

Cognitax Tool Grammar: Re-factoring the Generative Program  
A pervasive action dimension for linguistic description, theory and models <sup>12</sup>

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This is a frequently changing dynamic document responsive to reader critique and is likely not the latest version available by contacting the author. (Note the title has changed.<sup>3</sup>) The later version always supersedes the earlier and typically may include major revisions. Comments and challenges are welcome for future versions. The extended version under development is freely available on request from the author.

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<sup>1</sup> We are indebted for the incisive comments of readers who suggested constructive improvements even as the ideas presented here were sometimes at considerable variance with their own current working frameworks. We owe special thanks to the following for comments on either parts or the whole of this work: John Hewson, Paul Postal, Vit Bubenik, Pieter Seurens and Willem de Reuse.

<sup>2</sup> We had considered an alternative title for this paper since it seeks to explain malformation: “A Review of Verbal Misbehavior”

<sup>3</sup> From version 12.9 ‘Cognitax’ replaces ‘Pragmatax’ to clarify that Tool Grammar is distinct from pragmatics, as well as separate work that may refer to grammatical tools. Both were absent from the title in an earlier version.

## **Operative Motivating Hypotheses of Tool Grammar**

1. There exists an empirically evident necessity for representation of linguistic structural action intent which has been generally overlooked in the theory of language, including centralized configurational syntax in the generative program.
2. Linguistic structural action intent extends the basic Chomskyan focus on linguistic creativity (unbounded generation from finite means) to a new level of representation useful for explaining and constraining the inventive means by which the species-specific features of human language are effected. Theoretical gains are sought by extending the Chomskyan idea to generation of structure from intent.
3. The inclusion of intention in linguistic rules both enables solutions of resistant and intractable problems, and otherwise enables a wider set of more generalized and more natural solutions.
4. The exclusion of linguistic intention and action from generative rules introduces artefactual complexity and precludes the strongest possible natural constraints on characterizations of the human faculty of language.
5. Theorizing based on linguistic action intent leads to thinner, simplified, more directly empirical argumentation compared to the indirections necessitated by complex syntactic analysis based on central configurational syntax.
6. The inclusion of linguistic action intent in generative rules enables a deepening understanding of the role of generative constructs such as C-Command and Merge in the computational facility which underlies human language, revealing a new level of significance for Minimalism's most basic claims..
7. Careful examination of linguistic intent as a methodology can greatly reduce the entropy of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic theory by independently explaining a plethora of ill formed sentences in a straightforward way, leaving a more tractable set of separate theoretical problems for these disciplines.
8. Scientific validity is enhanced by revising the architecture of generative linguistics from a bi-directional sound-meaning connection to a functional connection between linguistic action intention and external linguistic representation.

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# 1 Introduction and Summary<sup>4</sup>

Are there alternate paths to explanatory theories based on extensions or revisions of Chomsky's programmatic axioms and architecture of linguistic competence? Specifically, might scientific validity be enhanced by re-factoring the architecture of generative linguistics from a directly mathematical sound-meaning connection to a functional connection between linguistic intention and linguistic expression? Can the operational presence of structural intention in generative grammar illuminate further the fundamental significance of C-Command and Merge operations of the Minimalist Program? Might linguistic structural intent extend the basic Chomskyan focus on linguistic creativity (unbounded generation from finite means) to a new level of representation useful for explaining and constraining the inventive the means by which the species-specific features of human language are effected? Can theoretical gains be achieved by extending the Chomskyan idea to generation of structure from linguistic intent oriented more to the creative generative process of sentence creation than interpretation by the listener? Is Chomsky's profound attention to the creativity of human language enhanced by extension to the domain of linguistic structural intent?

The main thesis of the present work is that there exists an empirically evident necessity for the representation of linguistic structural intent which has been generally overlooked in the theory of language, including notably centralized configurational syntax in the generative program. We propose and motivate Tool Grammar<sup>5</sup>, in which a sentence is an action, a performance wherein intention is central rather than syntax. A sentence intention is a formative set of decisions for external representation of thought by means of highly constrained, conventional, interlocking structures and processes, which we call 'tools'. Each tool is an intentional device for specific effect in the process of utterance generation, distinguished from the traditional concept of a linguistic 'rule' by the explicit specification of intent added to the standard structural input and output conditions. The data essential for motivating linguistic descriptions is thus enhanced by explicit field transcriptions of evident user action and intent using a controlled scientific vocabulary. Tool Grammar (TG) postulates that sentence generation exhibits linguistic cognitive actions most fundamentally and syntax processes more procedurally, parallel to but distinguished from the Chomskyan hypothesis that humans are fundamentally "syntactical animals". (Searle, June 29, 1972) The crux of resolution for this contrast is whether TG better can enable stronger constraints on the definition of human language than more rigidly syntax-centered accounts. A revision of the architecture of competence shifting away from the strict centrality of syntax can increase the potential for explanatory power in the generative program.

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<sup>4</sup> We recognize that Shakespeare's admonition will apply as much to what might be said here as it is to what has gone before: "There are more things in heaven and earth, (...), Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Hamlet (1.5.167-8)

<sup>5</sup> The term "tool grammar" (TG) is intended as a handier nickname for "Instrumental Grammar". Importantly, the term 'tool' is not used in any anthropological, archeological, anti-generativist, or reductionist sense, but only to signify that in the formation of a sentence a speaker has access to an array of devices, lexical and structural, for the purpose of externalizing an intended representation of meaning. Since TG does not derive from the toolkit approach of (Culicover & Jackendoff, 2005) or other proposed systems presented as tool sets we sometimes identify it as Cognitax Tool Grammar.

Several specific conceptions of language characterize the TG approach to linguistic analysis.

- While the Generative Program has not always built on a clear definition of the basic units of language, TG defines a sentence as that externalized communication structure which carries the selective representation of meaning resulting from the targeted set of speaker decisions made for the purpose of effecting linguistic intent. This definition orients the sentence to speaker action rather than interpretation thereby distinguishing linguistic intent from the wider phenomena of interpretation and implication that characterize receptive activities. A language therefore is conceived not so much as a set of sentences that need to be accounted for, but a set of structures considered in the context of active decisions about structure and representation on the part of the speaker.<sup>6</sup>
- While the Generative Program has classically taken as its basic problem to develop a theory of the non-directional syntactic connection between meaning (logical form) and output (e.g. phonological form), (Chomsky, *Sophia Lectures*, 2014) TG re-factors the architecture of language competence rather to connect linguistic intentions to output as a directional generative process. This at once adds an intention generator as a new module in the competence framework and also defines a new relationship to truth functional interpretation semantics and the study of implication. For TG, the meanings hearers take from an utterance, which are evidently various and diverse, involve a different set of processes from the speaker's intentional engagement to represent particular meaning structures. This means that the various interpretations that might or might not be taken from a particular utterance warrant a separate analysis from that of the representation the speaker intended to make. Another consequence of this re-factoring is that the source of creativity and recursion is moved outside the purveyance of syntax to the intention module.

TG holds that language has the external representation of meaning as a purpose and tools as a means of action. Natural constraints on the inter-compatibility of tools render many rules and constraints on configurational syntax unnecessary, since unacceptable sentences often reflect the incompatible misapplication of tools. A broad swath of linguistic ill-formedness can be attributed to structures involving incompatible intents.

As an illustration, the following examples provide a taste of how the intention of the passive tool can conflict with the intentions of other tools: the passive structure, drawing attention away from the agent, is vulnerable to conflict from a tool centering on the agent.

Al visited the sick woman.

The sick woman was visited by Al.

What was surprising about Al was that he visited the sick woman.

\*What was surprising about Al was that the sick woman was visited by Al (him).

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<sup>6</sup> The development of a formal definition of the word is implicit in the procedures and results of TG but is not elaborated here. Suffice it to characterize a word as a prepackaged structure that is merged into an incrementally expanding hierarchical structure as a speaker makes decisions of representational and structural intent. The means by which words are selected in accordance with pattern matching against internal semantic representation are sufficiently involved and interesting that they deserve separate treatment not undertaken here.

We observe here incompatibility between tools in opposition, at cross purposes, to both add and take away special attention to the agent. This is one tip-of-the-iceberg example of the myriad issues, far beyond the simple topic/focus conflict seen here, that can be handled in a straightforward way if intention is represented in linguistic rules. When this approach is extended to many other areas of syntax, attractive and simplified solutions become available for a surprisingly wide range of problems.

The operative hypotheses of this paper surround the question whether linguistic rules are preferably formulated in terms of linguistic structural intentions, a theoretical position that has perhaps not heretofore been fully examined to resolution. From a preponderance of diverse cases involving linguistic problems that resist authoritative solutions, we seek to demonstrate that linguistic theory is strengthened when it inclines toward incorporation of components of linguistic action and intention.

The goal is to show that the exclusion of linguistic intention and action from generative rules introduces artefactual complexity and undesirably precludes the discovery of powerful natural constraints on characterizations of the human faculty of language. The inclusion of intention in linguistic rules both enables solutions of otherwise intractable problems and enables simpler, more natural solutions generally. Theorizing based on linguistic intent leads to thinner, simplified, more directly empirical argumentation compared to the indirections necessitated by complex syntactic analysis based on central configurational syntax. TG argumentation, by adding a new dimension of recordable and verifiable data subject to independent validation, thereby enjoys resistance to the view that it is merely stipulative or reductionist and facilitates a new way of looking at generative grammar.

## **2 Re-factoring the Generative Program**

To test our theses we select from among difficult and vexing problems in syntactic theory. We present and defend empirically transparent and radically penetrating mechanisms for these problems while rigorously constraining the notion of a human language in support of the primary Chomskyan goals of explaining infinite linguistic creativity from finite resources and rapid child language learning in the context of poverty of stimulus data. We conclude that syntactic theory requires specification of structural intent in order properly to solve a set of the most difficult theoretical challenges.

