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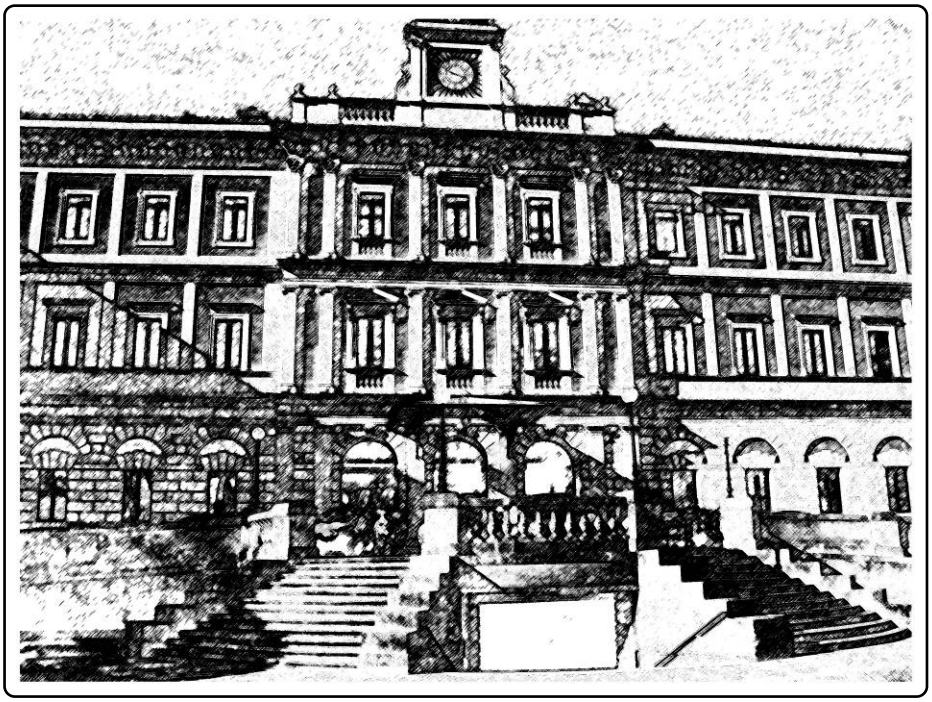

CENTRO **I**NTERDIPARTIMENTALE DI **S**TUDI **C**OGNITIVI SUL **L**INGUAGGIO
Interdepartmental Centre of Cognitive Studies on Language
Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia

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Foreword

Ever since its foundation in 1999, CISCL (Centro Interdipartimentale di Studi Cognitivi sul Linguaggio) has offered a research environment for the linguists of the University of Siena, for visiting professors and scholars, for local and visiting doctoral students. The main research directions which have been pursued concern various aspects of the study of language as a cognitive capacity: theoretical and comparative syntax, the interfaces with semantics and phonology, computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, the study of first and second language acquisition, the study of language pathologies. A unifying dimension underlying this variety of topics is the use of precise theoretical models of the principles/parameters and minimalist kind, and the attention to the fine structural details of syntactic configurations, a research endeavor sometimes identified under the label of "cartography of syntactic structures".

The wealth of research activities pursued at CISCL gives rise to contributions disseminated into a variety of scholarly journals and other forms of publications, along the channels of normal diffusion of research. Nevertheless, we thought it would be useful to create a space where the research conceived, pursued, somehow connected to the Center through collaborations, or even simply discussed at CISCL during sojourns of external guests could be presented and made available in an easily accessible unitary format. The regular publication of CISCL working papers, accessible both electronically and in the printed version, seemed a natural possibility. We thank the guests of CISCL who kindly made available their work for the Working Papers, and hope that this initiative will give a contribution, however modest, to the diffusion of linguistic ideas and results.

Luigi Rizzi
Director of CISCL

Siena, December 2007

The Alison's cat sleep in the kitchen: On the acquisition of English *'s* Genitive Constructions by native speakers of Italian*

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This work deals with the acquisition of L2 English *'s* Genitive Constructions with Bare Proper Name possessors by native speakers of Italian. We investigated original L2 English data collected through a written elicitation test from a group of 94 Italian teen-agers learning L2 English in a formal environment.
Results indicate that both Universal Grammar and transfer from the L1 are implied in the acquisition of these structures.
In Section 1 we compare Italian and English Possessive Constructions in the light of a model of possessive DPs; in Section 2 we present the experimental design and the results, which will be discussed in Section 3.

