Introduction to the volume

An Annotated Syntax Reader: Lasting Insights and Questions

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There are lasting insights to be found in each of the papers included here. At the same time, each of these papers gives rise, as in any scientific field, to further questions.

Each paper in this volume is, for reasons of space, presented in excerpted form, and is preceded by an introduction that provides some background and a small set of relevant references. Each paper is also followed by a set of questions intended to encourage the student to explore new lines of thought.

The number of syntactic papers (and books) published in the past half century that contain lasting insights and lasting results far exceeds the number that it was possible to include in a volume of this size. In choosing a set of 35 such papers, the editors were obliged to make arbitrary decisions, one of which was the decision not to include excerpts from books, as opposed to papers. Nor did we attempt to achieve exhaustivity across all subdomains of syntax, however characterized. We did not, either, try to maximize the number of syntacticians represented; as a result, some syntacticians, including one of the editors, are represented by more than one paper. (Had we been allotted twice or three times as many pages, we could readily have added another 35 or 70 papers of equal quality and importance to the 35 that we did include.)

In constructing the excerpts, i.e. in shortening the papers to 10-12 pages (which allowed us to include many more papers than would otherwise have been possible), we faced a difficult task that inevitably led to compromises and imperfections. In some cases, the excerpts may not flow as smoothly as did the source paper (and in some cases we may have omitted parts of the paper particularly dear to the author). We did attempt, of course, to preserve readability to whatever extent possible. We eliminated most footnotes, but tried to supply updated references that were missing or not yet known at the time of the original publication.

An excerpt is by definition not exhaustive of the paper it is part of. Each excerpt can thus be taken as an invitation to the student to find and to read the entire paper. In a similar vein, while the introduction and questions that precede and follow each paper mention a certain number of references relevant to that paper, the set of references is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to be an invitation to further reading, a door to the discovery of

other papers on the chosen topic.

The questions that follow each excerpt are not limited to points touched on within the excerpt itself, i.e. some questions themselves invite the student to turn to the entire paper from which the excerpt has been extracted. These questions number between 15 and 21 per paper, vary quite a bit in length and complexity, and are quite heterogeneous in type. Some of the questions can be answered in a short format and may be used as homework exercises. The majority of questions, however, are genuine research questions, which are meant to stimulate discussion and inspire avenues of research. (Related to this, there is no answer key.)

The introductions to the individual papers will be most useful to those who so far know little about syntax (the beginning student, or the scholar from another field) and the questions most useful to those who know more, or want to know more, or are beginning to do independent research in the field. The introductions typically contain (i) a beginning paragraph that situates the issue(s) raised in the paper in a broader context and says why they are important to the field; (ii) a description of the main (empirical and theoretical) contributions of the paper; (iii) a final paragraph that tries to highlight one idea that has had a lasting impact or has spurred interesting debate, while giving some references. For some of the older papers, the introduction also has the function of making them somewhat more accessible to today's reader, either by explaining some of the assumptions or by highlighting the core of the idea while leaving aside the details of the implementation, which are no longer current.

The questions are often, to one extent or another, English-oriented, in part because the author of the questions is a native speaker of English, in part because English is at present the single most widely discussed language in the syntactic literature, and in part because English is probably the language that is on average most familiar to students of syntax.

Students who are not native speakers of English can, if they know English very well, readily pursue the answers to such questions on their own, using their own knowledge of English (and of any other language explicitly mentioned) supplemented by recourse to descriptive grammars, to the syntactic literature, and to discussion with native speakers of English (and other languages). Students who are native speakers of English will have a slight initial advantage in this respect.

However, this initial advantage can be neutralized in at least two ways. First, students who are not native speakers of English can transpose English-oriented questions to their own native language (or languages). In some cases, the transposition, which will allow the student to proceed more quickly

and more deeply, will be straightforward. In other cases, it may require substantial inventiveness. In every case, it will be enriching to the student to make the attempt.

Secondly, every one of the questions in this volume, whether English-oriented in its formulation or not, can and should lead the student to ask how other languages can be brought to bear on that question. As many other languages as possible. In the limit, all other languages. In practice, some.

Bringing in multiple other languages will inevitably lead to further questions of the comparative syntax sort. Is a given difference between two (or more) languages related to other differences between those languages? If it is, what theory of syntax is best adapted to capturing that linkage? What form of parameter must underlie that difference? What theory of parameters best characterizes the individual parameters discovered, best characterizes the limits on syntactic variation?

Answers require questions. The questions provided here are intended to lead to ever deeper questions, and to ever deeper answers.