When syntactic phenomena are understood to be conditioned by linguistic action/intent descriptors, difficult problems yield to straightforward solutions: conflicting intents yield ill-formed sentences. When generalizations are sought at an incorrect and incapable level of representation, unnatural and unnecessarily contrived solutions unavoidably result. By incorporating intention action directives into linguistic structure building, syntactic problems generally acquire a facilitative utilitarian resolution: much of syntax is transformed into functional processes of cognitive mechanics. Important fundamentals of syntax are reducible to a particular form of structural cognitive manipulation and syntax is no longer so autonomous a component of linguistic competence. Much of the Chomskyan Weltanschauung and the resulting theories can be retained and revalidated, but much also is to be gained by re-factoring the

organizational structure of linguistic science.

TG represents a sub-paradigmatic shift in syntactic theory to the extent it can be integrated to the minimalist program. Some tenets are revised but important elements are retained. The concepts of poverty of stimulus, universals, ill-formedness, recursiveness from Merge, interpretation, generative capacity, filtering, and so forth are reapplied in an alternative architecture of linguistic competence.

We present a range of arguments from linguistic and poetic data that action intents are at the generative core in a set of syntactic processes. When the intentions underlying structural decisions are examined, separate from the internals of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, all three may be subject to simplification, potentially increasing the scope of constraints on the operations of human language.

The entire enterprise of investigating linguistic intent is seen finally to highlight the thesis that constructs such as C-Command and a lexical merge operation may be deeply fundamental to a linguistic ability wherein tools are used to produce sentential products. TG brings out the essential theoretical importance of a Merge operation since it is logically inescapable that lexical choices in any realistic process of sentence generation become assembled into hierarchical structures, and the latter are among the best motivated of linguistic theoretical constructs. Merge is a tool for assembling other tools.

It may bear emphasizing that the Cognitax Tool Grammar approach to human language builds on, rather than undermines, the generative program of the Chomskyan school of linguistics. The main impetus is to use as a database the vast collection of linguistic effects to be found in work on generative syntax. These would not be available and could not have been conceived were it not for the Chomskyan insistence on theoretical rigor as a required framework for targeted data collection of a kind that is necessary for scientific progress. Far from aligning with positions that are antithetical to the Generative Program such as (Tomaseo & Ibbotson, 2016) or (Everett, 2012), TG carries the direction of research to a new sphere in the same domain. Chomsky identified early that rule recursion can be associated with one dimension of linguistic creativity, the generation of an unbounded set of structures from finite processes but it is a misrepresentation to identify linguistic creativity merely with recursivity. Chomsky later provided a further profoundly insightful formulation whereby the merging of pairs of subunits into larger structures also satisfies the need for structural unboundedness. By providing that pairs of units can be combined into a larger structure, whether lexical items or phrasal substructures, the Merge process of the Minimalist Program affords even greater formal explanation for the unique capability of human linguistic capability.

Rather than seeking to undermine or displace the generative program, the proposed revision in the present work would amplify its importance even further to any extent that additional explanatory power is made available. Chomsky's massively influential foundations of generative grammar builds from profound observations on the creativity of human language. To the extent that a revised architecture can uncover a new level of linguistic creativity it validates the Chomskyan proposal by judiciously extending its initial programmatic formulation. The inclusion of linguistic structural intent in linguistic analysis opens further the possibilities for discovering new dimensions of linguistic creativity.



### 3 Background: Cognitax is Linguistic Action

Architectural work on large symbolic systems frequently leads to the observation that undue complexity arises when there is an attempt to capture and express regularities at the wrong level of generalization, i.e. where natural conditioning properties are inexplicit or unexpressed. A primary thesis of TG is that there has been excessive idiosyncratically contrived complexity and resulting instability in Chomskyan theories of syntactic competence when generalizations have been sought apart from the factors that condition them. This implies that superior solutions might be achieved at a different level of representation. The vast syntactic literature seeking explanations for which sentences of a language may or may not be acceptable can be reviewed for potential reanalysis if the fundamental reasons for linguistic structure formation are examined in detail. Syntax might be significantly reduced in a utilitarian context to cognitive mechanics of a utilitarian kind. TG explores the world of syntax with the mindset of cognitive functional mechanics.

The origin of the present works goes back to discussions with an anthropologist finely attuned to the linguistic actions of a native language. As she gathered material and made progress on the phonology, morphology, lexicography, etc. of the language she was so carefully archiving, it seemed a gaping insufficiency that linguistics could not offer elicitation field tools for the vocabulary of social life actions that interested her. Linguistics offered methodologies for phonetic transcription, phonemic discovery and transcription, morphological analysis, syntactic description, and promising scientific frameworks for theory, but there was little tradition for recording or analyzing the semantics of the actions that are so obviously carried out in the process of speaking. This stood in stark contrast with the myriad expressions available in every language to characterize what a speaker is doing with words. Elicitation of semantic detail can be difficult, yet every field linguist asking what something means has likely known the experience of hearing rather than the speaker is doing when words are used. This suggests a dimension of semantics which is closer to the surface origination and easier to elicit and describe than the intricacies derived after difficult thought about receptive interpretation in a truth functional model theoretic semantics framework. TG assumes the validity of a particular methodology: when a linguist elicits or records data s/he could well write down an answer to the question what a speaker is doing when a certain form is used. What is the action?

Chomsky's massively influential generative program has fundamental attributes which are unassailable, but nevertheless extensible. Language is cut up into competence and performance to put scientific focus on cognitive ability, adding a divide and conquer strategy necessary in the midst of the overwhelming complexity of human language. It brings to center stage rapid language learning in childhood and the startling recursive creative potential of language, while also imposing empirical constraints on putative theories and mechanisms. Generative mapping, with its emphasis on formalization, testing, and minimal contrasts of sentence acceptability, provides discipline to guide hypotheses toward the counterexamples necessary for progress. There has been an extraordinary collection of distinctive facts and patterning effects for a large number of diverse language phenomena. Its methodology has been highly effective as a stimulant to scientific advancement, but can also entail forward interests involving new perspectives. For all the fecundity of the unfolding Chomskyan vision, theories have retained syntax, and neither semantics, pragmatics nor higher cognition, as the core focal center of

language generation.<sup>7</sup> While the range of data has widened broadly, the area of focus, syntax, has remained narrow relative to the full range of operational linguistic phenomena. The fundamental unit of study, the sentence, has arguably remained without a satisfying definition. In TG we explore whether a shift in perspective can be advantageous, wherein language is viewed not so much as centering around syntax as the structural action semantics of intentional<sup>8</sup> purpose.

Among many dimensions of scientific challenge, the generative program has focused on the speed and ease of child language learning but has not so much set a paramount goal to explain why in the worlds' languages there should be such variability, or instability or ambiguity.

TG adopts the idea that elements of language are to be understood as having an intentional functional purpose. Elements of this idea have existed in linguistics for some time, generally involving the analysis of a relatively limited set of abstract functional concepts such as focus, theme, {fore|back}ground etc, TG is distinguished by placing an elaborated system of functional intention at the controlling generative core of language and elaborating a rich set of functional concepts/categories used to explain linguistic phenomena. We advert to tangential prior work by a wide range of researchers, including Halliday's systemic functional approach (Halliday, 2004), lexical functional grammar (Bresnan, 2001), the psychomechanics and psychosystematics of Gustave Guillaume, Walter Hirtle and John Hewson (Hirtle) (Hewson), cognitive linguistics of e.g. Wallace Chafe, , George Lakoff, and Leonard Talmy (Lakoff) (Talmy), construction grammar of e.g. Charles Fillmore George Lakoff, Goldberg, and Ronald Langacker (LANGACKER, 1986) (Langacker, 1999), [André Martinet's](#) Functional Syntax: (Langue et Fonction, Paris : Denoël, 1969, ©1962, Studies in Functional Syntax, München, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975, Syntaxe générale, 1985, Fonction et dynamique des langues, Paris, Armand Colin, 1989.), the Prague School, and so forth., A goal of TG is to bring diverse elements of various theories into a unified, inter-compatible linguistic framework, while discarding orphaned beliefs disconfirmed by ongoing empirical work.

TG is compatible with, and benefits from, restricted elements of each of these traditions but distinguishes itself by extending the role of specifying linguistic intention to a much greater degree and in much greater resolution than has previously been proposed. It also seeks to integrate with Chomsky's generative program re-combining characteristics of various approaches at the same time.

Special mention should be made of Pieter Seuren's work on Semantic Syntax and his pioneering formulations of the computerized means by which semantic initiatives can result in syntactic results. His work showing how lexically driven patterns result in syntactically formed configurations in a computationally transparent style are helpful in conceiving the manner by which linguistic intentions might resolve into patterns of acceptable and unacceptable sentences. While our theoretical framework is different, we take from Seuren's endeavors the belief that linguistic theory is enhanced, not just by the notion of formalization emphasized by Chomsky, but by actual formal implementation as a generative computer program, which is arguably an

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<sup>7</sup> Paradigmatic and other systematic aspects of morphology have on occasion also been overlooked.

<sup>8</sup> Since much of this work is about linguistic 'intention' it should be clarified that what is meant is the plainer meaning related to planning and not the philosophical sense of 'intentionality' relating the representations to the content they refer to. The latter topic, which is not considered here, is clarified, for example in (Georges Rey, 2015).

optimum goal for formalization in linguistic theory.

