Syntactic theory in light of Minimalism – seminar
הטיאוריה התכניתית לאור המינימליזם

Prof. Julia Horvath

Course no.: 0627-4041-01 Academic year: 2016-17 Semester: 2  Number of hours: 4
Degree: MA (BA with instructor’s permission)

Class will be held on: Tuesday 12-16
Reception hours: Webb 411, Thursday 15-16
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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 rog ram), 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) the nature of 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) and 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: 01/10/2017

Non-seminar final paper due: 30/07/2017

Language: The course is taught in English

**Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>The Minimalist Program vs. the GB framework: Motivation and basic architecture (<code>levels of representations</code> and optimal design)</td>
<td>Chomsky (1995)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Units of derivation: <code>phases</code> 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>Apr 5</td>
<td>Extractions and evidence for successive cyclicity: the Phase Impenetrability Condition (Spanish/Irish/Indonesian/German); extraction from noun phrases</td>
<td>McCloskey (2000); Rackowski and Richards (2005); Bayer et al. (2016); Davies and Dubinsky (2003)</td>
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<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Lexicon/morphology vs. the Computational system: Syntactic Atomicity (‘Lexical Integrity’) phenomena</td>
<td>Ackema and Neeleman (2003)</td>
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<td>May 9</td>
<td>Wh-movements and their landing sites: wh as a formal feature; Exhaustivity and wh-interrogatives; Wh-exclamatives, Modal Existential Constructions</td>
<td>Simik (2012); Horvath (2013); Grosu (2004)</td>
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<td>May 16</td>
<td>Selected topics I: The ‘that-trace’ effect; Q-float</td>
<td>Pesetsky (to appear); Chocano and Torrego (to appear); Shlonsky (1991)</td>
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<td>May 23</td>
<td>Selected topics II: Pied-piping; Interrogative Slifiting; ‘implicit' arguments (in the syntax or only in the semantics?)</td>
<td>Horvath (to appear); Stepanov and Stateva (2016); Landau (2010); Aya Meltzer-Asscher (2012)</td>
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<td>June 6</td>
<td>Selected Topics III: Hebrew ‘Triggered Inversion’; Extraction from Relative Clauses (Hebrew); Phasehood and extraction</td>
<td>Shlonsky and Doron (1992); Ivy Sichel (2016); Bošković (2014)</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Parameters and Language variation II: The Null Subject parameter and the EPP</td>
<td>Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998); D’Alessandro (2014)</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>June 27</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.


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