In reading the excerpted papers included in this volume, the student will be reading some of the primary syntactic literature of recent decades, going back as far as the mid-sixties (Postal's 1966 paper) and as recently as the mid-2000s (two papers by Cinque). In reading the older among these papers, the student needs to learn to abstract away from those aspects of older theoretical frameworks that have been superseded. At the same time, the student needs to learn to perceive the commonalities between earlier and later frameworks.

Alongside advances in syntactic theory, it is essential to simultaneously see the advances in observational and descriptive adequacy (to use Chomsky's early terminology) that have taken place in the past half century (especially since the rhetoric of the field sometimes puts disproportionate emphasis on the explanatory frontiers at the expense of the observational and descriptive). In that regard, the reading of this volume can be complemented by the reading, for example, of the detailed and solid grammars of Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Basque and English edited by Renzi et al. (1988-1995), Bosque and Demonte (1999), Solà et al. (2002), Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina (2003), and Huddleston and Pullum (2002), respectively. (On the stability and clarity of syntactic data in the general case, from a psycholinguistic perspective, see Sprouse 2011). Broad overviews of syntactic theory can be found in Baltin and Collins (2001) and in Everaert et al.'s *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax* (2006). Broad overviews of comparative syntax, more specifically, can be found in Cinque and Kayne (2005) and Kayne (to

appear).

Since the advent of generative syntax, our knowledge and understanding of human language syntax have become qualitatively better, at both descriptive and theoretical levels. On the theoretical side, advances have come in various forms. To take one example, bare phrase structure (external and internal merge) has superseded the less constrained 'phrase structure rules + transformations' of the first 20 years of generative syntax. At the same time, it is essential to see that theoretical advances can, and typically do, coexist with theoretical stability (despite the mistaken impression among some that the field reinvents itself completely every few years). Core ideas can remain stable for decades or longer, and we have endeavored to choose papers that contain one or more ideas that have had that sort of long lasting impact.

As just mentioned, bare phrase structure is newer than, superior to, and more constrained than the older phrase structure rules (plus transformations). That represents an advance. Yet the core notion of constituent structure itself (now expressed by Merge) has remained stable, going back to the beginning of generative syntax (and before). In addition, there is a wide consensus that constituents do not overlap, and that (cf. Kayne 1981) constituent structure is invariably binary branching. Binary branching in turn converges with Anderson and Chung's (1977, Ch. 5 of this volume) stable conclusion to the effect that VSO languages have a VP from which the verb is extracted; binary branching also converges with Legate's (2003, Ch. 32 of this volume) by now stable conclusion that there are no (and can be no) non-configurational languages.

In the area of constituent structure, we can in addition note the long-term solidity of the notion 'head of a phrase' that goes back to Chomsky (1970, Ch. 3 of this volume) and that has been extended to subareas of syntax not considered by him back then in work such as that of Rizzi (1997, Ch. 24 of this volume). Similarly, though a bit less immediate, is the continuity between the earlier idea of 'cycle' (Chomsky 1965) and the newer idea of 'phase' (Chomsky 2001, Ch. 30 of this volume), despite the innovative notion of 'spellout' associated with the latter.

The existence of locality conditions on movement operations has been a perfectly stable aspect of syntax for a very long time. Moreover, despite evolving differences of detail, there has been a long-standing realization that some or many locality conditions are sensitive to a notion of 'intervention', going back to Chomsky's (1964) A-over-A principle (with a containing category intervening to block extraction of a contained category of the same type) and then forward to Rizzi's (1990) relativized minimality and Chom-

sky's (1995) minimal link condition. As an example of a partially different locality condition, we can take Rizzi's (1980, Ch. 8 of this volume) use of subjacency in an elegant and lasting account of a variety of facts concerning extraction from wh-islands in Italian. (Rizzi's account seems likely to stand even as we search for a better understanding of discrepancies between certain other languages and Italian in this area of syntax.) In an even more obvious way, we can cite one subpart of Ross's (1967) coordinate structure constraint, namely the subpart that in English blocks sentences like **Who are you thinking of inviting John and?*, as being cross-linguistically stable, without exception.

