Syntactic theory in light of Minimalism – seminar
התיאוריה הת başınaיתלאור המינימליזם

Prof. Julia Horvath

Course no.: 0627-4041-01 Academic year: 2017-18 Semester: 2 Number of hours: 4

Degree: MA (BA with instructor’s permission)

Class will be held on: Tuesdays 12-16

Reception hours: Thursdays 15:00-16:00, Webb 411

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Course prerequisites: Current Syntax 1

Reading material: See Bibliography (below)

Course Description

This MA seminar – open to BA students (with special permission) – aims to explore a range of syntactic phenomena, accounts proposed for them, and their theoretical implications, especially in relation to recent minimalist conceptions regarding the design of the language faculty. We will discuss and analyze a selection of topics involving syntactic phenomena and cross-linguistic variation within the framework of the Principles and Parameters theory. The empirical material presented will be examined with respect to versions of the recent ‘minimalist’ perspective on the architecture of the language faculty (UG) and its “optimal design” (the M(inimalist) P(ogram), outlined in Chomsky in the late 1990s, and developed in subsequent work).

The phenomena to be discussed will relate in particular to issues of (a) the interaction and division of labor between the syntactic (computational, structure building) component and the systems it interfaces with (PF, semantics, information structure), and (b) parameters of grammar assumed to capture cross-linguistic variation.

The theoretical topics addressed will include the following:
The operation Merge: phrase structure and movements
Units of the syntactic derivation – phases/cycles and their “size”; locality
The copy theory of movement; economy
Agree – phi-features, Case, and the labeling of categories
Functional elements, feature-checking, parameters, and the cartographic trend
Optional movements and the role of the interfaces

Course Requirements
The seminar can be taken either as a seminar or as a course (non-seminar).

Regular attendance and active participation is required.

The grade will be based on:

(i) class participation and a brief class presentation (20%),
(ii) a seminar paper for those taking it as a seminar, or a small (non- seminar) paper, for those taking it as a course (80%).

Seminar paper due: September 16, 2018

Language: The course is taught in English

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>March 6, 2018</td>
<td>The Minimalist Program vs. the GB framework: Motivation and basic architecture ('levels of representations' and optimal design)</td>
<td>Chomsky (1995)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>March 20, 2018</td>
<td>Units of derivation: 'phases' and the interfaces of syntax with the phonology and the semantics; economy principles</td>
<td>Fox (1993); Matushansky (2005); Landau (2006)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>April 10, 2018</td>
<td>Extractions and evidence for successive cyclicity: the Phase Impenetrability Condition (Spanish/Irish/Indonesian/German)</td>
<td>McCloskey (2000); Rackowski and Richards (2005)</td>
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<td>April 17, 2018</td>
<td>Extraction from noun phrases; Davies and Dubinsky (2003)</td>
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<td>April 24, 2018</td>
<td>Wh-movements and their landing sites: wh as a formal feature; Wh-exclamatives, Modal Existential Constructions; Simik (2012); Horvath (2013); Grosu (2004)</td>
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<td>May 1, 2018</td>
<td>Selected topics I: The ‘that-trace’ effect; Q-float; Pesetsky (to appear); Chocano and Torrego (to appear); Shlonsky (1991)</td>
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<td>May 8, 2018</td>
<td>Selected topics II: Pied-piping; Interrogative Slifting; Horvath (to appear); Stepanov and Stateva (2016)</td>
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<td>May 15, 2018</td>
<td>Selected Topics III: Hebrew ‘Triggered Inversion’; Extraction from Relative Clauses (Hebrew); Shlonsky and Doron (1992); Ivy Sichel (2016);</td>
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<td>May 29, 2018</td>
<td>Parameters and Language variation II: The Null Subject parameter and the EPP; Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998); D’Alessandro (2014)</td>
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<td>June 5, 2018</td>
<td>Class presentations on topics for seminar/final paper</td>
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<td>June 12, 2018</td>
<td>Class presentations on topics for seminar/final paper</td>
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Note: This schedule is tentative and may change as the course progresses.
**Bibliography**


Bošković, Željko (2014) Now I’m a phase, now I’m not a phase: On the variability of phases with extraction and ellipsis. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45.


D’Alessandro, Roberta (2014) ‘The Null Subject Parameter: Where are we and where are we headed?’ ms. Leiden University.


Horvath, Julia (to appear) Pied-Piping. In M. Everaert and H. van Riemsdijk, eds.,


Newmeyer, Frederick (to appear) Where, if Anywhere, are Parameters?: A Critical Historical Overview of Parametric Theory. In Looking into Words, Yale volume Festschrift for S.R. Anderson