1. *'s* Genitive Constructions and their acquisition

1.1 Possessive Constructions in English and Italian

This section is devoted to the analysis of *'s* Genitive Constructions and to their comparison with other possessive constructions attested in English and Italian.
First of all let us compare English and Italian Possessive Constructions:

* This work was presented among the CISCL Research Seminars (Siena, Italy, 28 November 2006), at IGG XXXIII (Bologna, Italy, 1-3 March 2007) and at the IV Encuentro de Gramática Generativa (Mendoza, Argentina, 26-28 July 2007). We thank the organizers and the audience. In particular, we thank Adriana Alvarez, Adriana Belletti, Valentina Bianchi, José Camacho, Giuliana Giusti, Andrea Gualmini, Luigi Rizzi and Marit Westergaard for helpful comments. Special thanks are due to Simona Matteini and to the Scuola Media 'B.Bonfigli' of Corciano (Italy). All errors and omissions are of course our own. For the specific concerns of the Italian Academy, Elisa Di Domenico is responsible for Section 1 and 3, Elisa Bennati for Section 2. This work is dedicated to the memory of Marica De Vincenzi.

On Labeling: Principle C and Head Movement

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In this paper, we critically re-examine the two algorithms that govern phrase structure building according to Chomsky (2005). We accept the algorithm that dictates that a lexical item transmits its label when it is merged with another object (the Head Algorithm) but reject the second algorithm proposed by Chomsky and replace it with the Probing Algorithm, which states that the probe of any kind of Merge is the label. In addition to capturing core cases of phrase structure building, these two algorithms shed light on Principle C effects and the syntax of wh constructions, which we analyze as cases of conflict between them. In these two configurations a lexical item (which should become the label in compliance with the Head Algorithm) is merged with a syntactic object that, being the probe of the operation, should become the label in compliance with the Probing Algorithm. In one case, this conflict produces two alternative outputs (a question or a free relative) that are both acceptable. In Principle C configurations, one of the resulting output (the one determined by the Head Algorithm) produces an object that is not interpretable. This way, Principle C effects are reduced to cases of mislabeling, with no need to postulate a specific condition to rule them out.

1. Introduction

One important assumption in the minimalist program, initially formulated by Chomsky (1995), is the Inclusiveness Condition, according to which narrow syntax merely operates on lexical items and cannot "add" interpretative material. This is usually interpreted as meaning that semantically active material such as indices, bar levels or labels cannot be inserted in the course of a derivation.
Still, there is an important theoretical notion that does not seem to de dispensable, namely that Merge yields labeled syntactic objects: when Merge forms a syntactic object, the features associated with one and only one of the assembled items are visible for further computation[1]. If the inclusiveness condition is to be taken seriously,

[1] Collins (2002) sketches a theory of syntax in which labels can be completely dispensed with. However his polemical objective is the notion of label as an extra object distinct from the two items that

An introduction to Phase-based Minimalist Grammars: why *move* is Top-Down from Left-to-Right

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This paper is an introduction to a grammatical formalism (Phase-based Minimalist Grammar, elaboration of Stabler's 1997 Minimalist Grammar) that includes a revised version of the standard minimalist structure building operations *merge*, *move* and the notion of *derivation by phase* (Chomsky 1999-2005). The main difference with respect to the standard theory is that these devices strictly operate Top-Down and from Left-to-Right. In these pages I will argue that long distance dependencies, such as successive cyclic A'-movement, are better understood within this unconventional (at least within the Minimalist Program) phase-based directional perspective[1].

1. Introduction

The Government and Binding approach (Chomsky 1981) broke with the Transformational Grammar tradition (Chomsky 1957) by shifting the focus of inquiry from the generative procedure of phrase structure building to the configurational patterns apt to discard/license bad/well-formed sentences given their underlying Structural Description(s). Within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), structure building operations (such as *merge* and *move*) re-gain a prominent position but certain well know problems of directionality of application of these operations, with respect to specific formal tasks such as *generation* and *recognition* (Aho and Ullman 1972) and their performance counterpart, *production* and *parsing* (in the sense of Berwick and Weinberg 1986), are only marginally discussed within the standard framework (Phillips 1996, 2003). This is essentially because the definition of these structure building operations implicitly includes a directionality assumption without discussion.

In this paper I will tackle this assumption and argue that the directionality issue is crucial for understanding certain aspects of the grammar, especially long distance dependencies such as A'-movement: if we assume that a long-distance dependency necessarily includes a unique base thematic position and a unique topmost criterial position (e.g. operator, subject or topic, Rizzi 2004a), from a purely formal viewpoint we might expect that the order of computation of these positions be irrelevant, that is,

[1] This work is a distilled version of the ideas discussed in my Ph.D. thesis defended at the University of Siena (January 2005). I am especially grateful to Valentina Bianchi for the careful discussion of every aspect of this paper. Parts of this work have been discussed at CISCL (2001-07), MIT (2001, 2004), Harvard (February 2006), UPENN (February 2006), University of Geneva (March 2005, 2006), University of Nanzan (February 2007), University of Gerona (June 2007). Thanks to all these audiences for their precious suggestions and remarks.