The very notion of movement operation is itself common to syntactic theories going back to Chomsky's earliest work, even if the way in which syntactic movement is regulated has changed considerably, from the early use of highly specific transformations to the later probe-goal approach. If we abstract away from the different formal characterizations, we can see, more specifically, that many of the movement operations of very early generative syntax have remained highly stable, e.g. *wh*-movement, raising to subject position with *seem*, movement of the object to subject position in passives. Pronominal clitic movement of the sort prominent in Romance languages began to be discussed somewhat later, but has remained stable ever since. (Sportiche's 1995 recasting in terms of 'pro'-movement leaves the core idea of clitic-type movement intact.) Verb movements of the sort discussed by den Besten (1983), Emonds (1978) and Pollock (1989, Ch. 15 of this volume) have an extremely stable core, in particular if we take them to be cut from largely the same cloth as the VP movements proposed in Massam (2000, Ch. 29 of this volume), Nilsen (2003), and Jayaseelan (2010) (even if in some cases V-movement and VP-movement are competitors).

Wh-movement in interrogatives is widespread and uncontroversial across many languages. Less widespread, at least at first glance (cf. Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, Ch. 17 of this volume), is negative phrase movement of the sort readily seen in Scandinavian languages (cf. Engels 2012), and in French in the specific case of *rien* ('nothing') (cf. Kayne 1975, Ch. 1). Also less widespread than interrogative *wh*-movement is *wh*-movement in relative clauses of the sort readily seen in English and many other European languages.

On the other hand, some movement operations that were thought to exist in the early years of generative syntax are now seen not to, in the sense that the phenomena they were intended to account for can better be looked at in other terms. Examples are agent-postposing in passives (now to be rethought along the lines of Collins 2005), downward movement from

subject position in sentences like *There has arrived a letter for you* (now to be rethought in terms of a lower original position for the superficial subject, as in Perlmutter 1978, 1989 and Burzio 1986), and rightward heavy-NP-shift (now to be interpreted as involving leftward movement instead, as in Larson 1988, Ch. 13 of this volume, and den Dikken 1995). (On sentential extraposition, see Kayne 1998.)

The abandoned movement operations of the previous paragraph had in common that they were rightward movements, which Kayne (1994) argued not to be available to the language faculty, as a consequence of antisymmetry, in his sense. Antisymmetry itself has come to be widely accepted (though there is not a consensus) as a restrictive characterization of the relation between linear and hierarchical order. Languages do not have access (for principled reasons - cf. Kayne 2011) to directionality parameters of the sort made use of especially in the 1980s (cf. Travis 1989, Ch. 16 of this volume). If antisymmetry is correct (and if Baker's 1988 UTAH principle or something like it is correct, and if Cinque's 1999 hierarchy is correct in constraining the cross-linguistic order of external merge), then word order differences across languages must invariably be due to differential applications of movement operations. An extension of the preceding would be that all cross-linguistic morpheme order differences can be traced back to differences in movement, which would fit in with Baker's (1988) solidly grounded view that morpheme order is tightly tied to syntax.

That languages differ in their (morpho)syntax is uncontroversial. We use the term 'parameter' to refer to the properties of the language faculty that underlie these differences. An early proposal as to the form of (some) parameters was given by Bach (1971), in terms of the idea that a given language would choose a subset from a universally fixed finite set of transformations. Since then, the idea has come to the fore (and is almost certainly correct) that parameters are rather to be understood in terms of (relatively simple) properties of functional heads (Borer 1984, Chomsky 1995; as opposed to lexical heads - cf. Kayne 2006). (For a lucid discussion of parameters, see Rizzi 2009, 2011.) What is solidly established, in addition, is the fruitfulness of searching for correlations across syntactic differences as a means of establishing a new kind of window into the language faculty (cf. Kayne to appear).

Returning to movement operations, we know that surface subject position is filled by internal merge/movement in a significant number of cases (passives, unaccusatives, *seem*) and it is virtually certain that surface subject position is in fact filled by internal merge/movement in all cases (cf. Koopman and Sportiche 1991, Ch. 19 of this volume). A related point is

that we know with certainty that the number of arguments a predicate has cannot be read off the visible sentential structure in a superficial manner. In a sentence like *You seem to have made a mistake*, there might appear to be two arguments of *seem*, but there is really only one, from within which the subject *you* has been extracted. The same almost certainly holds for *People consider you to be intelligent*, with *you* raising from within the infinitive phrase, as extensively argued by Postal (1974). A third and more surprising example comes from sentences like *You have a little sister*, given Szabolcsi's (1983/84 and 1994, Ch. 22 of this volume) analysis of possession sentences (transposed to English in Kayne 1993), in which the possessor *you* clearly originates internal to the phrase *a little sister*, and does not originate as an argument of *have*.

