subject, which corresponds to Agent.
The Minimalist Program

- Construction of the phrase structure in English produces the configuration in (47).

(47)
History of Syntax

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Grammatical functions

• From the beginning, MGG has taken the position that grammatical functions (GFs) such as subject and object are not primitives, but are defined in terms of “epistemologically prior” properties of utterances, e.g. linear precedence. (Chomsky, 1981:10).

• However, GFs are actually defined configurationally in MGG (Chomsky, 1965:71): subject (of S) is an NP immediately dominated by S, object (of VP) is an NP immediately dominated by VP, predicate (of S) is a VP immediately dominated by S, and so on.
Grammatical functions

• An important branch point in the development of syntactic theory is the assumption that the GFs are primitive.

• In LFG (Bresnan and Kaplan, 1982) there is a level of F(UNCTIONAL)-STRUCTURE that corresponds in systematic ways to C(ONSTITUENT)-STRUCTURE.

• In a language such as English, the subject function corresponds to the configuration ‘NP immediately dominated by S’, while in a case-marking language such as Russian it corresponds to ‘NP marked with NOMINATIVE case’.
Grammatical functions

- Subsequent theoretical developments hinge crucially on how GFs are managed. Recall the decomposition in MGG of the derivation of the passive construction into Move $\alpha$ (see (26)).

- The restriction of syntactic representation in MGG to configurations raises the question of why certain configurations participate in certain derivations while others do not.
Grammatical functions

- Abstract Case is an invisible diacritic that distinguishes the syntactic arguments; it can be used as a way of encoding these arguments without explicit reference to their configuration or the GFs.
- Specifically, the passive verb is intransitive, hence it does not assign Case to its direct object (Baker et al., 1989).
- The subject, on the other hand, is assigned Case.
- The movement of the object to subject is then understood (in GB) as satisfying a requirement that the Case feature be assigned to an NP, or in later work, that it be checked before spelling out at PF.
Grammatical functions

• Non-transformational theories refer explicitly to GFs to characterize the relationship between active and passive.

• The MGG account accomplishes this result by assigning Patient to the object, and then moving it to subject position.

• But in a non-transformational, or LEXICALIST account, Patient is assigned directly to the subject in virtue of the verb being in the passive form.
Grammatical functions

• In LFG, for example, f-structure plays a direct role in the analysis of the passive.
• There is a lexical rule that derives the passive verb from the active form.
• This rule reassigns the correspondences between the GFs and the $\theta$ roles governed by the verb (Bresnan, 1982).
• The passive structure signals that the Agent role is not linked to the subject.
• Principles of mapping between syntactic structure and thematic representation then ensure that the Patient role is linked to the subject.
Grammatical functions

• In HPSG a similar lexical rule rearranges the valence features of a verb and the $\theta$ roles (Pollard and Sag, 1987).

• Passive sentences are straightforward realizations of the basic structure of the language, similar to cases where the predicate is adjectival; cf. (48).

(48)  

a. Sandy was $[\text{VP/AP arrested by the police}]$.

b. Sandy was $[\text{AP asleep at the wheel}]$.

• There is a lexical rule that remaps the roles to the syntactic arguments when the verb is passive. The rule applies generally to all verbs.
Grammatical functions

• Similar devices are found in other approaches, including GPSG (Gazdar et al., 1985, Relational Grammar (Perlmutter and Postal, 1983, and Simpler Syntax (Culicover and Jackendoff 2005). The crucial mediating factor in such accounts is the lexicon, where the $\theta$ roles are associated with individual lexical items (Gruber, 1972; Jackendoff, 1972; 1983; 1990.
Grammatical functions

• In Simpler Syntax (Culicover and Jackendoff, 2005) the Patient is linked to the object GF, which does not correspond to a syntactic constituent in the passive. It then corresponds by default to the subject GF.
Grammatical functions

- Relational Grammar (Blake, 1990; Perlmutter, 1983) takes the grammatical relations Subject, Direct Object, etc. to be syntactic primitives, rather than constituent structure.
- The structure is represented in terms of the assignment of grammatical relations to phrases, and constructions such as the passive are derived by reassigning the grammatical relations (e.g., underlying Subject is assigned to Direct Object, and underlying Object is assigned to an Oblique grammatical relation). Linear order is defined over the final stage (or STRATUM) of grammatical relation assignments.
Representations

• In Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997) the syntactic representation is expressed not in terms of the classical syntactic categories, but functional categories such as Clause, Referential Phrase, Predicate and so on.