Whereas various authors have shown overlap between the syntactic and pragmatic components of linguistic competence, e.g. (Chierchia, 2004) (Horn, 2000), etc., our aim is to explore a reorganized view of linguistic generation based on the central concept of linguistic tools which are used to realize a generative component of linguistic intent. Rather than examine only the structural and configurational generalizations, i.e. syntax-generative rules, and what their projection onto truth functional semantics might involve, we propose to investigate more narrowly what the speaker intends to do and how s/he does it structurally. A sentence intention is a formative set of decisions for external representation of thought by means of highly constrained, conventional, interlocking structures and processes, which we call 'tools'. We refer below to this general area of investigation as 'cognitax' tool grammar. Cognitax concerns the decisions speakers make in formulating the structure of sentences. Without proposing that the full-blown inferentially derivable meaning of a sentence underlies and explains syntactic structure, it presents a view in which syntax is not so autonomous as it is often conceived. Cognitax as a discipline is separate from truth semantics and pragmatics insofar as the intentions underlying utterances can be demonstrated to have psychological reality separate from the processes of truth semantics, interpretation and inference. By demonstrating its independent necessity in explaining the phenomena of language we aim to demonstrate its psychological reality as domain of representation in linguistic processing. Cognitax is neither inferential semantics nor pragmatics but a set of separate representations marking linguistic structural intent.<sup>9</sup>

The present work on TG is limited to core phenomena roughly associated with syntax and its semantic correlates. It bypasses for the most part important broad areas of linguistic science such as truth functional semantic interpretation, discourse, background encyclopedic awareness, and so forth. In this way the work may seem initially less ambitious than works such as (Seuren) and (Halliday), but since many of these wider fields of research involve pre-linguistic cognitive processing in one way or another, TG may be found by adjustment to be compatible and to interact with these and other theoretical frameworks as part of a larger program of re-factoring linguistic analysis. We see advantages to encouraging more of a theoretical lingua franca for linguistic science,

#### **4 Ill-Formedness and a Working Methodology**

If language engages the application of a set of tools, ill-formedness, in all its variation, can result from picking the wrong tool for the intended task, or combining incompatible tools, or not having the prerequisites for some tool. In general, unacceptable sentences don't occur in normal usage and it is natural to seek the most direct explanation. Syntactic theory has never come close to explaining all the sorts of ill-formedness documented in the literature. (Ross J. R., Haj Ross's papers on syntax, poetics, and selected short subjects, 2014) We present the hypothesis that there are so many manners of ill-formedness because there are many tools in a language that have natural restrictions on their use. Examples of ungrammatical sentences might be likened to trying to paddle an elevator or forcing square pegs into round holes, or where there is no hole at all. A goal of this paper is to demonstrate new resources for the explanation of patterns of

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<sup>9</sup> Investigations of the evident interactions among cognitax, semantics and pragmatics best awaits preliminary exploration of the former.

unacceptability

Since we claim that structural action semantics can be transcribed, and is at the core of the language faculty, an operative question arises whether problems which have been considered unresolved, controversial, or even intractable might succumb more easily when the fundamental actions of language are factored in.

The methodology for exploring our hypotheses will be to survey and comment on selected problems and key data from the following sources, with some emphasis on central or difficult problems:

- Standard textbooks in generative grammar

- Well documented unresolved problems and issues

- Specific works documenting areas where generative grammar is incapable

- Problems of metaphor, stylistics, and poetics which in their finesse can be regarded as quality control on syntactic theory

We pursue this program of investigation below, undertaking preliminary analyses to explore a theoretical goal of discovering strong constraints on the limits of human language.

## **5 Specific Objectives and Scope**

A full exploration of the relationship between linguistic intention and expressed linguistic realizations is a vast project so we must begin by limiting the scope of initial work. From one perspective, our purpose here is initially somewhat negative insofar as we aim to show that there can be alternative explanations to be explored for many unacceptable sentences which have been attributed only to configurational aspects of linguistic generation. So our first goal is to look again at why sentences may not be grammatical or acceptable, from another angle, based on the premise that for transparent and coherent reasons many recombinant structures, which may look possible when viewed from the limited perspective of independent variation, may not, instead, ever be of a nature ever to be preconceived due to cognitive constraints. In the context of these original questions, we begin to explore the nature of a system that uses linguistic intention to preclude instances of what would not be said for utilitarian cognitive reasons. A number of scholars have pursued a more functional view of linguistic structure and have conceived certain linguistic rules as functional elements using a limited range of operational concepts such as theme, focus, background, and so forth. Our goal, in contrast, is to envisage a larger framework where the role of functional intent is massively expanded to provide operational workings that support and pervade the manifestations of syntax in a more encompassing way that also can enable more powerful constraints on universal grammar in the sense fundamental to the generative tradition. Our use of the term ‘tool grammar’ reflects an interest in analyzing as many syntactic phenomena as possible for underlying functional explanations.

Tool grammar presents a minimal hypothesis that careful examination of linguistic intent can greatly reduce the entropy of syntactic and semantic theory by independently explaining a plethora of ill formed sentences in a straightforward way leaving a more tractable set of separate

remaining theoretical problems.

Whereas Chomsky's minimalist program proposes a generative account of the syntax-centric connections between sound and meaning to include the creative, recursive component within those connections, we advert to the challenge of integrating such a system with cognitive creative linguistic intention and explore the implications of reconfiguring the program of research to incorporate such a level of creative linguistic cognitive action into the generative enterprise. We contemplate steps beyond a minimal revision such as adding a linguistic action interface to the syntactic component in addition to the phonological and semantic ones, and put it rather at the center of sentence generation. It is beyond the scope of initial work to proceed the full distance into this research program so we limit our goals to demonstrating the feasibility and advantages of such an approach while programmatically outlining some directions that seem promising for future progress, and also observing in passing evident opportunities for imposing strong general constraints on for form of possible language structures..

Formalization of linguistic theories is important to afford testability and to guide data collection toward an understanding of important structural effects. Linguistic science has progressed to the point where theories have begun to be formalized as actual implementations in computer code. Implementations as computational prototypes, even strictly within the domain of linguistic theory, may be especially revelatory for generative systems since they can not only validate the empirical claims but can bring new theoretical questions to light. Although we are not aware of a data base of regression tests for the acceptable and unacceptable sentences of any language we are preparing to implement our own proposals as a working prototype. This aspect of TG studies is beyond the scope of the present work but should be understood as an important longer term goal for scientific validation. While focusing on theoretical linguistics, we also envisage work toward a model of linguistic competence which lends itself to incorporation in active computational models that generate and interpret sentences. Unlike the Chomskyan model of syntactic competence which statically and declaratively represents syntax knowledge in a standalone system, we intend, by flowing from structural intention to syntactic output, to encourage a view of syntax which might eventually be incorporated in engineered solutions for natural language problems. While we adhere to the importance of linguistic analysis and modeling, we also anticipate a possibility of machine learning algorithms attempting automatically to mediate between specifications of linguistic intent and surface syntactic structures. Hidden Markov models and other statistical techniques may produce valuable linguistic engineering systems without hand crafted linguistic rules, and may bear useful similarity to neural models of brain functioning. While there may eventually be computer implementations, cognitax TG is initially formulated in the tradition of linguistic theory rather than computer science and as such neither inherits nor exhibits meaningful similarities to semantic grammars in the discipline of artificial intelligence

We intend this work to be empirical but programmatic and incremental. We present arguments that a set of syntactic phenomena are attractively explained if the analysis includes a specification of linguistic intent for structures observed in data, but the objective is programmatic and exploratory with limited goals. The sole objective is to show that structural decision actions can contribute to an explanation of linguistic patterning. Discussion is limited to classic,

challenging or resistant problems which motivate use of structural action conditioning factors that impose general constraints on generation by eliminating incompatible co-occurrences.

Since we can practically address a only subset of linguistic problems we leave open the possibility that some well studied phenomena with settled solutions might or might not have purely configurational solutions as presented in mainstream work in autonomous syntax without a component of linguistic intent. We motivate the need for a linguistic action dimension in a set of cases and outline a preliminary alternative architecture of competence, but it is beyond the intended scope to examine the full range of syntactic processes which might thereby be impinged, nor to present a complete alternative system. To the extent our arguments are successful, theoretical syntax can benefit from incorporating a new dimension, but it would be premature to try to anticipate the full range of implications. There remain a wide range of deeply studied syntactic phenomena to be examined from the perspective of linguistic action intents. We do not here exclude autonomous syntactic solutions. For this reason, and since many questions are left open, any definitive conclusions about the degree of difference between alternative systems and architectures of competence would be premature and speculative. This caveat allows for the possibility that previous solutions presented in the literature may be not impinged by specifications of structural intent.

In summary, the objective, therefore, is only to argue that linguistic intent can condition syntactic patterning while outlining an alternative architecture of linguistic competence without articulating a full technical proposal in detail. Our process of analysis is an exploratory pilot to consider whether evident constraints on structure tend toward strong generalizations to help define the notion of what a human language is and can be.

We do not address issues of semantic analysis or semantic theory beyond the narrow and functionally restricted domain implicit in the tool grammar concept. The specification of linguistic structural intent has a qualified semantic nature but is limited to actions affecting structural choices and excludes issues of interpretation, compositionality, implication, inference, possible worlds, as well as the wider spectrum of linguistic truth-functional semantics as a general discipline. Notably, we do not propose that the full specification of the meaning of a sentence underlies the generation of syntactic structure as in the earlier tradition of generative semantics. Our position is that one very limited tranche of semantic information is associated with linguistic choice, leaving issues of interpretation apart for separate study. Where work on generative semantics was challenged for not providing sufficient constraints on universal grammar, our hypothesis is that the theoretical use of one dimension of semantics in syntactic analysis, structural intention, opens the possibility not only of providing a stronger level of universal constraints, but one that covers data more completely. Generative semantics derives syntax from meaning; TG derives structure from intentions that result in selections of lexical items and constructions. In TG, syntax is not completely autonomous from a semantic realm, but neither is it fully enmeshed with the elaborations of interpretive semantic theory.

Our proposals include preliminary statements of compatibility constraints on the combination of structural elements. To the extent that these provide simpler explanations for complex phenomena, or preclude unresolved exceptions and resolve residual puzzles they become subject to comparison with systems of purely configurational constraints in generative. We argue that

constraints on generation using representations of linguistic intent hold promise generally to simplify the statement of linguistic universals, thereby advancing the Chomskyan goals for a specification of competence. The ideal result would be a simpler system of constraints that stabilizes and grows as new discoveries are made, while providing better coverage for a wider range of data with fewer exceptions. It is interesting when analyses we develop in the TG framework seem to validate and replicate a set of Chomskyan conclusions that were not based on linguistic intent.