On Syntactic Computation in Aphasia: a Study on Agreement and Movement in a non-fluent Aphasic Speaker

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To investigate the linguistic competence of a non-fluent aphasic speaker we focus on certain properties of the patient's deficit in the functional lexicon, and ascribe occurrences of non standard use to defective syntactic computation. By manipulating the position of constituents, we tested agreement in sentences with post-verbal subjects and the patient's ability to detect errors induced by different elements in attraction configurations.
The results show clear asymmetries in grammaticality judgments of the different agreement conditions. A deficit in the computation of agreement in sentences with postverbal subjects was reported, indication of the fragile nature of postverbal subject agreement. In the experiment on attraction we found a clear impairment with attraction induced by linear intervention of a prepositional modifier. In order to evaluate our subject's performance we compare the results from this single case study with data from a range of experiments involving other languages and populations.
By investigating the finer properties of functional elements we hope to show the extent to which certain characteristics of aphasic speech may be attributed to a possible reduction in processing abilities.

Introduction

Subjects with aphasia caused by cerebral lesions present an interesting empirical source for investigating the correlation between the organization of neural structures and linguistic models. The functional lexicon is one aspect of language in which this correlation may be studied. Much work on aphasia focuses on the functional lexicon, since the tendency to drop functional elements is characteristic of so-called agrammatic or non-fluent speech (see Menn and Obler, 1990 for cross-linguistic data). Functional categories trigger fundamental linguistic computations, such as verb movement, stepwise from subordinate to super-ordinate categories in the tree structures. An impairment of concatenation (and/or movement) should therefore lower the likelihood of these operations succeeding. From this perspective, it is

Expletives, Datives, and the Tension between Morphology and Syntax

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1. Introduction

Pronominal clitics of the sort found in Romance languages are in many ways obviously part of the syntax of those languages. Yet certain aspects of their behavior can lead to proposals more morphological than syntactic in character, as seen in Perlmutter's (1971) templatic approach to the question of clitic ordering and clitic combinations. In this paper, I examine a somewhat different aspect of Romance clitics, one for which a more morphological, less syntactic approach might again come to mind. I will argue, however, in favor of an analysis that, using familiar syntactic notions, ties the phenomenon in question more tightly and more fruitfully, I think, to other aspects of Romance (and universal) syntax.[1]

In the course of so doing, I will be led to reanalyze the status of expletives such as English *there* and its Romance counterparts, proposing in effect that they are not true expletives. Rather, they originate within their so-called 'associate', in way that has something in common with Moro (1997) and, more so, with Sabel (2000), though the proposal I will make ties expletive *there* more closely to various other instances of *there* than do these earlier works.

2. North Italian *ghe*

A clitic that will have an important role in what follows is the *ghe* found in many North Italian dialects, in particular in the Veneto area (Padua, Venice, etc.). The behavior of this *ghe* is different in certain respects from that of comparable clitics in French and Italian. French has a locative clitic *y* seen in:

[1] The present paper corresponds in varying degrees to the first part of one presented at the Stony Brook Workshop on Romance Clitics (May 2005), at the Cambridge University Graduate Linguistics conference (March 2006) and GLOW, Barcelona (April 2006) and in talks at the University of Padua and University of Siena (March 2006).
The proposal on expletive *there* goes back to talks at NYU (September, 2000) and especially at Sophia University, Tokyo (November 2002), as well as to a series of lectures at Leiden University (May/June 2003).
Since Perlmutter (1971), many authors have taken a more syntactic (and more fruitful) approach to clitic ordering and clitic combinations; for particularly striking results concerning Romanian, see Săvescu Ciucivara (2006).

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Covert Movement of Negation: raising over modality

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This paper will explore the relation between the phonetical realization of sentential negation and its LF-mapping. Languages that share many common features often differ in the position where the negative marker surfaces but it is unclear if those variations have an effect on the logic representation of the sentence. In order to try to answer to this question, I will consider some empirical facts related to inverse scope interpretations of negation above modality, showing that when the possibility of reconstructing the modal operator is excluded, as in double-modals constructions, the only option available to build the appropriate LF representation is to covert-move negation[1].