That the appearance of a phrase in surface subject position is not a reliable indication that it originated there is a solid conclusion that has a partial counterpart in Koster's (1978, Ch. 7 of this volume) demonstration that finite subject sentences, as in *That you are right is obvious*, are not actually in subject position proper, but rather in a topic position. That *that you are right* cannot be in subject position tells us in turn that finite sentences cannot by themselves be arguments, but only subparts of arguments, as had been proposed by Rosenbaum (1967) in terms of a deleted *it*.

Rosenbaum's *it*-deletion proposal is to be seen as one instance of a much broader stable conclusion about syntax reached early in the history of generative syntax (and before), namely that the language faculty allows for various syntactically and semantically active elements to be deleted, or, alternatively put, not to be pronounced. These silent elements range from the traces/silent copies of movement operations to the silent pronominals PRO and pro. The former, PRO, is found as the subject of non-finite sentences such as infinitives and gerunds. Its presence can be detected in various ways; one striking way involves comparing *We can't decide whether to go on the trip* and **We can't decide if to go on the trip*, and by examining the Romance counterparts of these, as in Kayne (1991, Ch. 18 of this volume). 'Pro' is a partially distinct silent pronominal whose properties have been studied by many (see, for example, Rizzi 1982b, Ch. 11 of this volume; 1986).

Another solidly established subtype of silent element is found in VP-deletion sentences like *John hasn't solved it but Mary has*, in which the VP is silent. This type of sentence is available to some languages but not others (e.g. French doesn't allow **... mais Marie a*), and the same holds for the silent noun in *John has written three papers but Mary has written four* (whose word-for-word counterpart is likewise impossible in French). The silent VP and silent noun exemplified in this paragraph are silent elements

with antecedents (that are found in the first half of their respective sentences).

Other sorts of silent elements, whose study goes back at least to Katz and Postal (1964), can be exemplified by *John has just turned twenty* (with a silent counterpart of *years* that would not be possible in French), as discussed in Kayne (2003), or by the baseball example *They won the game with two home runs in the seventh* (with a silent counterpart of *inning*). These silent elements don't have antecedents in the way that the silent elements of the preceding two paragraphs do, though it's been clear for decades that they are present (see, e.g., early discussions of 'the recoverability of deletion'). Their properties can be studied in a familiar fashion; putting things another way, their presence can be detected by slightly altering their environments, e.g. by noting that while **They won the game with two seventh home runs* is impossible, the sentence is much improved if extra material of a certain sort is added, as in *?They won the game with two top of the seventh home runs*.

Addition of extra material also saves a (certain interpretation of a) sentence in *John criticized him* vs. *John criticized himself*, i.e. addition of *self* allows for an anaphoric interpretation that would otherwise not be available. (A proposal that may permit linking these facts about anaphora to the preceding set of facts about silent *inning* is given in Kayne 2002, in a way that may not be compatible with Reuland 2011.) That *self* and the preceding pronoun have separate syntactic status had been proposed by Helke (1973) and reinforced by Pica (1987), whose argument that the bi-morphemic/bi-syntactic status of *himself* has an effect on the locality conditions regulating it appears to have been correct. These locality conditions, and more generally put, the existence of locality conditions on reflexives, have been established beyond doubt for a long time (though how closely they should be tied to locality conditions on movement is not clear). The same holds for the existence of so-called Condition B effects in many languages (i.e. the effects that prohibit *him* from taking (unstressed) *John* as antecedent in *John criticized him*). The same also holds for so-called Condition C effects, which prohibit (unstressed) *he* from taking *John* as antecedent in *He thinks that John is smart*, and which are found in language after language. (A separate question is whether Condition C is primitive, as in Lasnik 1976, or not, as in Kayne 2002.) As a final example of a stable, solidly established locality effect, we can mention the fact that if a verb agrees with a subject phrase, then that subject must be the verb's own subject and cannot be a higher subject (this would follow from Chomsky's Agree).

As a final example of a long-recognized property of the language faculty,

of a rather different sort, we can think of the (virtually certain) fact that all languages have a verb-noun distinction (see Baker 2003, Kayne 2008, Aldridge 2009, Koch and Matthewson 2009).

With its goal of tying together a broad set of fundamental ideas and a series of explicit research questions, this volume should be of use to students and teachers of syntax at an intermediate or advanced undergraduate level (for example, in a second level or second semester course), as well as to students and teachers at the graduate level. It could be used as a source of inspiration for paper topics, or thesis or dissertation topics. This volume may also be of interest to scholars and scientists outside of linguistics proper, for example to philosophers, psychologists and cognitive scientists who would like to gain a sense of what are some of the main insights and main issues in the field of syntax.

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