Finally, it is noted that many syntactic phenomena can be analyzed either as alternative related structures introduced into an utterance as a formational process, or as a basic pre-compiled lexical structure which is optionally transformed to an alternate form by a transformational rule. We do not in the present work undertake a comparison of the differences between lexical and derivational patternings, that is, between alternative formative constructions and options in the dynamic process of construction. For this reason we refer to the constructions involved in such alternations using the non-committal term '(trans)formation'.

## 6 Illustrating Linguistic Action: Passive is Not Active

In this section we do not analyze passive structures in detail but only demonstrate that the passive construction involves a cognitactic action and is not simply a mechanical or configurational manipulation. We call a structural linguistic action (or a combined set of linguistic actions) an '*actioneme*' and symbolize its transcription using a dollar sign ('\$'). An actioneme is analogous to but different from the 'sememe' of traditional linguistics. It is understood as a basic psychological component of linguistic structural intent.

Actionemes are introduced as pseudocode (see below) in the spirit of computer system design where it is useful to summarize actions as part of the preliminary process of examining system architecture and coding strategies prior to later formalization in machine executable form. We discuss this aspect of actioneme representation below. The actionemes presented are useful to facilitate discussion for a system eventually to be formalized in executable computer language, but they are also primarily useful for analysis of linguistic theory.

The actioneme is a basic recording of what users are doing, the originating linguistic action, when a linguistic element or structure is selected, but it does not include any full semantic specification of utterance meaning. The term *actioneme* is introduced to signal an emphasis on what forms are used to do, while larger traditional questions of what they mean are not directly engaged. Semantics generally involves discovering what a speaker is saying. In cognitax the focus is on what the speaker is doing in structuring an utterance. It is the difference between the content of a message and the strategies used to present the content. What is said, versus what is done, and how.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> We differentiate our work from the earlier contentious tradition of generative semantics since we do not advocate that syntax should be directly derived from an underlying semantic representation in logical or other form, but that it is useful to posit an intermediary action phase involving cognitactic decisions that determines aspects of how structures will be built. Tool grammar involves this indirection and in any case does not address the historical arguments for or against generative semantics.

The sememe is an element of meaning while an actioneme is an element of cognitax, or structural linguistic action. We take the meaning of an utterance to be the thoughts which the speaker undertakes to represent, while the cognitax is the set of decision actions the speaker takes in formulating how the meaning should be represented in external form. An actioneme is not an element of meaning in a normal broad sense. In the way that it can be considered semantic, it is reduced in a very restricted sense, oriented to linguistic action that results in particulars of sentence formation as a result of linguistic decisions for particular intent.<sup>11</sup> Since actionemes involve structural decisions, it might be asked why they should ever be characterized as ‘semantic’. The answer is that linguistic structural actions originate in the speaker’s thought processes, which is the domain of semantics as we intend it.

We propose that every linguistic (trans)formation<sup>12</sup> has cognitactic content and introduce one example here to illustrate.<sup>13</sup> The passive form of a sentence evidently is not functionally equivalent to the active form:

- (1) Al visited the sick woman.
- (2) The sick woman was visited by Al.
- (3) What was surprising about Al was that he visited the sick woman.
- (4) \*What was surprising about Al was that the sick woman was visited by Al (him).

This indicates that an actioneme is operative in the passive example: \$bringPatientIntoAgencyEventFocus. The active form can be explained as an unremarkable default or, possibly, since one can posit two possible functional intentions, as reflecting \$exhibitExplicitEventAgency. When a phrase highlighting special characteristics of the agent (such as “What was surprising about” or “Of all the foolish acts given her allergies”) is added, the tool drawing focus away from the agent becomes incompatible.

- (5) Of all the foolish acts given her allergies, Al visited the sick woman in his wool sweater.
- (6) \*??Of all the foolish acts given her allergies, the sick woman was visited by Al in his wool sweater.

These examples show a cognitactic conflict<sup>14</sup> between tools in opposition, trying in a single

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<sup>11</sup> Traditional linguists might object to the introduction of a new linguistic term since ‘sememe’ is available to refer to any basic unit of meaning formation, but we prefer to introduce a new term here to signal the contention that if fieldwork centers on eliciting the intended action of sentences, and linguistic theory incorporates intention in a theory of tools, that a new understanding of linguistic processes will result.

<sup>12</sup> Or construction as the reader prefers. Throughout this paper transformations may be cast as alternate constructions depending on considerations which we do not presently take up.

<sup>13</sup> In case a theory denies the existence of a particular transformation and construes syntactic alternations to have been produced directly our arguments still apply because at some point in sentence production a choice of structure is made and must be reconciled with other choices.

<sup>14</sup> A cognitactic incompatibility is a situation where the use of one tool does not make sense in the context where another tool has been used. A representation involving both puts them in conflict. These may either be viewed as constraints on construction as we do here for purposes of demonstration, or might possibly be built into the



sentence, at cross purposes, to both add and take away special attention to the agent. We discuss a Cross Purpose Constraint further below.

As actionemes are proposed as operative in syntactic processing they should not be viewed as unredeemable subjective intuitions without rigorous scientific basis or theoretical foundation. We maintain that actionemes can be regularized and codified in ongoing investigations, and their validity as data can be established and replicated in a scientific process. Actioneme elements can be validated by properly interviewing linguistic consultants, by social science research practices, and by psycholinguistic experimentation. A properly motivated set of actionemes would have status beyond initial intuitions as formally validated linguistic constructs.

TG suggests possible explanations for the many dimensions of variability of structured expressions. A grammar might be understood as a repertoire of mental tools used in building actions based on conceptualizations rather than a fixed mechanistic generative competence. What are sentences built with? We propose TG or sentence action grammar as a utilitarian construction and delivery system; it makes use of linguistic structural action semantics defined in a broad but intuitive sense: What is the speaker doing with the utterance?

We aim to demonstrate the explanatory value of transcribing evident features, such, for example, as “assert completed” where such an action is manifestly present in the use of perfective structures. We call these features, when transcribed and presented *actionemes*. We envisage constraints on tools for the realization of linguistic actions, implemented in downstream syntactic processes, and call the holistic system *cognitax*. Sentence action meaning, unlike the predicate calculus of truth functional meaning, is viewed as procedural knowledge, i.e. methods for accomplishing things, rather than declarative knowledge, the static summarization of dynamic possibilities.

## 7 Actionemes as Pseudo-Code

Actionemes are clusters of properties that represent linguistic action intent. We present hypotheses about linguistic actions using dollar sign actioneme symbols such as ‘\$insertReflexive’. Actioneme symbols (represented with ‘\$’ symbols) represent preliminary hypotheses aiming toward a standard vocabulary of linguistic action intents. They are utilized as a form of pseudo-code for methodological convenience with an understanding that the process of formalizing TG should call eventually for a range of mathematically explicit, more rigorous elements and forms. The purpose of pseudo-code is to engage higher level questions of structure, process and organization without falling into detailed questions at a lower level of generalization. Actionemes are shorthand in discursive presentations for a feature and function formalism which is conceptualized for a machine implementation as a generative system. A useful and conciliatory default assumption is that actioneme features inhabit and extend the feature space often referenced in syntactic and semantic theory but are

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individual tool structures so they are not candidates for insertion in the same structure. In either case we maintain that the filtering of incompatible structures follows from the common sense utility of the structures rather than abstract configurational structures.

given a revised and radically more enlarged role than has been countenanced previously. Pseudo-code representations abstracting away from the higher resolution of the most detailed analysis can be borrowed from computer architecture where it is exceedingly useful for preliminary analysis of procedural processes and is essential for discussions of alternative approaches prior to formalization into machine executable form.

The current work primarily considers issues of theoretical linguistics but can also be part of a design process for a computerized system that aims to properly formalize TG theory as an operational generative system subject to regression testing against a database of sentence forms. Actionemes often require phrases and reflect an internal complexity. This suggests the possibility either of a form of feature representation (e.g. \$inquireJudgment [+inquire, +judgment]) or of embeddable function representation. (e.g. inquire(judgment()) ), and might possible involve mixed representations. The use of embedded functions implies a tree representation, begging the question, which we leave open, whether representation of action intentions fits naturally into the merged tree structures that result from lexical selection and assembly into increasingly larger units. Whatever the form of improved theoretical statements our hypothesis is that constraints on cognitive compatibility among linguistic tools can be formulated as patterns of actioneme feature or function complexes, and that, furthermore these can be integrated into the larger matrix of a linguistic theory. The general thesis is that linguistic tool intents are involved in a restrictive cognitive utilitarian mechanics, which can explain many linguistic phenomena, and is compatible with a variety of linguistic theories. Our current purpose is to advocate for the general approach so issues of formalization are not here addressed.

## **8 Motivation for a New Orientation**

It is possible to look at the tradition of generative mechanical syntax and intuitively feel incompleteness with regard to an understanding of the essence of human language. Meaning is treated in generative grammar, but it doesn't have the central role that can seem from the outside as indispensable to any well-ordered discipline of linguistics. The present work attempts to address a void by bringing the particular semantics of linguistic action, what a user is doing when a particular structure is chosen, back into central focus, albeit in a controlled and limited way.

There is an essential tradition of transcription in linguistics. As a profession, linguists record data to systematically reflect structure in phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc. But what of the particular purposes of the uses of language structures? Syntacticians don't generally systematically encode the elements of sentence intent as a commonly accepted practice, as they do the basic elements in other domains. Yet, structural action semantics is the glue that connects semantic intention to form.

