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The main title of the book is brilliant: short, snappy, and certain to arouse curiosity as it promises to answer two of the most fundamental questions in current generative syntax (the subtitle could have been left out). Does the book answer the questions? Yes, it does, although, not surprisingly, there are further questions raised by the answers, which I return to later. In the process of elucidating these two big questions, Shigeru Miyagawa discusses and develops interesting, well-informed, and for the most part convincing analyses of a range of phenomena in a number of languages. Japanese figures prominently in the discussion, but Finnish, Kilega, Kinande, Chinese, and Old Japanese also provide important pieces in the jigsaw puzzle that assembles.

The book is a ‘Linguistic inquiry monograph’, and as such is not too long, easy to carry with you, well produced (although the Finnish examples could have been better proofread), and affordable. The series still uses endnotes instead of footnotes, which is irritating if you want to read the notes as they come. The trick is to just ignore the notes until the end of the chapter, which worked well in the case of this book. M’s presentation is lucid, never more formal than required to get the point across. Each chapter starts with an extensive synopsis that is then further articulated, making his reasoning always easy to follow.

Ch. 1 is titled ‘Why agree?’ (1–29). Giving away the answer here feels a bit like revealing the murderer in a whodunnit, but I will do it nonetheless (or this review will remain very short): agreement occurs to establish a functional relation. By ‘functional relation’ M means relations such as subject-predicate, theme-rheme, and focus-presupposition. Agreement is a means of forming such a relation at a distance, for instance, between finite T and an argument in VP. Agreement is typically accompanied by movement, placing the constituent agreed with in the specifier position of the agreeing head. Thus, the answer to ‘Why agree?’ is also part of the answer to ‘Why move?’ (the title of Ch. 2). According to M, the reason for the movement is NOT that agreement presupposes a spec-head relation (as in Chomsky 1993), but instead, the movement is required to ‘keep a record of functional relations for semantic and information-structure interpretation’ (33). Agreement is described formally in terms of Chomsky’s (2001) probe-goal valuation relation: a probe with an uninterpretable feature is valued by a goal with a matching interpretable feature. This is often reflected in phonetic form (PF) by agreement and case morphology. Since uninterpretable features get deleted subsequent to spell-out, however, there is no record of the relation in logical form (LF), unless there is also movement. The principle is called probe-goal union (PGU): a goal moves to unite with its probe.

The deeper reason why we want functional relations, according to M, is that it greatly increases the expressivity of language. He does not actually discuss what human language would look like without these relations, but as far as I understand, we would be restricted to referring/pointing to individuals and events, perhaps only in our immediate surroundings, without being able to say anything about them. There would be only vPs, no TPs or CPs.

One of the leading ideas in this book is that all languages have Agree, accompanied by movement, but Agree is not always a matter of φ-feature valuation, resulting in morphological agreement. Another form of Agree employs topic/focus features. This important idea is introduced in Ch. 1 and elaborated in subsequent chapters. M does not claim that languages do one or the other. In
fact, he argues at some length that (Mandarin) Chinese, commonly taken to be a topic-prominent language par excellence, has person features in T involved in agreement, albeit without morphological effects, and that even Japanese has some $\phi$-feature-based agreement. But then he goes on to develop the idea that topic and focus features function as probes in a variety of constructions in Japanese and other ‘discourse-configurational’ languages, in formally the same way as $\phi$-features do in other languages/constructions. Specifically, following Chomsky 2005, 2008, according to which all movement-triggering features start out as features of phase-heads, M proposes that unvalued topic and focus features enter the syntax as features of C, but can lower onto T, whence they trigger movement of topic and focus-marked constituents. He is thus opposed to the idea that topic and focus-fronted constituents always move to designated topic and focus positions in the C-domain.

