

A Minimalist analysis of possessor advancement

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Grammatical Function Changing Processes (GFPCs)

(1) GFPC

A (nominal) category that has a certain grammatical function F in the context of a verb with a certain morphology M in a sentence P receives another grammatical function F' in a context of a verb with a different morphology M' in a sentence P' . P and P' are thematic paraphrases.

Object-Incorporation

Incorporation is (here) understood as the integration of a nominal lexical element that can occur freely in a sentence A into another, higher lexical element as a bound morpheme in a sentence A'. The denotational meaning of the two sentences remains hereby identical.

(2) Mohawk

- a. Yao-wir-aʔa ye-nuhweʔ-s ne ka-nuhs-aʔ
 PRE-baby-SUF 3FS/3N-like-ASP DET PRE-house.N-SUF
 'The baby likes the house'
- b. Yao-wir-aʔa ye-nuhs-nuhweʔ-s
 PRE-baby-SUF 3FS/3N-house-like-ASP
 'the baby likes the house'

Possessor Advancement

Possessor Advancement (or Ascension) refers to incorporation of a possessed noun, stranding the possessor which then takes the syntactic role its possessum had before. This is not marked by case but by agreement in Mohawk.

(3) Mohawk

- a. Ka-rakv ne sawatis hrao-nuhs-a?
 3N-be.white DET John 3M-SUF
 'John's house is white'
- b. hrao-nuhs-rakv ne sawatis
 3M-house-be.white DET John
 'John's house is white'

Mohawk agreement patterns

- If there is no possession
 - and no incorporation, there is agreement with the DO
 - and incorporation, there is still agreement with the DO
- If there is a Possessor
 - and no incorporation, the verb agrees with the DO, the DO with the Possessor
 - and incorporation, the Verb agrees with the Possessor

Basic GB-assumptions

- There are different layers of syntax, D-structure and S-structure, connected by Move α . Case assignment happens on S-Structure
- Movement must leave a trace (Projection Principle)
- The X-bar schema determines the tree structure: an XP must have a head, can have a complement and at most one specifier
- Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH)

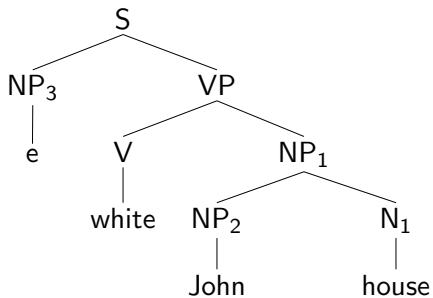
Assumptions on incorporation

- All GFPCs are the result of incorporation
- Incorporation is head movement

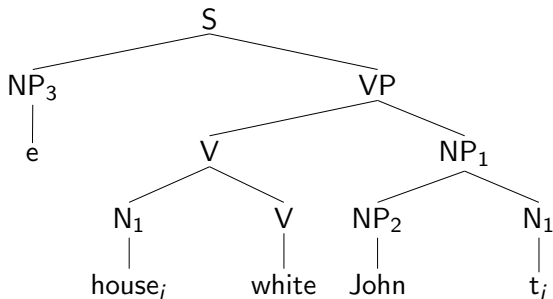
Derivation 1

(4)

D-structure



(5) S-structure



Points of criticism

- Case filter: Any noun has to pass a case filter in order to be interpretable at LF. Case assignment or incorporation satisfy the case filter.
- Case Frame Preservation Principle:
 - (6) A complex X^0 of category A in a given language can have at most the maximal Case-assigning properties allowed to a morphologically simple item of category A in that language.
- Traces cannot assign Case
- those stipulations are ad hoc and not elegant
- Baker's account cannot derive the obligatoriness of V-DO agreement with incorporated DOs in the absence of a possessor

- There is nothing like D- or S-structure
- Strict cycle condition
- Earliness Principle
- Merge, Move, Agree
- every operation is feature driven
- no look-ahead

definition of Agree

- (7) Agree between a probe P and a goal G obtains if
- a. P c-commands G
 - b. P has a feature [$*F^*$] and G has a matching feature F
 - c. G is the closest matching goal for P.
 - d. G is active due to a feature [$\cdot M \cdot$] and P has a matching feature [M]

Then [$*F^*$] on P gets checked and deleted and [$\cdot M \cdot$] on G gets checked and deleted.

Both P and G can be on the same head, then the Feature [$*F^*$] gets deleted immediately

Problems for minimalism

- given earliness, we would assume the DO to always agree with its Possessor
- Even if Agree could be postponed, Agree between the DO and the possessor NP would violate the Strict Cycle

Main tasks

The translation of Baker's account into Minimalism has to solve three tasks

- 1 The technical problems related to Minimalism, not violating Earliness or Strict Cycle
- 2 Baker's adhoc assumptions should be avoided
- 3 The entire Mohawk pattern is to be derived

Trigger of incorporation

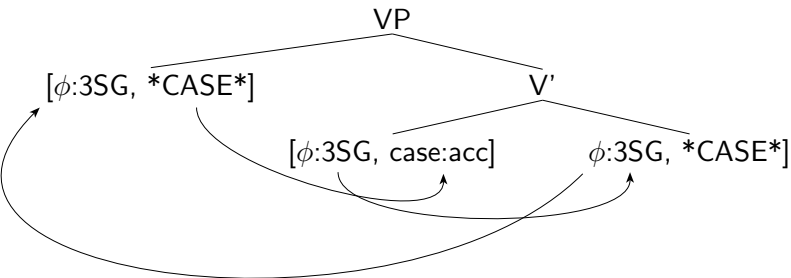
Baker assumes that the morphophonological structure of the noun, having a bound and a free allomorph, induces incorporation

Assman, Georgi & Weisser assume that vocabulary insertion applies postsyntactically, they suggest a Probe feature [**CASE**], located on the noun. This needs to C-command its goal in order to delete the feature. A noun can have an incorporation triggering [**CASE**] feature or a regular [*·case:·*] feature, but only one of them.

on head movement

Head movement targets the specifier of the higher head, into which the lower one incorporates. The difference between Phrasal movement and head movement is the location of [*X**], in head movement it is on the moving head.

Sample Derivation



structure of N

- N has either the feature [$*\text{CASE}*$] or [$\cdot\text{case}:\cdot$]
- N has optionally a feature [$\cdot\text{N}\cdot$], selecting a nominal possessor
- N has optionally a case assignig property [case:gen], which is tied to a ϕ probe [$*\phi*$]

If N selects a possessor but does not assign case, the possessor is free to receive it from the verb without violating Earliness.

Accordingly, there are eight possible specifications of N.

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	Poss?	[case:GEN]?	Incorp?	Attested
Case I	-	+	-	-
Case II	-	+	-	-
Case III	-	-	-	+
Case IV	-	-	+	+
Case V	+	-	-	-
Case VI	+	-	+	+
Case VII	+	+	-	+
Case VIII	+	+	+	-/+

More derivations

Let us try to derive the attested patterns and to crash the derivation for the unattested ones!

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- Case I-IV derive correctly all attested patterns without a possessor. V always agrees with DO, whether incorporated or not, and crash otherwise
- Case V-VII derive all the attested patterns with a possessor and crash otherwise.

Achievements

- Incorporation can be transferred into Minimalism without violating central Minimalistic principles
- It is not necessary to stipulate that traces do not assign case, or that a complex head can assign only the case its simplex head assigned, since an incorporating N which also assigns case, assigns the case always to itself
- all the Mohawk patterns can be derived

- DP instead of NP structure
- Incorporation of external arguments