1. Surface variation and logic interpretation

It is relatively uncontroversial in the literature that languages show a great variability in their means to express negation. It is well known, for example, that some languages convey a negative sentential meaning by using a verbal affix which directly attaches to a verbal host while other languages adopt a self-standing negation which can be separated from the verbal complex and which shows characteristics similar to the ones of adverbials. Among the romance languages, Standard French is famous as it negates a sentence showing both the affix *ne-* which is part of the verbal morphology and the adverb *pas* which surfaces in a different and lower structural position

(1) Jean n'a pas lu
J. Neg aux Neg read
'*Jean didn't read*'

[1] A preliminary version of this paper has been presented at the XXXIII Incontro di Grammatica Generativa (Bologna, Italy, 1-3 March 2007) and at the XXXIV Österreichischen Linguistiktagung (Klagenfurt 8-9 December 2006). I wish to thank Wolfgang Meyer, Patrick Grosz, Leonardo Gatti and Federico Misirochi for their judgments on Milanese and German. Thanks also to Andrea Gualmini and Valenina Bianchi for comments. A special thank also goes to Kate Seib.

On Some Properties of Criterial Freezing

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1. Background

In an approach to syntax ruled by economy guidelines, it is natural to assume that movement is always motivated by the fulfillment of an interpretive requirement (Fox 1999, Reinhart 2006): there is no truly optional movement, and chains typically terminate in positions dedicated to particular interpretive properties. A'-chains fulfill these economy or "last resort" guidelines in a particularly transparent manner. They may be thought of as a device to assign two kinds of interpretive properties to a linguistic expression: *s-selectional* properties, or properties of semantic selection, typically theta role assignment for arguments; and *scope-discourse* properties (Chomsky 2000) such as the scope of an operator, and properties related to the informational structure and discourse articulation like topicality and focus. For instance, in a topicalisation structure like the following

(1) Your book, I intend to read next week

the expression *your book* must be interpreted as a thematic argument -- patient -- of the verb *read*, and as the topic of the clause. Natural languages typically assign this duality of interpretive properties to an expression by having the expression occur twice, in two positions dedicated to the assignment of such properties. This is the configuration traditionally referred to as "movement": the expression is inserted in the thematic position and then is moved to the scope-discourse position. In an approach reducing movement to internal merge, and adopting the copy theory of traces (Chomsky 1995, 2000), the element actually occurs twice in the two dedicated positions, both in the derivational history and in the derived representation.

How are "dedicated positions" expressed? As thematic assignment uncontroversially is a matter of a local relation between a head – the verb – and a local dependent, it seems reasonable to assume that also the other interpretive property, topicality, is determined by a head-dependent relation. So, one may think that there is a dedicated head in the left periphery of the clause, Top, which carries an explicit instruction for the interface systems of the kind: "my specifier is to be interpreted as a topic, and my complement as the comment", thus determining the topic-comment articulation (Rizzi 1997 and much related work), an assumption immediately supported by languages in which the Top head has an overt morphological realization (Aboh 2004). We thus end up with a complete representation for (1) like the following:

(2) Your book [Top [I intend to read <your book> next week]]

with the trace expressed as an occurrence within angled brackets, left unpronounced at

English as a Mixed V2 Grammar: Synchronic Word Order Inconsistencies from the Perspective of First Language Acquisition

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This paper discusses some word order inconsistencies in present-day English and argues that these may be explained by natural processes in first language acquisition. English is usually assumed to have lost its verb-second (V2) properties in the Middle English period, but the paper argues that English should be considered a mixed V2 grammar, as subject-auxiliary inversion is still a syntactic requirement in all questions and a type of inversion also marginally appears in certain declaratives (with informationally light verbs). Discussing word order variation across Germanic V2 languages as well as some acquisition data, the paper develops an approach to language acquisition and change which is based on micro-cues in the input. This means that there are many types of V2 grammars, which distinguish between different clause types, patterns of information structure, and natural classes of categories. In this model, historical gradualism is seen as successive changes affecting one micro-cue at a time, and the mixed V2 property of English is considered to represent no exceptional case, simply a somewhat more restricted V2 grammar than that of the other Germanic languages.

1. Introduction

Unlike the other Germanic languages, which generally have a strict verb second (V2) requirement in all main clauses, Standard English is normally characterized as a non-V2 language. This is illustrated by the classical examples of V2 word order in the German sentences below, where the finite verb appears in front of an adverb in subject-initial declaratives, see (1), and in front of the subject in non-subject-initial declaratives and all questions, as in (2)-(4). The standard account of this phenomenon is that the verb has moved across these elements to the head of the clause, to C, due to some feature requirement on this position (see e.g. Vikner 1995). The English glosses/translations clearly indicate that English is not a typical V2 language, at least not of the same kind as German.

(1) Anna **liest immer** Zeitungen
*Anna reads always newspapers