

Chomsky (1994); Bare Phrase Structure Theory (BPS)

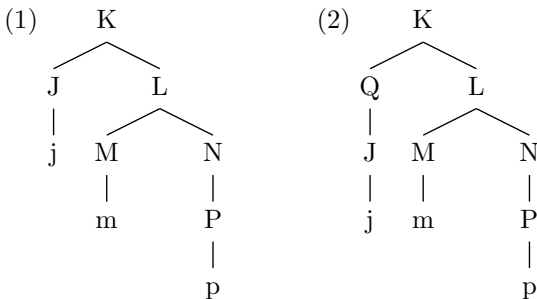
1 Purely Conceptual Issues

Chomsky starts section 6 with a remark on the locus of linearization. Where does the temporal ordering of terminals kick in within a derivation? Linearization is relevant for PF only, and hierarchical relations are still relevant for morphological processes (and he presupposes a postsyntactic morphology). Hence the actual ordering of X^0 s must take place between Morphology and PF. Leaving out the LF-branch, we get, schematically¹:

(1) N → Spell Out → Morphological Structure → Linearization (LCA) → Phonological Form

In his attempt to integrate Kayne’s LCA into the BPS theory, Chomsky tries to cope with conceptual problems of the LCA: first, the LCA relies on lexical items (LI) that project categories (i.e. first, X^0 , second, X' , etc.) as a result of categorial information. Within the BPS theory, however, there are no categories *projected* from LIs; LIs are bundles of lexical information which combine with other LIs through merge, that’s all. The result of merge is a new category which is the label of the projecting LI; the ”phrasal level” is relational: a category that does not project is maximal, a category that is projected and projects is intermediate, a category that projects is non-maximal. “The c-command relation is stipulated to hold only of categories (not terminals)” (414) under the LCA, while it holds of terminals (LIs) and their sisters in the BPS theory.

Concerning another problem, let’s take a look at the tree (2) first²:



We have talked about the problems that arise if K and L in (2) are different categories (say, X' and XP , respectively). L c-commands J - a case which must be excluded to get the correct linearization. However, if, along Kayne’s lines, K and L are really *one* two-segment category [K, L], L doesn’t c-command J, since c-command holds of categories, not of segments. Chomsky takes issue with this proposal since he wants to keep the segment-category distinction along with the related A/A’ distinction, which must be derived independently³: “we do not expect non-maximal heads to be specifiers or to be adjoined to

¹This conception is consistent with the view that differences between languages are located in the overt component of the grammar only. The derivational path from N to LF is said to be universally uniform. We have seen that, for example, the head parameter (or, its variant compatible with the LCA) necessitates movement types some languages have (German) while others don’t (English). By the above schema, this type of movement takes place after Spell Out, namely in the Morphology. Empirically, I guess, there are a number of problems with this conception. Recall that Kayne gave the following story as to why *Wh*-movement is absent in complementizer-final languages: IP moves to Spec-C, which, in turn, blocks overt *Wh*-movement. If this type of movement is overt it is after Spell-Out. How then is it possible that covert, semantically-driven *Wh*-movement takes place afterwards (what is worse: after Reconstruction)? I don’t like messing up beautiful stories, and I am sure there are solutions (within Phase-theory, maybe) if one wants to uphold the initial theory.

²Maybe one remark: Chomsky holds that his trees (31a) and (31b) correspond to Kayne’s (4) and (13), respectively. While (31b) does resemble (4) (and is essentially equal to (1) in the “Antisymmetry”), number (31 b) looks different from (13). Kayne’s discussion of the latter tree centered on the question of adjuncts and on the restriction of one adjunct per head.

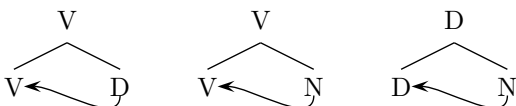
Be that as it may, I tried to distill from Chomsky’s text what I think are conflicting aspects of both theories.

