Head Movement, XP Movement and Noun Incorporation

Head Movement (HM) has been controversial since various problems with it have been pointed out (Fanselow, 2003, Mahajan, 2003). One particular problem with HM is its incompatibility with Bare Phrase Structure. Specifically, Merge (a,b) always results in a phrase {a, {a,b}}. I suggest that features geometries may offer a solution. There has been much syntactic work on feature geometries (Cowper, 2005, Harley & Ritter, 2002, McGinnis, 2005). Let us assume that a head is essentially a piece of a feature geometry. If Merge (a,b) consists of the merger of two compatible pieces of feature geometry, then a new larger feature geometry is formed, giving rise to a larger head. Here is brief explanation of how this can be implemented. Assume, following Cowper that Infl is a complex feature geometry. Assume also that the features of v are also arranged in a feature geometry. The current proposal suggests that both geometries are actually part of a larger geometry that can remain separate in languages without V-to-T movement or can be united in languages with V-to-T movement. Ultimately, V to C movement is possible as we have one single feature geometry that can be put together by the individual heads. Some consequences of this proposal are that noun incorporation (NI) must be XP movement (since the extended nominal and verbal projections assumedly comprise distinct geometries) and that HM cannot cross clauses. These results are incorporated into recent collaborative work on NI, in which it is argued that NI takes place by XP movement (Barrie & Mathieu, 2016). I present current research outlining an analysis for XP movement of NI in which the phrasal incorporated noun (IN) moves to a low topic position below IP (Belletti, 2004, Jayaseelan, 2001). A recurring issue for NI is the fact that the IN can appear with a full DP double in classifier incorporation (Barrie, 2015, Rosen, 1989). Instead, I exploit this fact to drive the analysis. Following Ott (2015), who proposed a similar analysis for split topics in German, the IN+double complex is merged as [[nP][DP]] and is unlabelable, hence unstable. Specifically, I propose that [[nP][DP]] forms a small clause in the sense of Moro (1997), where the nP is the predicate. This nP then undergoes raising to the low TopP as mentioned above, giving rise to the illusion of noun incorporation. The verbal complex is now put together by a combination of head movement and XP movement. Prosodic evidence will be adduced to bolster this analysis (Dyck, 2009, Michelson, 1988).

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