# ◼ GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

## Syntactic Locality at the Interfaces

The Principles and Parameters (P&P) approach to natural language takes core syntactic phenomena to be emergent from the interaction of general linguistic principles, and it models syntactic variation across languages in terms of parameters that regulate how those general principles are implemented in specific languages. Minimalism grew out of both the unprecedented descriptive and explanatory achievements and the perceptible explanatory limitations of the Government and Binding theory, the first full-fledged theory of syntax to be formulated in terms of the P&P approach. Minimalism is a research programme couched in the P&P framework, which, while keeping to the latter's key objectives, seeks to go beyond the attainment of descriptive and explanatory adequacy in two ways.

First, it sets the pursuit of theoretical simplicity and explanatory potential as a primary goal and a central guiding principle in syntactic explorations. This has led to the purging of many elementary objects and relations from within narrow syntax that were postulated earlier as part of its computations. Concurrently, a wide range of syntactic phenomena have been argued in the minimalist framework not to necessitate a syntax-internal account. They are analyzed instead as being attributable to independent interface requirements of the external systems of sound/gesture and meaning that are imposed on the output of syntax.

Second, the substantive thesis advanced by the minimalist programme is that natural language syntax is designed to relate the two syntax-external subsystems of language in an optimal way (the so-called Strong Minimalist Thesis, Chomsky 1995). The principal objective is to discover in what particular ways the design of syntax is optimal and to what extent syntactic phenomena can be deduced from this optimal design. A key manifestation of optimal design whose implications have been explored in great detail in the province of syntactic dependencies involving movement is the economical nature of grammatical computations.

The conjecture that syntactic computations are economical was in part motivated by Relativised Minimality. This "relativized" conception of locality holds that a movement operation cannot take place to a landing site across a type-identical element precisely because the element that would be crossed over is closer to the landing site: the movement of the closer element requires less computational resources. Minimalism has revised and improved on earlier formulations of Relativised Minimality in several ways. For one, since the minimalist framework takes syntactic features rather than words or phrases to be the primary targets of operations, Minimality too has been relativised to features (in the form of the Agree operation, Chomsky 2001), with considerable empirical benefit (Rizzi 2004).

Thus minimalist research has been highly selective in purging narrow syntax of formal features: in accord with its premises, features with interpretive potential that drive syntactic computations and/or implement economy are retained.

Another, "absolute" conception of locality existing alongside relativized intervention is also based on the minimalist assumption that the computational complexity of derivations is strictly limited. According to Chomsky's proposals, syntactic computations operate without substantial lookahead or lookback: they are confined to relatively narrow, local domains that have been termed "phases" (Chomsky 2001). Phases are emergent properties of the design of the grammar, namely, the cyclic manner in which the syntactic derivation is mapped to the interfaces. The chunks of structure that are mapped get transferred to the non-syntactic components, and are therefore are no longer available to syntactic computations, thereby optimally limiting potential computational complexity.

The papers that make up the first section of this issue form a thematic collection of current accounts of syntactic locality that share a common perspective. First, they all subscribe to the general minimalist view of syntax that has been briefly reviewed in the foregoing. Second, they approach the effects of local domains in syntax from the perspective of the interfaces, be it the semantic interface, the PF interface, or both. They bring together questions concerning the ways in which properties that are relevant primarily to the interface components manifest themselves in narrow syntax.

Lena Baunaz's paper titled *Wh-phrases in situ: Interface strategies* is an empirical study in the minimalist feature-relativised conception of minimality. It concerns the question which semantically interpretable properties enter syntactic computations of relativized local domains for movement dependencies, and whether these features also have manifestations at the PF interface. Exploring the locality properties of in situ *wh*-questions in French, Baunaz argues that what seem like a simple division between D-linked and non-D-linked *wh*-phrases in syntax (Pesetsky 1987) is actually a more refined distinction that factors D-linked operators into partitive and specific. Based on differences in their patterns of interaction as well as their behaviour in negative and scope islands, it is demonstrated that the interpretable property of partitivity and that of specificity are both syntactically active: they are part of the hierarchical feature complex that characterizes operators that enter operator movement dependencies in the grammar. Notably, partitive *wh*-dependencies are blocked both by partitive and by specific quantified phrases, while dependencies created by specific *wh*-phrases are blocked by specific quantified phrases only. Accordingly, Baunaz augments Starke's (2001) approach to the feature-geometry governing relativized locality in *wh*-movements by making "specific" a feature dependent on partitive, rather than a direct dependent of the feature Q. The distinction is further corroborated by data from the prosodic interface. It is shown that the property of partitivity and that of specificity are not only interpretable at the semantic interface: in French in situ *wh*-questions they have distinct tonal correlates.