Ch. 3, ‘Unifying A-movements’ (59–92), starts by posing the question of what defines A-movement in the framework of current syntactic theory where specifier of IP is not a theta-position or even necessarily a case-position. After showing that there is still a distinction to be made between A and A′-movement (A-movement is insensitive to weak cross-over (WCO) and creates a new binder of anaphora), M proposes, as a preliminary hypothesis to be modified in subsequent chapters, that A-movement is when a grammatical feature on T targets the goal of Agree for movement. He then goes on to argue for the thesis that the grammatical features on T that induce Agree and movement include not just $\phi$-features but also topic and focus. The initial evidence comes from movement of the Japanese focused mo-phrase (’also’-phrase): it does not allow reconstruction, it may overcome a WCO-violation, and it affects the binding properties of the moved phrase, all unmistakable properties of A-movement. He then argues that, since a scrambled phrase also showing properties of A-movement can precede a focused focus-phrase, there must be another A-position above TP; M dubs it $\alpha$P. The spec of $\alpha$ (a category present only ‘when needed’) can host either a topic or a focused constituent. Its properties are elucidated in subsequent chapters. A further section deals with Japanese short scrambling as topic movement, modifying M’s earlier analysis (Miyagawa 2001) of scrambling as EPP-driven movement.

Discussing the nature of the topic and focus features, M adopts an idea from Holmberg & Nikanne 2002: focus is a binary feature [±focus], a property of all referential expressions, where [–focus] is the default value and is interpreted (when fronted) as ‘aboutness topic’. M further develops this idea. C will always have a [–focus] feature (effectively an unvalued focus feature, although M refrains from calling it that). This feature, after lowering to $\alpha$, if $\alpha$ is present in the structure, or else to T, probes for a valued focus feature. If the goal is [–focus], that will be the value of T or $\alpha$, while if the goal is [+focus], T or $\alpha$ is valued [+focus]. The Agree-relation is accompanied by movement in either case.

This theory is further elaborated and defended in Ch. 4, ‘$\alpha$P, $\phi$-features, and the A/Ā distinction’ (93–123), which is specifically about the role of the head $\alpha$. An important claim is that $\alpha$ can inherit not just the topic/focus probe from C, but the $\phi$-probe as well, as a parametric option. Among the languages that have realized this option are (many of) the Bantu languages: those discussed by M are Kinande (following Baker 2003) and Kilega (following Carstens 2005 and Kinyalolo 1991). Characteristic of these languages is that any fronted constituent—subject, object, or adverbial—triggers agreement on the verb. He adopts and develops the idea from Baker 2003 that agreement is crucially dissociated from Case in these languages. In M’s theory this is a consequence of the $\phi$-features of C being inherited by $\alpha$, if $\alpha$ is merged, and by T if $\alpha$ is not merged. Only in the latter case, that is, when Agree targets the subject, is Agree accompanied by (nominative) Case. In the former case, because a $\phi$-probe by hypothesis must depend on something else to identify its goal, the goal is a [–focus]-marked phrase (a topic) or a [+focus]-marked phrase, moved to the specifier of $\alpha$P (to satisfy the PGU). M shows that only Kilega but not Kinande realizes the option of a [+focus]-marked goal. Thus, there are two types of languages that combine $\phi$-probing and topic/focus probing: those where the $\phi$-probe can lower onto $\alpha$ or T (Kinande and Kilega), and those where it can only lower onto T (Finnish).

The remainder of the chapter discusses differences between A and A′-movement. M argues that the crucial difference, from which the other differences follow, is that A-movement does not necessarily leave a (full) copy, hence there is no necessary reconstruction and no WCO. This, in turn,
is because what we call A-movement does not cross a phase boundary (more precisely, a ‘transfer-domain boundary’). Given that syntactic derivation proceeds in phases, where a phase is a portion of structure that is spelled out and interpreted (‘transferred’) when completed, if a constituent, call it α, moves out of a phase P without leaving a copy, the information encoded by α in P (e.g. a theta-role) will not be interpreted when P is spelled out. For movement of α within a phase, however, a copy is not necessarily required, as one copy is in principle enough to encode the properties of α. This is a simple and very attractive idea if it can be maintained, and obviously M has arguments for it. The important distinction, if M is right, is thus not between A-movement, in the sense of movement to an ‘argument position’, and A’-movement, but movement within and across a phase boundary.