All of language, considered as a phenomenon, is oriented around intended meaning, and syntax in particular is in service to it. Syntax can be understood as a meaning representation and delivery system, so one would expect, a priori, the severest of epistemological problems to arise

should it be abstracted sufficiently away from the glaring reality of its essential purpose. Semantics has not found the centrality of its role in linguistic syntax perhaps because in its various manifestations it is not so directly observable or accessible and brings inherent difficulties as a result.<sup>15</sup> Even the narrower spectrum of linguistic intention cannot be recorded except indirectly. It must be inferred to an extent beyond other dimensions of more direct representation. Yet, just as physical particles are discovered without any means of direct observation, contemporary linguistics has recognized the necessity to investigate central phenomenon with inferential work. While there are many scholars engaged productively in the **broad** generative enterprise of meaning theory, we propose here to focus directly on one particular and highly constrained dimension associated with meaning, the connective processes of utilitarian intent, as integral to the analysis of syntactic phenomena .

Syntactic work has historically inclined toward semantic analysis insofar as it has regularly imported quasi semantic elements (tense, modality, aspect, case, subcategorization, selectional restrictions, etc.) to accomplish its work. In TG similarly, we propose to extend the reach of syntax into the domain of structural intention so as to identify underlying factors and investigate their role in explaining linguistic patterns

We propose an incremental ground-up approach to developing conventions for sentence action transcription. Our exclusive interest is in the inventory of linguistic actions rather than truth functional intensional systems, or other variants based on formal logic. We bring a narrow selection of semantico-intentional elements forward for their relevance in syntactic construction and patterning. Tool grammar distinguishes itself from traditional semantics, among other ways, by refraining from an insistence that all meaning representations be compositional in order to leave open the possibility that generative systems may be compiled for speed and function in ways that do not reflect the expectations of truth functional semantics.

It is crucially indicative that human languages already have built-in vocabulary for expressing what one speaker posits another is doing in the course of language use. These expressions are a valuable basis of preliminary action transcription because they emanate from inside the system we would like to study. Users interpret linguistic intentions and report them using vocabulary already in the language.

We begin by extracting from everyday language terms that describe what some speaker is doing, or intending, or trying to do, by using a particular linguistic construction. We propose to draw upon this innate natural vocabulary as a stimulus to widen the scope of the study of grammar. We limit ourselves in semantics only to descriptions of conventionally recognized linguistic actions and the intentions that underlie them.

The TG approach does not in wholesale manner begin by rejecting the general thesis of configurational explanations for syntactic patternings, but only presents the advantages in particular but theoretically important cases of an amplified analysis, controlled in the domain of structural intent, which, after all, is *prima facie* quite natural to a functional view of generative processes. Arguing prior to full formalization, we use pseudo-code actionemes to

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<sup>15</sup> There is a well known principle of psychology whereby one's beliefs and attitudes are formed much by exigencies of circumstance, possibility, and realistic ability.

explore the fundamental issue of the controlling factors for the occurrence of many patterns from reflexive anaphors to poetic structure. We refer to the TG regularities conditioned by linguistic action intent, and thereby having characteristics different from purely syntactical rules, as components of the *cognitax* of a language. The structures and processes of cognitax constitute a *tool grammar* for a language so may be thought of as synonymous terms for our purposes. The former is intended to convey the inseparability of cognitive sentence planning decisions from the understanding of syntactic structure, while the latter denotes the utilitarian aspect.

As noted, Tool Grammar is inspired by the observation that natural languages include numerous terms to describe linguistic actions (*assert, deny, ask, tell, etc.*), so there is reason to believe that external observations about action intents can be refined to a form of scientifically valuable data for theorizing about the processes underlying language behavior. Language itself thus provides some metadata about language which can afford a basis for developing a closed, controlled scientific vocabulary for systematically transcribing the linguistic intents associated with linguistic structures. The TG framework includes the hypothesis that those competent in a language are thereby able to ascertain intents underlying linguistic utterances, albeit in a naïve, unformalized form, that, for linguistic analysis, ultimately will require ongoing development in a standard scientific process of empirical rectification.

Beyond conscious awareness and the formulation of a controlled vocabulary of actioneme primitives, a central goal of a theory of action intents is integration with processes of structure formation in an overall theory of structural linguistic action. TG furthermore has the potential to reveal that constraints on well-formedness correspond often to high level cognitive disciplines and strategies for managing complexity, uncertainty, integrity, consistency, information density and other cybernetic principles of information representation. TG can be summarized as a fully formalizable theory of cognitive utilitarian meta-linguistic structural action intents. An important goal is to achieve over time as work product a scientific controlled vocabulary for the range of linguistic intents available in human communication.

## 9 Evidence from Meta Reference

John Ross in one of his squibs raises a point of direct interest to the hypothesis that cognitax tools underlie human language use. (Ross J. , 50 Years of Linguistics at MIT, 2013)

One mystery squib of mine was a question: what is the source of *that* in this sentence: “The rules of Clouting and Dragoff apply in that order.”?

The sentence implies a decision regarding which of conjoined terms to order leftmost/first. This

evidently reflects a tool \$specifyConjunctOrder, and it would seem 'that' must refer to this ordering, i.e. to the cognitax actioneme. This shows linguistic structure is self-aware and can refer to itself at the level of actionemes. The referent of 'that' is direct evidence that actionemes exist per the decision to place one item before another.

The example suggests that syntactic structures are connected to a process of construction which is improvisational and on occasion even self-conscious and self-referential. It is evidently prima facie evidence that syntax offers tools in a manipulation matrix, such as perhaps a whiteboard pointer in computational representations, rather than a contained generative automaton.

We take Ross's questions as primary direct evidence for the existence of cognitax tools and their usage in sentence formation.

## 10 Some Historical Antecedents to Cognitax

In and from (Austin, 1975) there has been extensive work on the pragmatic and related aspects of language via linguistic use groupings such as locutions, illocutions, perlocutions, performative verbs, illocutionary acts<sup>16</sup>, and so forth.<sup>17</sup> Classical work into the pragmatic effects on syntax includes (Searle J. , 1979), which gives a taxonomy of pragmatic types, examples and analysis of verbal classes, and specific discussion of effects on syntax. In early generative studies there was interest in pursuing concrete derivational relationships between verbs of linguistic action and other aspects of syntactic study. John Ross pursued a performative verb hypothesis (Ross J. , On declarative sentences, 1970) that would have a verb like 'say' underlying indicative sentences. The mainstream of the generative enterprise veered quickly away from generative semantics (involving syntactic decomposition of lexical items and other abstract devices).

Later traditions of generative work constructing purely syntactic solutions have indirectly provided evidence for what we present as actionemes. An example of this, among many, is Landau's postulation of underlying locative elements for experiential verbs (Landau, 2010), which in our terms outlined below would be recast as an action intent (actioneme e.g. \$assertLocative). This example illustrates a body of work pointing in the direction of cognitax analysis but stopping short of any proposal to orient linguistic syntax itself to structural action semantics.

This initial scaffolding is seminal, but does not portray the large universe of diverse language actions that are evidently at work in the full spectrum of language constructions, nor does it

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<sup>16</sup> (Sadock, 2004) summarizes Austin's rough-out of illocutionary types

1. VERDICTIVES: acts that consist of delivering a finding, e.g., acquit, hold (as a matter of law), read something as, etc.
2. EXERCITIVES: acts of giving a decision for or against a course of action, e.g., appoint, dismiss, order, sentence, etc.
3. COMMISSIVES: acts whose point is to commit the speaker to a course of action, e.g., contract, give one's word, declare one's intention, etc.
4. BEHABITIVES: expressions of attitudes toward the conduct, fortunes or attitudes of others, e.g., apologize, thank, congratulate, welcome, etc.
5. EXPOSITIVES: acts of expounding of views, conducting of arguments, and clarifying, e.g., deny, inform, concede, refer, etc.

<sup>17</sup>See (Sadock, 2004) for an overview.

provide a systematic means for construction solutions using them.<sup>18</sup>

The European functionalists proposed that pragmatics and semantics underlie syntax. (Dik, 1981) Although there are sufficient differences to make a full contrast with his theories of secondary interest, the role of intention as the initiator of linguistic events appears in Dik's work. (Dik, 1981) (p.8). Dik does not identify a level of linguistic action or elaborate a level of linguistic intention so distinctly or with such a functional load for the generation of syntax as we propose here. Nor does he explicitly relegate the generation of linguistic intention, the anticipation of addressee interpretation, or addressee interpretation definitively to a higher cognitive domain. He views them more as intertwined in general with syntactic processes than as separate higher cognitive function. In contrast, for TG we propose linguistic action as an explicit level of generalization justified by its facility for explaining syntactic and other phenomena.

## 11 Basic Constraints on Focus Constructions

Cleft and Pseudo-Cleft constructions are documented in many treatments of English syntax, illustrated, for example, by (McCawley, 1998) p. 66.

- (1) I gave a watch to my brother.
- (2) \*It was a watch to my brother that I gave.
- (3) \*What I gave was a watch to my brother.

These contrast with acceptable clefting (our examples):

- (4) It was a watch I gave to my brother.
- (5) It was to my brother I gave a watch.
- (6) What I gave to my brother was a watch.
- (7) To whom I gave a watch was my brother.

It is evident that these (trans)formations exist to move material to a fronted focus position, but rules of syntax have not included a dimension to capture their functional purpose. We posit an actioneme for constructions such as these: \$giveFocusToSalientElement. If such an actioneme is associated with the syntactic (trans)formations the unacceptable sentences above would seem to be ruled out by a common sense constraint.

### Single Focus Constraint

Given that the purpose of a focus construction is to bring an element to the fore, it is counterproductive to focus transform more than one element since focus on two elements is contradictory and detracts from the purpose. The focusing of two elements interferes with the proper focusing of either.

The focus item 'only' provides independent support for a variant of this constraint as illustrated

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<sup>18</sup>A useful and far -ranging treatment that maintains the formal separation of pragmatics from syntax also includes analysis of reflexives and other phenomena used to show interaction effects and some operational intermingling. (Ariel, 2008)

by data from (McCawley, 1998) p 68. Contrastive stress is indicated by underlining.

(8) John only put flowers in the vase.

