

Syllabus: Interfaces in sentence structure

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Semester: Winter 2025/26

Meeting time: Tuesdays, 21.10 – 10.02, from 14:15 to 15:45 (no class 28.10)

Course description

This course investigates how syntactic structure interacts with linearization, morphology, semantics, and the lexicon in English and other languages. We will examine how syntax connects to word order, how head movement connects syntax and morphology, and how event composition links syntax to meaning. Throughout, we will compare different theoretical implementations within the generative linguistics tradition.

Learning goals

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- explain how syntactic structure is related to surface linear order;
- describe major approaches to head movement and their empirical motivations;
- outline the interaction between syntax and morphology
- analyze the relation between event semantics and argument structure;
- evaluate how to constrain theories of syntax–PF/–LF interaction.

Assessment

Four short take-home assignments, roughly every three to four weeks, graded for completion. Regular participation and discussion are expected.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Further Reading
21 Oct	Overview of the course	—
28 Oct	No class.	—
4 Nov	Syntax and linear order	Kayne (1994) ch. 1
11 Nov	Binding, scope, and hierarchy	Reinhart (1983)

Date	Topic	Further Reading
18 Nov	Why we need head movement: verb-raising, auxiliaries, and do-support.	Roberts (2010) ch. 2
25 Nov	What is head movement? Is it in the syntax, or somewhere else?	Dékány (2018)
2 Dec	Morphology vs. syntax	Halle & Marantz (1993)
9 Dec	Morphosyntax of English verbs: Auxiliaries, agreement, and tense/aspect realization.	Embick & Noyer (2001)
16 Dec	Interfaces and phases: Spell-Out and linearization (Winter break)	Chomsky (2000)
13 Jan	Argument structure and event structure I	Kratzer (1996); Pytkänen (2008)
20 Jan	Argument structure and event structure II	
27 Jan	Resultatives, causatives, and complex predicates	Harley (1995); Ramchand (2008) chs. 2–3
3 Feb	More on typological variation	—
10 Feb	Open session/review	—

Office hours

By appointment.

References

- Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquiries: The framework. *Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*. MIT press 89–155.
- Dékány, Éva. 2018. Approaches to head movement: A critical assessment. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.316>.
- Halle, Morris & Alec Marantz. 1993. Distributed morphology and the pieces of inflection. (Ed.) Kenneth Hale & Samuel Jay Keyser. *The view from Building 20*. 111–176.
- Harley, Heidi. 1995. *Subjects, Events and Licensing*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology PhD dissertation.
- Kayne, Richard S. 1994. *The antisymmetry of syntax*. Vol. 25. MIT press.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1996. Severing the external argument from its verb. In Johan Rooryck & Laurie Zaring (eds.), *Phrase structure and the lexicon*, 109–137. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-8617-7_5.

- Pylkkänen, Liina. 2008. *Introducing arguments* (Linguistic Inquiry Monographs). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ramchand, Gillian. 2008. *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon: A First Phase Syntax* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Reinhart, Tanya. 1983. Coreference and bound anaphora: A restatement of the anaphora questions. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 6(1). 47–88. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00868090>.
- Roberts, Ian. 2010. *Agreement and head movement: clitics, incorporation, and defective goals* (Linguistic Inquiry Monographs 59). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.