

Intermodular argumentation

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This contribution calls attention to the intermodular potential of the interactionist architecture that multiple spell-out and derivation by phase (Epstein et al. 1998, Uriagereka 1999, Chomsky 2000, 2001 *et seq.*) have introduced. In contrast to the Government & Binding paradigm where the completed morpho-syntactic derivation was merely dumped into PF (and LF) with a "good bye and don't come back", Phase Theory establishes a two-way pipe between the concatenative (morpho-syntax) and the interpretational devices (phonology/PF, semantics/LF) that did not exist in earlier versions of the inverted T-/Y-architecture. Actors on both ends are not free anymore to do what they want: their theories and analyses may make predictions on the other end.

The intermodular potential of Phase Theory, however, has not received much attention thus far. Syntacticians use Phase Impenetrability for syntax-internal purposes, and Phase Theory evolves at high speed without taking into account what happens when the parcel spends time on the phonological side. On the other hand, phonologists have barely acknowledged the existence of Phase Theory, let alone taken into account the predictions that it makes on the phonological side.

I submit that *intermodular argumentation* provides stronger evidence than what can be produced by modular-internal reasoning: it offers the maximal degree of independent assessment that linguists can expect without leaving their discipline. Be it only for that reason, the new interactionist architecture that the minimalist orientation has installed is a good thing to have.

Below I expose three intermodular arguments: in each case, the existence of a device in current syntactic theory is taken to evaluate competing phonological theories according to whether they provide for this device or not. That is, since derivation by phase is based on selective spell-out, the PIC and the phase edge, phonological effects of cyclic spell-out must also feature these devices. Phonological theories that require all nodes to be spelled out (non-selective spell-out), where no look-back devices do not play a role (absence of the PIC), or which do not spell out the sister of the phase head (cf. the phase edge), do not qualify.

The empirical material considered that allows syntax to referee competing phonological theories concerns affix class-based phenomena (in English). Three competing phonological theories are presented: Lexical Phonology, Halle & Vergnaud's (1987) non-interactionist model and Kaye's (1995) Government Phonology-based view. It is shown that Lexical Phonology spells out all nodes, while Halle & Vergnaud only spell out those nodes that dominate interpretation-triggering affixes; finally, Kaye spells out only the sister of interpretation-triggering affixes. Current syntactic theory holds that spell-out is 1) selective (only a subset of nodes is spelled out) and 2) concerns only the sister of the phase head- X° (i.e. the complement of what is called the phase edge). Since the spell-out mechanism is of course the same on both the syntactic and the phonological side, Lexical Phonology must be dismissed because it spells out all nodes, and Halle & Vergnaud are unhorsed since they spell out the mother of the interpretation-triggering terminal, rather than its sister. Only Kaye (1995) matches all syntactic requirements and is therefore selected.

References

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