(9) \*John put only flowers in the vase.

Here we see both ‘only’ (\$assertNoOther) and contrastive stress (\$assertThisOverThat) insinuating focus in the same sentence. When ‘only’ adds focus to the entire verb phrase, it can co-occur with contrastive stress on the locative phrase. But when ‘only’ focuses the direct object and contrastive stress focuses the locative phrase, they are not compatible. In this case we see that a corollary of the Single Focus Constraint operates within the verb phrase.

### Overlapping Exclusion Constraint

Don’t use multiple focus devices that exclude possibilities when one exclusion is inclusive of a narrower one.

This example serves to illustrate the simplicity, directness, and empirical basis of cognitactic analysis, for which evidence can be marshaled in a wide range of syntactic environments.

## 12 Tools versus Rules

A tool is not equivalent to a rule. It encompasses more and serves a different purpose. A rule is a productive regularity observed by a linguist. It can be a generalization or a requirement or a tendency but it cannot in our view purposefully be used by a speaker to build a communication structure. A rule is for the theorist describing an observable pattern, a tool is for someone with an intention trying to accomplish something. A linguistic tool is useful in building a communication structure, which is an assembly of intentions represented by their particular forms. A set of sentences can be described statically or be abstractly generated by rules, but these auto-generated sentences do not serve a utilitarian purpose. Tools, in contrast, can be wielded to specific effect. As the product of tools, sentences are inherently useful, whereas a purposeless generation of a syntactic structure is not.

We posit two fundamental types of linguistic tools: lexical and (trans)formational.<sup>19</sup> A user constructing a sentence amalgamates a complex of intentions by selecting and assembling lexical items. Lexical items are merged into integrated structures according to constraints of phrase structure and phrase merging. As lexical items become merged they form configurations which become eligible for (trans)formation. Transformations are linguistic tools that reflect the intention to configure or modify the communication in a particular manner for particular effect. They take syntactic structures in configurational syntactic complexes as input and generate modified configurational syntactic complexes as output, but always with some stylistic or other informational intent.

Formally, a rule can be characterized as a well-known schema with two basic parts: structural requirements and structural effects

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<sup>19</sup> An alternative view of grammar would create the respective constructions independently without the intervention of transformation mechanisms. We do not consider this possibility here.

## RULE

Structural input requirements  
Structural output effects including optional introduction of new material  
(Extraneous parameters)

The structural requirements specify under what conditions of structure the rule is applicable. The structural effects specify the effects on the input structure when the rule applies. A third part records extraneous parameters of applicability as required by a particular theory. A rule may thus be characterized as ‘optional’, or can be selected as ‘active’ among a collection of universally available rules and conditioning effects which may or may not be activated in a particular language. Any number of ancillary parameters can be considered.

A tool, in contrast, can be specified with these same parts, but including, crucially, an additional part to specify utilitarian intent.

## TOOL

Utilitarian intent  
Structural input requirements  
Structural output effects including optional introduction of new material  
(Extraneous parameters)

To illustrate the difference, consider one simplified case of adding a lexical item and effecting a (trans)formation. A user chooses to insert a perfective morpheme to communicate that an event is completed. There is an input requirement that there be an event of continuance instantiated in a verb. New material is specified. The effect of the tool is to merge the new material, the perfective marker, into the input structure.

Perfective Tool:<sup>20</sup>

Intent: \$assertCompleted  
Input requirement: verb of continuance: “He eats”  
New material: ‘have + en’  
Output effect: merge perfective marker: “He has eaten”

Now, consider the operation of a classic stylistic (trans)formation.

Passive Tool:

Intent: \$ bringPatientIntoAgencyEventFocusFrontToSalientPosition  
Input requirement: verb plus object: “He eats the cake”  
New material: ‘be + en’ (‘by\_’)  
Output effect: The cake is eaten by him.  
Move object to front, subject to by-phrase, Merge passive marker: “The cake is

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<sup>20</sup> Operations are not formalized where we intend only to illustrate high level concepts.



eaten by him” Note: This structure might alternatively be analyzed as a lexical choice involving no transformational restructuring.

A main difference from standard generative grammar is that TG would incline to natural utilitarian solutions as part of the human endowment for problem solving with tools. The linguistic mind is projected as not so abstractly foreign to the conscious utilitarian human mind. All grammatical devices have been instantiated, given the constraints of universal limitations, by humans. Rationales for tools may be recognizable and understandable as intuitive inventions. Every linguistic rule may have been some inventor’s novel idea at some point prior to adoption by a community, and must be understandable with regard to motivation and intended effect. Empirical investigation will determine whether we risk a disservice to the tradition of a human linguistic lineage if we assume all intricate language capacity results from no other processes than a simplified setting of parameters. (Chomsky, The minimalist program, 1995) A language may, alternatively as here, be understood as an inventory of tools, selected from a universally available tool construction set (limited and extensible under meta constraints), together with a selection of parameters to determine how tools are individually configured and interact with one another. This possibility for innovation and invention beyond n-ary parameter choices can be advantageous in the case it is verified, as we suspect, that the variety of language constructions cannot be insightfully understood as a simple setting of parameters..

The crucial analytical difference between a rule and a tool is that the latter specifies intent using vocabulary of linguistic action descriptors. We anticipate these can be conventionalized over time from linguistic fieldwork in order to develop a putative universally available set, even while the structures realized from them can be differentiated and diverse. We hypothesize is that the listing of intents in a sentence involves a necessary operational characterization of meaning which will be more useful in the understanding of syntax than those associated with semantic interpretation and deriving from formal logic, which are less tractable and more removed from the psychological mechanics of utterance generation. For the purposes of TG, meaning is circumscribed as a series of functional and intentional steps taken to enact a plan for desired effects. These are able to be observed and captured by the field linguist undertaking the analysis of language.

### **13 Distinguishing Grammar from Meaning**

Since TG endeavors to motivate syntactic rules using action directives of intent, expressed in a controlled and circumscribed semantic vocabulary, the question naturally arises as to the fundamental distinction between grammar and meaning, and how it might be characterized in linguistic theory. Chomsky’s original contrast usefully distinguishes types of ill-formedness that intuitively seem either structural or semantic: (Chomsky, Syntactic Structures, 1957) p. 15

- (1) \*Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.
- (2) \*Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.

Whereas the first of these is viewed as grammatically correct but semantically amiss, the second lacks even grammatical well-formedness in the common view. Since TG views linguistic tools as devices for building structures to represent ideas externally, we are led to a natural expression of the grammar vs. semantics distinction based on the proposal that lexical items and syntactic

structures are complementary tools for representing configurations of thoughts:

Semantic ill-formedness results from the combination of incompatible ideas in the formation of an utterance.

Grammatical ill-formedness results from the use of functionally incompatible tools, lexical or (trans)formational, in building structures for external linguistic representation

In the first example above, green is a color, ideas cannot sleep at all, let alone furiously, which factors put the ideas at odds. In the second, less than optimal, example, assuming no expressive license, commas, or the like, which are other matters, the tools have requirements which are not met:

‘sleep’ has a slot designed for following/predicating a noun

‘furiously’ is a tool designed to fill a slot modifying a verb

‘ideas’ is a tool designed to fill a slot/predication calling for a noun

‘green’, ‘colorless’ are tools designed to fill slots preceding/modifying a noun

This original pair of examples was used to make a particular point by Chomsky, which is not quite the same as our concern here, so the contrast is not so targeted for our purposes. It combines elements of semantic and grammatical conflict and is also subject to various expressive and stylistic interpretations rendering them more acceptable. A better example for our purposes illustrates the point more directly:

(3) \*In sleeps the.

We propose that the inclusion of a dimension of structural action semantics in the formulation of rules as tools still enables a clear distinction between meaning, which concerns ideas, and grammar, which concerns representational structures.

In general there are two types of linguistic tools: lexical and structural. Lexical tools are selected to map configurations of ideas to a conventionalized word structure. They bring with them constraints on the selection of other words that can co-occur with them. Structural, or (trans)formational tools build structure and determine the form of presentation of the source ideas as they are represented in the external medium. Because there are two types of tools<sup>21</sup> there are three main types of grammatical ill-formedness depending on whether a tool conflict is

- lexical-lexical (e.g. subcategorization) e.g. \*In sleeps the.
- structural-structural (formational conflict) e.g. \*It was a watch to my brother that I gave.

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<sup>21</sup> There are more to the extent that one considers the exigencies and incompatibilities that arise when lexical items are merged into larger structures. These questions are elaborated in a later section.

- lexical-structural (e.g. government). e.g. \*I wonder you are meeting?

In later sections of this paper we undertake to illustrate various types of tool conflict in reference to standard and difficult problems in linguistic analysis.

While on the subject of the grammar/meaning distinction it is useful to lay out what a linguistic utterance is in TG terms, and to clarify the relationship to semantics. TG holds that there is a higher context of cognitive ideation from which an utterance emanates, but it is not an intended part of the output linguistic utterance. A linguistic utterance is conceived as action directives selected in a higher pre-linguistic cognitive component. There are two types of action directives from which an utterance is formed:

- A selection of lexical items, which are pre-packaged objects of expression with semantic affinities at the level of the higher cognitive domain, deemed sufficient (pattern) matches for the ideas to be represented. The intent of lexical tools is always the same, to represent in conventional form configurations of ideas to be represented. Lexical tools include constraints specifying restrictions on other lexical items that co-occur in their presence. Lexical items do not include full semantic specifications, which must be constructed for the utterance by the addressee by reverse engineering based on the conventional packaging of words.
- A selection of formational tools, which are directives determining various aspects of how the utterance will be structured. Each formational tool is associated with an action intent such that some tool intents may not be compatible where the objectives in the tool use are in conflict. Passives, clefts, focus constructions, and so forth, including the full range of syntactic constructions discussed in the syntactic literature, are products of formational tools.

