

# Introduction

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This second issue of the *Linguistic Variation Yearbook* extends the themes developed in the first volume in new directions. Many articles develop analyses showing how the study of linguistic variation leads to the formulation of precise hypotheses on the nature of language design and economy. In addition, these studies often allow us to distinguish between external and internal aspects of the language faculty.

Peter Culicover and Andrzej Nowak adopt a model of social interactions developed in Latane (1996) to show how some linguistic combinations are excluded by social factors. They argue that a proper understanding of linguistic variation has to take into account a nonsocial notion of linguistic complexity related to Markedness, while the notion of parsing complexity is ultimately linked to that of language learnability. The nonsyntactic character of parsing complexity is supported by the existence of exceptions to the general constraints it accounts for. The complexity advocated by Culicover and Nowak is ultimately related to the mapping between syntactic strings and Conceptual Structure, which is to be distinguished from other mappings to external systems such as discourse structure involving Topic and Focus.

Somewhat similar considerations about the distinction between external and internal aspects of the language faculty can be found in Heidi Harley's article. She advocates a treatment of double object and double complement structures which considerably simplifies the mapping between syntactic position and semantic interpretation. The analysis developed provides support for a hypothesis put forth in the framework of Distributed Morphology according to which Spell-out is the locus of late lexical insertion, at least in cases where structural classes of nouns and verbs are free, and determined by encyclopedic knowledge. Through a careful study of the syntax of double object constructions in various languages, Harley shows that linguistic variation can ultimately be reduced to the inventory of morphosyntactic primitives of the lexicon.

This last view is also espoused by Cristina Schmitt and Alan Munn. They show that the properties of bare singulars in Brazilian Portuguese do not follow entirely from Longobardi's (1994) claim according to which only DPs can be arguments. Building on Bobaljik's (1995)'s Free AGR Parameter, they claim that T/AGR is a single head in English, while AGR and T are separate heads in Romance. The authors argue that D may not select NP directly, and claim that there must be an intermediate projection in what we might call the left periphery of NP. The properties of bare singulars in Brazilian Portuguese are argued to follow from the lack of number in bare singular arguments. Schmitt and Munn show that the parametric distinction observed across Romance languages follows entirely from morphosyntactic differences. The analysis calls into question Chierchia's semantic Nominal Mapping Parameter, while capturing and improving upon its basic insights.

Carol Neidle's article bears on the question of language design as it relates to the modality in which language is expressed. She convincingly argues that American Sign Language has a design very similar to that of an oral language. The displacement properties related to overt and covert movement within hierarchically organized domains are expressed by manual properties and nonmanual syntactic marking. Neidle's analysis suggests that some important syntactic properties of language design are not modality sensitive.

Ileana Paul argues that some 'subject only' restrictions on A-bar movement of objects in Malagasy derive from the notion of phase. She adopts a model of syntax where syntactic chunks are built incrementally and sent to spell-out and semantic interpretation. Drawing on earlier work by Massam and Smallwood (1996), she argues that objects are licenced in situ in Malagasy, while in languages like English, objects move out to a position at the edge of the VP phase where they are accessible for further movement.

Myriam Uribe-Etxebarria addresses the issue of Wh-in situ constructions in Spanish. She develops an analysis according to which various syntactic, semantic and prosodic aspects of these constructions can be accounted for in terms of overt movement. In particular, this analysis entails that there are no independent covert operations at LF, and no optional movement. The notion of semantic interpretation can largely be reduced to 'multiple interpretation' in parallel with the cognate notion of Multiple spell-out. Apparent optional covert movement can be reduced to derivations involving the left periphery of the clause and to specific interpretations involving the notion of presupposition.

Alain Rouveret addresses the status of resumptive structures in a derivational theory of syntax. While both direct and indirect Welsh relatives are

sensitive to strong islands, only direct relatives display the scope and binding reconstruction patterns found in gap relatives. The author shows that the gap strategy is used when resumptives are excluded by the notion of phase. Rouveret develops an account of both types of relatives adopting a framework in which their respective properties derive from the interaction of the locality induced by the Phase Impenetrability Condition, Agree, and a lexicalization principle inducing checking before spell-out in the spirit of Svenonius (2001). It is argued that the locality conditions imposed on Agree can be circumvented in indirect relatives by a series of local dependencies creating a chain via mechanisms reminiscent of the Principle of Minimal Compliance (Richards 1997, Pesetsky & Torrego 2001). Rouveret stresses in conclusion the consequences of this analysis for the proper formulation of a theory of economy which is compatible with the high ‘cost’ of resumptive relatives.

Hubert Truckenbrodt develops an analysis of the intonational phonology of Bengali within an optimality theory according to which prosodic phenomena are constrained by both ranking and faithfulness. According to the formulation of faithfulness here, some internal boundaries of the phonological phrases might be inherited by larger syntactic units. This mapping between phonological and syntactic phrases constitutes a theoretical attempt to capture the syntax-phonology mapping observed at the interface level, an issue addressed in several papers of the volumes.

The various articles of the volume show that questions such as the status of the left periphery of the clause, the reduction of variation to morphosyntactic variation of lexical primitives, the reformulation of cyclicity in terms of Phase, or the distinction between internal and external phenomena, constitute core issues in current research within the minimalist program or related frameworks. The articles exhibit a diversity which we believe illustrates the vitality of the field.

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