Masanori Nakamura's paper *Null operators, ellipsis and scrambling* is an inquiry into the syntax–PF interface. It is a study of the ways in which the property of being null at the PF interface impacts the set of permissible syntactic

movement operations. The paper draws on Chomsky's notion of the phase, in particular, on the conception that the linearization of terminals at PF takes place cyclically at each phase level, which gives rise to a linearization-based model of locality (Fox & Pesetsky 2005). On the assumption that phonologically null elements do not take part in linearization at PF, it follows that phonologically covert movements of null operators should exhibit less stringent locality properties than phonologically overt movements (cf. Bošković 2007). Notably, a null operator movement does not need to proceed successive cyclically, stopping over at each phase edge. Nakamura shows that this enables us to capture the familiar observation that tough-movement cannot take place out of a tensed clause, on the assumption that null operators are nominals, whose movement is blocked by an intervening finite T(ense) head. The paper also explores another consequence of the cyclic linearization-based approach to locality. As linearization is strictly monotonic, a phase that has been linearized can undergo overt movement only if it is phonologically null: otherwise contradictory linearization instructions would be generated. Since the domains of phases correspond to ellipsis sites (Holmberg 2001), it follows that if a certain category can undergo ellipsis (and thus it corresponds to a phase domain), then it cannot undergo movement except when it is phonologically null. Since argument nominals can be elided in Japanese, an A-scrambled word order in OSV clauses cannot result from the overt movement of one argument nominal across another. Nakamura argues that this converges with Ueyama's (1998; 2003) null operator movement analysis of Japanese scrambling, and shows that this analysis, as opposed to its competitors, makes the correct prediction that A-scrambling is possible out of subjunctive clauses, headed by a defective T head that does not act as an intervener.

Cornilescu and Nicolae's contribution titled *Romanian adjectives at the syntax–semantics interface* explores the role of phases in the syntactic composition of noun phrases in Romanian, with particular attention to how the distribution and interpretation of different types of adjectives relate to phasal domains within the nominal phrase. It is argued that while post-nominal relative and qualifying adjectives are syntactically adjuncts, and they are interpreted via Predicate Modification, pre-nominal adjectives all occupy phase-peripheral specifier positions. The latter is detectable on the basis of the presence of quantificational (pragmatic, modal) features in the interpretation of pre-nominal adjectival modifiers (cf. Chomsky's 2001 P-feature). These adjectives are non-restrictive and they are interpreted via Functional Application. Within this class, a structurally high subclass of pre-nominal adjectives are object-level modifiers, linearly preceding a structurally lower subclass of adjectives, which are kind-level modifiers (corresponding to Larson and Marušic's 2004 syntactic distinction between the DP- and NP-adjectives). Based on this interpretive difference, which correlates with a structural difference, two types of peripheries are distinguished: the periphery of a lower $n^*$-phase and the periphery of a higher $d^*$-phase. Thus, Cornilescu and Nicolae's paper directly concerns the mapping of phasal domains within the nominal architecture, providing corroborating evidence that at least two phases must be delineated within the structure of the noun phrase.

# References

Bošković, Željko. 2007. On the locality and motivation of Move and Agree: An even more minimal theory. Linguistic Inquiry 38. 589–44.

Chomsky, Noam. 1995. The Minimalist Program. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by Phase. In M. Kenstowicz (ed.) Ken Hale: A life in language. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1–50.

Fox, Danny, and David Pesetsky. 2005. Cyclic linearization of syntactic structure. Theoretical Linguistics 31. 1–45.

Holmberg, Anders. 2001. The syntax of yes and no in Finnish. Studia Linguistica 55. 141–175.

Larson, Richard K. and Frank Marušič. 2004. Indefinite Pronoun Structures with APs. Linguistic Inquiry 35. 268–287.

Pesetsky, David. 1987. Wh-in-situ: Movement and unselective binding. In E. Reuland and A. ter Meulen (eds.) The representation of (in)definites. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 98–129.

Rizzi, Luigi. 2004. Locality and left periphery. In A. Belletti (ed.) Structures and beyond: Cartography of syntactic structures. Vol. 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 104–131.

Starke, Michal. 2001. Move dissolves into merge: A theory of locality. Doctoral dissertation. University of Geneva.

Ueyama, Ayumi. 1998. Two types of dependency. Doctoral dissertation. University of Southern California.

Ueyama, Ayumi. 2003. Two scrambling constructions in Japanese. In A. Barss (ed.) Anaphora: A reference guide. Malden, MA & Oxford: Blackwell. 23–71.

**Balázs Surányi**