Ch. 5, ‘WH-questions and focus’ (125–42), discusses and proposes a solution to a familiar conundrum within the minimalist last-resort approach to movement: if WH-movement is an effect of a probe-goal relation accompanied by movement, then C should contain an uninterpretable/unvalued Q-feature attracting an interpretable WH-phrase (as seems particularly adequate in languages where only one WH-phrase can move). By contrast, C would appear to contain an interpretable question feature encoding interrogative illocutionary force. M’s solution is: C in questions has an interpretable Q-feature that does not trigger any movement. Instead, the probe that targets a WH-phrase and triggers movement (by virtue of PGU) to the specifier of CP is a FOCUS feature, valued [+focus] when targeting a WH-phrase, since WH-phrases in questions are focused. The Agree-relation between the focus probe and the WH-phrase then allows the Q-feature on C to establish an operator-variable relation with the WH-phrase, as M puts it. The evidence comes mainly from intervention effects by quantifiers on WH-in-situ, discussed by Beck (1996) and others. As first noticed by Kim (2002), not any old quantifier is an intervenor, but focused quantifiers are. In M’s theory, where the probe is a focus feature, the intervention is thus a relativized minimality effect. One idea, mentioned only in a footnote (since it derives from a reviewer), that I find very interesting and worthy of further investigation is that WH-movement in relatives is movement of a topic phrase, a possibility predicted by M’s theory.

There are a number of ideas and hypotheses in this book that I found quite compelling, in particular the role of topic and focus as probes alongside φ-features. M also makes good use of recent literature on a variety of topical issues. This, in conjunction with the lucid presentation, should make the book very useful reading for postgraduate courses and reading groups.

As for the big questions in the title of the book, I find the answers highly suggestive. But if the purpose of movement is to keep a record of the relations created by Agree for the benefit of semantic interpretation, then why is it not sufficient that a chain is created by merging a copy of the goal near the probe? Why is it also typically required that the higher copy be pronounced, providing overt evidence of the movement? Why should that make any difference for semantic interpretation within a theory strictly separating narrow syntax from morphology/phonology, à la Chomsky 2001, 2005, 2008? Could it also be in order to keep a record of the relation for the benefit of phonetic interpretation, and thus ultimately for the benefit of communication? But that is typically taken care of by morphological agreement in the case of the φ-feature probe, and by intonation in the case of the focus probe. If it would be the raison d’être of movement, then it would seem to follow that movement should be less common in the presence of morphological agreement. It would be quite the opposite of the actual situation, which is presumably why M does not make that claim. In any case, M’s answer to ‘Why move?’ raises interesting further questions about the precise architecture of the grammar, a good topic for a syntax reading group.

REFERENCES


Reviewed by Satoshi Tomioka, University of Delaware

Sophie Repp’s new book contains two things in one. It is an in-depth investigation of negation that uses the gapping construction as a window into its true syntactic and semantic nature. At the same time, it presents a novel and original analysis of gapping based on scope facts of negation in gapping. Ch. 1 provides a concise introduction of the phenomena and critical reviews of the previous analyses of gapping. There are three basic scope patterns with negation in gapping, as exemplified by (1).

\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Pete hasn’t got a video and John __ a DVD.
\item b. Pete didn’t clean the whole flat and John __ laze around all afternoon.
\item c. Pete wasn’t called by Vanessa but John ___ by Jessie.
\item d. Pete wasn’t called by Vanessa and John ___ only by Jessie.
\end{enumerate}

Among the three scope options, the first two, the distributed scope (1a: ¬A & ¬B) and the wide scope (1b: ¬(A & B)), have been widely discussed in the past. The third reading (1c and 1d), in which negation is confined within the first conjunct while the second conjunct is understood to be positive (i.e. ¬A & B), has not been noted before, and plays an important role in distinguishing R’s proposal from the previous analyses.

In Ch. 2, ‘The syntax of clausal negation: The distributed readings in main verb gapping’, the distributed scope reading becomes the centerpiece of R’s syntactic proposal. The crucial observation is that, unlike in English, the distributed scope reading is not readily available in German. This crosslinguistic difference is attributed to the syntax of negation: the English not is a functional head and projects NegP, which is a part of the extended verbal projections, whereas the German negation nicht is an adverbial and simply adjoins to VP. The main ingredient of R’s syntax for gapping is the ‘sideward’ movement operation of Nunes 1995, 2004. Take a simple gapping sentence like Andy read The Tim Drum, and Billy __ Momo. The second conjunct begins its numeration only with what is overtly expressed, {and, Billy, Momo}. The two DPs have Case-features that must be checked off, but as it stands, this numeration contains no material that can perform the feature-checker role. Therefore, the relevant material from the first conjunct is copied to the second conjunct via sideward movement. This copying process proceeds incrementally (i.e. the lexical verb first, then the small v, and ultimately T), and all the material that is a part of the extended verbal projections will be copied. This is how the difference between English and German is derived. The English negation not heads a NegP, which is selected by T. Thus, if