With these two inputs, procedures of tool application suffice to generate the utterance. A sequence of merge operations renders the complex of lexical items into a single hierarchical structure while the formational tools render the structure per their input and output specifications into a derived form of representation. The generated structure is linearized as output in the expressive medium, e.g. sound, signing, etc.

Here it is worth re-emphasizing that for TG the utterance generation does not envisage the full range of possible semantic interpretation. There can be, and often are, misunderstandings. The understanding of what is meant or intended or implied or anticipated for an utterance is in the province of the higher and more general cognitive realm. It can of course be modeled by the speaker prior to the generation of the output representation, and is characteristically interpreted by the addressee on receipt. Nevertheless, interpretation is a separate process from intention so a restricted set of specific action intents must at some level be specified for the formational structure tools. A thesis of TG is that unacceptable conflicts can best be identified and understood in the domain of intention.. This involves a restricted aspect of linguistic action semantics which

must be associated with the process of syntax formation. In this way semantics is partially but not fully separated from syntax for TG in the way that Chomsky once prescribed:

[T]he study of meaning and reference and of the use of language should be excluded from the field of linguistics...[G]iven a linguistic theory, the concepts of grammar are constructed (so it seems) on the basis of primitive notions that are not semantic ..., but that the linguistic theory itself must be chosen so as to provide the best possible explanation of semantic phenomena, as well as others. (Chomsky, *Essays on Form and Interpretation*, 1977) p. 139

In a larger sense, the fields of full semantics and syntax are modularized apart in TG because the full meaning of an utterance is associated with independent cognition before and after the generation of its output representation. TG includes a limited range of semantic actions in syntactic specifications.

This partial similarity to the Chomskyan approach, in separating full semantics from syntactic generation, belies, nevertheless, a major difference. While the generative enterprise characteristically has syntax at the center of linguistic competence, embodying the essential language properties of creativity, productivity, recursion and infinite range, TG places all of these in the cognitive sphere which generates directives to a less empowered and more compact syntactic component. Cognition is central to the TG view of generative linguistics with the syntactic component in a service role and one dimension of structural action semantics active at the interface. For this reason TG syntax can appropriately be labeled “cognitax”. The organization of the TG system and its utterance derivation processes are discussed further in a later section.

To illustrate briefly, consider a substantial case, among many, where these limited semantic factors play a role in generative syntax is the selection of complements for verbs. A small subset of these admits of indirect question complementation. (Johnson, 2004) p. 51

- (1) a. Martha denied that John has left.
- (2) b. Martha said that John has left.
- (3) c. \* Martha wonders that John has left.
- (4) a. \* Martha denied whether John has left.
- (5) b. Martha said whether John has left.
- (6) c. Martha wonders whether John has left.

Here we see that 'say' and 'wonder' allow an indirect question. We propose that they can implement the action \$countenanceAlternative. In contrast, 'deny' doesn't. Furthermore 'wonder' doesn't allow 'that' clauses for the meaning under consideration

- (7) \*Al wonders that Sue will leave.

This illustrates a role we propose for cognitax actions. The indirect question complementizer 'whether' is a tool used by the speaker to \$raiseAlternativesAsQuestion, while 'deny' has the action \$ruleOutAlternative. The complementizer 'that' effects \$assertSpecificFact. This allows

unacceptable sentences to be ruled out by a constraint based on actionemes more direct than configurational syntactic mechanisms.

#### Cross-Purposes Constraint

Don't introduce structures that work against each other in basic utilitarian intent such as raising and excluding the possibility of alternatives in the same construction.

In this case we see some verbs explicitly raise the consideration of alternatives and are compatible with complementizers that envisage the same. There is no practical point in raising alternatives while also denying them. A verb like 'deny' that works to narrow the possibilities to a single specific action requires a complement that is consonant with that intent, and is restricted to a specific action. These evident characterizations tend only to be available by direct representation of intention in syntactic theory and are obfuscated by indirection in approaches which do not retain action/intention at the core of linguistic generation.

## 14 Linguistic Fieldwork and Actioneme Transcription

TG views meaning as being projected by action, so the corresponding approach to data collection may be quite different from the direct asking of what forms mean. For cognitax what one does with a sentence and its parts is more useful for development of a tractable linguistic theory than questions such as what a sentence or other item might imply or “mean” in a truth functional setting. The operative question is what the user seeks to achieve by using a form. We advocate that elicitation frames generally take the form: What is the speaker doing with a word, morpheme, phrase sentence, etc.? This includes minimal contrasts against expressions lacking the form in question. For those doing anthropological or other field work it is daunting to specify all the implications of a meaning of a linguistic element. The TG view of meaning is operational. An element may conceal a readily accessible meaning in any declarative sense but have operational effect to be understood by contrasting examples with and without the form in question. What, for illustration, is the declarative meaning of ‘even’. There may be no answer prior to asking what speakers are observed to be doing when using this item in specific circumstances. Even as lay speakers, subjects are aware of a plethora of linguistic acts at all levels of structure, and are able to express and refer to these routinely, albeit in crude and raw form, with a general or dedicated native vocabulary. A single sentence or any of its units may, and characteristically does, involve a multiplicity of actions and subjects are not in general at a loss for vocabulary to describe them.

TG can rely on elicitation techniques such as the following, which are well-known to field linguists in any case:

- 1) What was the speaker doing when s/he used that element?
- 2) Why is that element there?
- 3) What's missing if you take that element out?
- 4) Can you say something to show me how you would use that element in a different context?

- 5) If you took that element out what could you put in there that would do about the same thing? What are the differences?

To illustrate this general idea of transcribing linguistic acts, it is instructive to look, first informally, at everyday words that describe the kinds of actions speakers have in mind even independent of any theoretical linguistic interest. In English, for example, the vocabulary describing language actions is very large. It is premature to pursue a fixed conventionalized list of descriptors but it is useful to explore the domain by means of a sparse sampling of illustrative examples.

Some are common and general:

Speak, Talk, Verbalize, Say, (promise, swear)

Many describe the structure of argumentation:

Argue, Contend, Deny, Refute, Contradict, Prove/Disprove, Counter, Give a reason, Reason, Imply, Presuppose, (Dis)Claim, Associate, Deduce, Generalize, Correct, Reinforce, Assert, Hypothesize, Support, Evade, Suggest, Ignore

Some are essentially social beyond the basic interpersonal component inherent in other examples:

Deliberate, Discuss, Consult, Set expectations, Confer

Others have to do with rhetoric:

Introduce, Expand on, Summarize, Emphasize, Hedge, Indicate, Highlight, Insist, Gloss over, Be ironic

A good many are judgmental

Flatter, Insult, Denigrate, Praise, Bemoan, tattle, blab, babble

Many pertain to specific contexts:

Joke, Sermonize, Read, Lecture, Pray, Preach, Rhyme, Wax poetic, Sing, Order (at retail)

They can be idiomatic:

spill the beans, let the cat out of the bag,

Some terms describe language use but do not reflect a speaker intent:

Be boring, Make no sense, Is confusing, stumble over words, be unclear

Of particular note, some such terms are of such general linguistic utility that they might be segregated out for the frequency of their utility.

Negate, Question, Declare, Declare Unknown, Command, Indicate, Express doubt, Express certainty, Leave unspecified, Emphasize, Downplay, Focus on.

Others are so basic and general that they can be inferred from and associated somewhat reliably what has been held to be a grammatical construction.

Quantify ('the dogs'), Locate (locative case), Attribute (bike's color), Modify ('run quickly')

This is but a small sampling of what is a large inventory of such terms. It is a major, albeit ultimately valuable, undertaking beyond the present scope to map out and analyze the full

descriptive taxonomy. While some terms can be used to describe non-linguistic acts, they also have major or central uses where they do reflect language behavior. Many terms have such a dual role.

As natural language terms, linguistic action descriptors often overlap and cross-classify one another. Just as the phoneme is an abstraction<sup>22</sup> often composed of multiple parts (/p/ bilabial, voiceless, /au/ [a] [w]) so these can be thought of as popular emic elements, which we refer to as linguistic ‘actionemes’ made up of analytical distinctive features that can combine in a variety of ways.

Usage of natural language descriptors in the field have the benefit of reflecting the interpretation of actual participants. While they can be used profitably in transcription of linguistic passages, scientific refinement and regularization can provide a formal, principled, canonical set over time. While further work is required to fully inventory, categorize, interpret and codify such expressions, we illustrate transcription of intention in an informal and exploratory way in this paper. Even with some informality, such transcriptions are empirically verifiable. Since they are manifest in popular usage, inquiry and experiments can determine and validate when and whether particular transcriptions have been accurately imposed on data.

There has been a recent focus on field methods for semantic and pragmatic research and regular coverage in conferences, including Semantics of Under-Represented Languages in the Americas (SULA). (Matthewson, 2004) (Gibson, 2010) (Sprouse, 2012) These areas of methodological interest are important for recording linguistic actions in syntactic and general studies as well.

In summary, speakers are typically doing many things at once when they utter a sentence, and it is valuable for the linguist explicitly to record individual actions implicit in the use of each sentence. There would be two primary questions to investigate in field explorations:

Generalizations: Generally, what is the speaker doing when s/he uses a particular form or structure X?

Scenarios: Given an element X, what would typically be going on when a speaker uses X and what would a speaker be doing by the use of X in that context.

Directing field work toward the discussion of scenarios and situations, as advocated, in recent studies, enables more specific descriptions of what is being done with each tool. This is an important dimension beyond the bare judgments of acceptability and the glossed translations that have historically been the focus of syntactic studies. For TG the most fundamental records would be the actions in a sentence without involving a full exploration of inferences, truth conditions etc., which speak more to theories of anticipation, interpretation, inference, and so forth. We see linguistic action and intention explicitly mentioned when speakers talk about language. This provides an important empirical basis for linguistic theory.

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<sup>22</sup> The term ‘abstraction’ here is used in a non-technical sense when referring to phonemes, etc. in this paper without wanting to raise questions of exact theoretical or psychological status.