• This shift is motivated in part by research on less well-studied languages, where it is less clear that the generalizations can be captured in terms of the classical syntactic categories.
Representations

- There are no transformations in RRG; rather, there are rules that map directly between syntactic structure and semantic representations.
- Semantic arguments are ordered in a hierarchy according to their semantic role (Actor, Undergoer, etc.) and mapped to syntactic positions. An illustration is given in (49) (from van Valin Jr., 2010:736).
Representations

• The PSA is the ‘privileged semantic argument’, in this case the Actor, that gets mapped to the preverbal position – there is no mention of syntactic structure or grammatical functions such as subject and object.
Representations

• Relaxing the assumption that phrase structure is a syntactic primitive leads to alternatives to MGG. In (HPSG; Pollard and Sag, 1994) phrase structure is implicit in the lexicon, immediate dominance (\textit{ID}) schemata and linear precedence (\textit{LP}) statements.

• A typical lexical entry (for the verb \textit{put}) is given in (50) (from Levine and Meurers, 2006).
Representations

(50)

\[
\text{word} \begin{cases} \text{PHON} \end{cases} \quad \begin{cases} <\text{put}> \end{cases} \quad \begin{cases} \text{HEAD} & \text{verb} \\
\text{AUX} & \quad - \\
\text{SUBJ} & \quad \langle \text{NP}_1 \rangle \\
\text{COMPS} & \quad \langle \text{NP}_2, \; \text{PP}_3 \rangle \end{cases}
\]

\begin{cases}
\text{CATEGORY} \\
\text{VALENCE} \\
\text{put-relation} \\
\text{PUTTER} & 1 \\
\text{THING-PUT} & 2 \\
\text{DESTINATION} & 3
\end{cases}
\]
Representations

• The features and the ID schema stipulate how to combine *put* with its complements (COMPS) and subject (SUBJ), and the semantic consequences. The structure emerges from this composition, as each VALENCE feature is satisfied by merging the current object with a phrase of a specified type according to the ID schemata.
Representations

• For example, *put* merges first with an NP, and the result is merged with a PP, to form the equivalent of a VP.
Representations

• Approaches other than MGG deal with sentential organization differently, but there are important overlaps.

• LFG’s C-STRUCTURE is essentially equivalent to classical REST S-structure, and lacks functional heads except those that correspond to overt morphological forms.
Representations

• In HPSG a phrase is a projection of its head, but there are no significant intermediate levels of syntactic representation, and no abstract functional heads – hence HPSG observes the VP internal subject hypothesis by default.

• There is feature checking, but the valence features in question correspond directly to observable syntactic properties of heads, e.g. SUBJ, COMPS, etc.
Representations

• Failure to saturate a valence feature means that it is passed up through the structure and must be satisfied at a later point in the derivation of the sentence, producing chains.

• The Valence Principle requires that the feature values of a phrase be identical to those of its head. For instance, if there is no direct object adjacent to the verb, then the valence feature is saturated by adjoining an NP to the left edge of the structure, which yields a ‘filler-gap’ construction.
Representations

• To the extent that comparable features are assumed in HPSG and MGG to license the arguments and their overt forms, the MGG approach can be seen to be a notational variant of the HPSG approach, differing only in that it has a more abstract structure, motivated through the application of DU.
Constructions

• MGG inherited the terminology CONSTRUCTION from traditional grammar; there is a ‘passive construction’, a ‘wh-interrogative construction’, and so on.

• By decomposing complex transformations such as the passive into the more primitive operation Move $\alpha$, MGG gradually adopted the position that constructions as such are artifacts.
Constructions

• At the same time, many syntacticians have continued to treat constructions as grammatical primitives.

• Such a view has been explicitly formalized in Construction Grammar (Kay, 2002), and has been widely adopted (see, e.g., Fillmore et al., 1988; Kay and Fillmore, 1999; Goldberg, 1995; 2006; Culicover and Jackendoff, 2005; Sag, to appear).
Constructions

• The central empirical point is that some (if not all) syntactic structures have aspects of meaning associated with them that cannot be explained strictly in terms of the meanings of their constituents. In order to capture this part of the form-meaning relation, the construction \textit{per se} must be part of the representation.
Explanation

• While the Argument from the Poverty of the Stimulus is widely accepted, there are alternative views about where this type of knowledge could come from in the absence of direct experience.

• Processing accounts observe that there are well-formed examples with the same structure as the unacceptable examples, and attribute the judgment of ill-formedness to processing complexity (typically characterized in terms of memory limitations) – see Hofmeister et al.; Hofmeister, 2011; Sag et al., 2007 and for a critique Phillips, to appear.
Explanation

• Fodor, 1978 and Hawkins, 2004 have argued that grammars evolve to incorporate constraints against computational complex structures.

• There are Bayesian approaches, which essentially argue that a structure can be judged unacceptable if there is an alternative structure that is significantly more likely, other things being equal (Pearl and Sprouse, in press).
Links

Please follow this link

http://www.ling.osu.edu/~culicove/Teaching/Svolvaer_2012

to get

• these slides,
• the draft on which they are based,
• and the references.