³I couldn’t find explicit remarks on this issue in the “Antisymmetry.” Kayne assumed the A/A’-distinction implicitly but remained silent as to how it can be defined. Presumably it was defined in terms of designated positions. Traditionally,

maximal projections“ (415) as the LCA-based theory suggests⁴. This would conflict with the relational definition of phrases within BPS: A maximal projection cannot possibly merge with another element (its spec) to form “an even more maximal projection.“ An intermediate “projection“ that awaits its spec is a nonminimal nonmaximal projection, and consequently cannot be the lower segment of an XP. Thus, conceptually, the LCA relies on notions of X-bar theory that have been abandoned within BPS.

2 Almost Empirical Issues

What happens if a head merges with a single terminal complement, say, h merges with c , forming the set $\{h, c\}$? By the BPS theory mutual c-command holds between them. If it is c-command that determines linearization, they cannot be ordered. A solution to this problem is to say that in such a situation one element obligatorily moves, leaving a trace. “(T)here is no reason for LCA to order an element that will disappear at PF.“ (417) Is the LCA a look-ahead guy who knows what will happen at PF by deciding to ignore traces/master copies? I don’t think so. Rather, it seems as though the LCA is equipped with an instruction like: “Once you scan a head merged with a single terminal complement, move one of the two away so as to avoid symmetrical c-command.“ Chomsky elaborates on this conclusion. If V^0 merges with a DP which is not complex, D^0 must be a clitic that seeks for a host; thus it has to move ”determined either generally, or by specific morphological properties, depending on how cliticization works” (417). If V^0 merges with an NP which is not complex, N^0 incorporates into V^0 . Finally, if D^0 merges with a NP which is not complex, N^0 raises to D^0 :

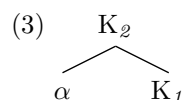


He now introduces the distinction between strong and weak pronouns. The weak ones obligatorily cliticize, the strong ones don’t and are complex in terms of their phrasal status. Michael alerted us of the example *John picked it_i up t_i* which is grammatical only if the weak pronoun moves. I don’t know if this is what is intended, but it must mean that the pronoun adjoins to P^0 or to the verb particle, respectively, for two reasons: First, direct adjunction to V^0 violates the Head Movement Constraint. And secondly, if it is V^0 that the pronouns adjoins to, the structure violates the LCA as D^0 right adjoins to the head, thus shouldn’t follow but precede its target.

Finally, Chomsky deals with head adjunction. First, he proposes a new definition of c-command:

- X c-commands Y if (i) every Z that dominates X dominates Y and (ii) X and Y are disconnected.

”(W)e take X and Y to be disconnected if $X \neq Y$ and neither dominates the other.” (419) Next he considers the tree (3):



The tree has the following terms, i.e. elements that are visible at the interface:

- $[K_2, K_1] = \{ \langle k, k \rangle, \{ \alpha, K \} \}$
- α
- K_1

α does not c-command K_1 since the former is only contained in $[K_2, K_1]$, but not dominated by it as it is not the case that every segment of K dominates α . This is a desirable conclusion as α is head-adjoined

adjuncts were automatically A’ positions while specs and complements were either A or A’ positions, correlating with θ -role and Case assignment on the one hand, and operator status and adjuncts status on the other. What is clear is that within Kayne’s theory this conception could not be upheld straightforwardly. Today, both notions are derived from independent concepts in most theories.

⁴As far as I can tell this holds for both trees above. Chomsky criticizes Kayne’s conception since ”the only admissible case of the segment-category distinction ... should be for a dubious structure such as (1),” (415) where a non-maximal head is a specifier. I couldn’t quite follow the reasoning for rejecting (1).

and must still bind its trace, thus it must be able to c-command out of the adjunction structure. Chomsky arrives at the conclusion that $[K_2, K_1]$ dominates K_1 (I see why it must effectively be the case but cannot quite follow his reasoning).

He concludes with upholding the "basic intuition" behind the LCA and maintaining the "specifier-adjunct (A-A') distinction," while departing from its strict version as "there may be multiple specifiers or adjuncts" (420).

3 (More) Open Issues

One issue Neven raised is what it means for the LCA to apply at LF. Since the LCA is relevant for linearization only, why assume it to hold at other levels of representation (as Kayne did) or cross-derivationally?