## 15 Labrador Inuttut Inverted Number Marking

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## 16 Inverse Number Marking Phenomena Elsewhere

We now turn to a set of apparent examples of inverse number marking apart from second person inflection. These occur in Dagaare, a language of the Niger-Congo group, and have been discussed extensively, including summary of previous work, in (Grimm, 2009) (Grimm, 2013). Grimm presents data suggesting that there is in Dagaare a single synchronic suffix, /ri/, which marks singular in one class of nouns, but plural in another (data from Grimm):

“same stem, yet -ri codes the plural interpretation for ‘child’ and the singular interpretation for ‘seed’”:

| Singular | Plural   | Stem | Gloss   |
|----------|----------|------|---------|
| b'í'e    | b'í'ir'í | bi-  | ‘child’ |
| b`ir'í   | b'í'e    | bi-  | ‘seed’  |

He gives further examples illustrating the plural interpretation for lexemes glossed ‘child, tree, forehead, basket, pig, scorpion’, and singular interpretation for ‘seed, hoe (metal instrument), prop/pillar, root, dry spot, horn’. Grimm notes this sort of inverted number marking may be rare in the world’s languages but is nevertheless attested in Kiowa and Pacific New Ireland languages.

This data raises a number of questions and Grimm advances the discussion by analyzing and documenting the semantic source of the two classes in terms of individuation. He points out difficulties in the theory of markedness for this data since singular/plural are generally regarded as unmarked/marked respectively, while their patterning is contrary to this in the Dagaare classes. Grimm does not address the thesis of (Smith L. R., 1979) wherein it is considered whether morphemes may function as markers of markedness, i.e. that singular and plural may be unmarked for two different classes, allowing a single morpheme to refer to the marked case in each. We deprecate this alternative position in the interest of pursuing a tool grammar solution as a deeper and potentially better motivated probe into the inverted number phenomena.

What is unmistakable in data presented is that all of Dagaare lexemes illustrating the singular interpretation clearly illustrate nouns referring to a collective system, and, furthermore, the ones



with plural interpretation do not.<sup>23</sup>

This data points clearly in the direction of an actioneme which reflects semantic dimensions of individuation per Grimm, and also count classification. Namely we posit that the morpheme seems cognitively unified around an actioneme \$assertCountable. The logic of this is that for a collective system countability arises and only makes sense where the individual element underlying the collection is conceptualized, while for the individuated noun, the possibility of counting arises just when the individuals are collected into a plural grouping.

This solution is related to a theory of individuation but offers an explanation why a single morphological form might be used to represent opposing valences: they are unified in the higher conceptualization of imposing countability. This solution illustrates an advantage of a tool grammar approach. If we analyze in terms of what the speaker is doing new possibilities arise, and in this case we open a window into a process that is natural and inherent as speaker action moves in the direction of counting. An analysis based on markers of markedness might unify the sense of the opposing forms, but, unlike tool grammar, it cannot provide an explanation why they should be unified in the first place, or at all. There is an apparent requirement here for the representation of linguistic intent in generative rules.

## 17 English Reflexives

A solution is proposed in this section for the acceptability patterns and effects for reflexive anaphors, as a competitive alternative to a purely configurational syntactic approach. By associating a specification of linguistic action intent with each formational process, which distinguishes the Tool Grammar approach, a simple, functionally motivated analysis is achieved which probes beyond the undergirding configurational elements of C-Command control and the Extended Projection Principle. The alternative TG approach here opens a window and poses questions and alternatives for the architecture of competence.<sup>24</sup>

We present a TG analysis of reflexive, holding, simply, that for each rule or element of structure in a sentence there must be specified, an element of linguistic structural intent, and that the intents of tools are relevant and determinative with regard to where they may be applied, thereby explaining patterns of acceptability/unacceptability. This approach does not reject the general thesis of a configurational explanation for reflexive patternings, but only presents the feasibility of a narrowed analysis, controlled in the domain of structural intent, which is prima facie quite natural to a functional generative process. Arguing prior to full formalization, we address the fundamental issue of the controlling factors for the occurrence of reflexive anaphors. The TG regularities conditioned by linguistic action intent, and

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<sup>23</sup> It is possible here to observe how a marker of markedness might present as an appearance in morphological patterning.

<sup>24</sup> Note that we use dollar sign pseudocode for architectural investigations into a system which is amenable to proper formalization and machine implementation.

thereby having characteristics different from purely syntactical rules, are characteristic of a *cognitactic* view of language wherein syntax is not so separate from cognitive functional purpose. By the association of purpose and intent with linguistic structural processes, we orient our analysis of reflexive structures around the practicalities of its usefulness in an endeavor to capture the essence from the perspective of utilitarian competence of language.  
*Background Data, Configurational Approaches, Overview*

In the Minimalist Approach reflexives historically depend on the concept C-Command, which is the configurational relation wherein the co-referential item must be the sister or be within the sister of the referee. Here is representative motivating data: **Invalid source specified.** 118-20

- (1) I shaved myself.
- (2) \*Myself shaved me.
- (3) \*The man I saw shaved myself.
- (4) \*My mother hated myself.

In expanded treatments, three factors are useful in configurational treatments of the reflexive. They are as follows: (Haegeman, 1994) p.207 ff.

- CM Clause-Mate: Reflexive is conditioned by co-reference inside the minimal clause.
- CC C-Command: Reflexive is conditioned by a co-referent in a C-command position
- SA Subject Argument: Reflexive is conditioned by the nature of the abstract local subject argument

Our treatment will diverge from this strictly configurational analysis but dovetails well with these previous generative analyses. In particular we find evidence that C-Command arises in generalizations for an underlying functional reason. Further, we argue that orientation to subject role in syntax, associated with the probing insights of the Extended Projection Principle, affirming that sentences must have a subject, derives its explanatory capacity from a necessary philosophical view: sentences are fundamentally representations, implying that there would of necessity be subject matter. These principles of generative grammar coalesce with concepts of purpose and intent as the functioning of linguistic constructs as tools is considered.

Below we present an array of standard data and effects associated with discussions of the reflexive in English, adapted from (Haegeman, 1994), Adger (Adger, 2002), (Carnie, Syntax A Generative Introduction, 2007), and others. This data illustrates three contextual controlling factors: a locality clause-mate constraint (CM), a hierarchical C-command constraint (CC), and a subject argument constraint (SA). The presentation is intended for those already familiar with the generative treatments of reflexive phenomena, which are well-rehearsed in the literature.

Following is the data set of acceptable and unacceptable sentence types which are the empirical basis of analysis. We recite relevant observations for each example:

- (5) I shaved myself. Al invited himself.
- (6) \*Myself shaved me. \*Himself invited Al (He himself left. \*Himself he left.)
  - a. Order or structure is relevant

- b. No anaphor in subject position
  - c. Not c-commanded by referent so precedence not necessary in configurational treatment
- (7) \*Al invited herself.
- a. Co-reference required with feature agreement.
- (8) \*The man I saw shaved myself.
- a. Co-reference is lateral or down in embedding, not up..
- (9) \*My mother hated myself.
- a. Embedded modifiers of heads are out of co-reference scope.
- (10) Al believes Sue to like herself.
- a. Reflexive occurs when co-referents associated inside same simple clause.
- (11) \*Al believes Sue to like himself.
- a. Higher subject co-reference is blocked across object control
  - b. Reflexive doesn't occur when co-referent in higher clause across object control.
- (12) Al's mother invited herself.
- a. Reflexive can refer to larger subject NP
  - b. Covered by CC
- (13) \*Al's mother invited himself.
- a. Not just CM but CC required since reflexive can't refer to NP inside subject NP
- (14) \*Al said that himself left.
- a. Shows CC not sufficient, need CM too
- (15) Al said that he left.
- a. Shows CC not sufficient, need CM too
- (16) Al thinks that Sue hurt herself.
- a. CC insufficient
  - b. Need locality constraint CM
- (17) \*Al thinks that Sue hurt himself
- a. CC insufficient
  - b. Need locality constraint CM
- (18) \*I expect himself to invite Al.
- a. Locality (e.g. CM) insufficient
  - b. CC required but phrase structure tree is debatable
- (19) I expect Al to invite himself.
- a. Locality (e.g. CM) insufficient.
- (20) Al believes himself to be the best.
- a. CC but not CM, so predicts ill-formed wrongly, but depends on phrase structure analysis
- (21) \*Al believes that himself is the best.
- a. CC but not CM so predicts ill-formed correctly
  - b. Also presents hypothesis that tensed S is controlling
- (22) \*Al believes Sue's description of himself.
- a. CC but CM so predicts well-formed wrongly, showing the need for an additional constraint.
- (23) Al believes any description of himself.
- a. CC CM predict this but shows can't just limit previous case inside NP
- (24) Sue believes Al's description of himself.
- a. Shows potential role of the logical subject.
- (25) The picture of himself upset Al.
- a. Reflexive in matrix subject position shows special nature of picture/description constructions.

- (26) b. Shows potential 3<sup>rd</sup> factor, role of logical subject  
\*Al believes that Sue's description of himself is wrong.  
a. Correct prediction CC but not CM
- (27) Al believes that any description of himself is wrong.  
a. Wrong prediction since CC but not CM
- (28) (Sue believes that) Al's description of himself is wrong.  
a. Correct prediction: CC and CM.
- (29) Al believes that a picture of himself will be on show.  
a. Shows that neither a tensed clause constraint nor a noun phrase constraint will suffice.  
b. It's possible to call on an abstract concept of subject dependent on case marking features being present..
- (30) Al expected Tom to invite himself. Tom was expected by Al to invite himself.  
a. Object control is a trigger
- (31) Ed allowed himself to invite Al. Ed allowed Al to invite himself.  
a. Co-reference to and from the higher object
- (32) Al believed Ed to have hurt himself. Al believed himself to have hurt Ed.  
a. Co-reference to and from the higher object  
b. Object control triggers lower reflexive.
- (33) Al has to want to try to begin to save himself  
a. Subject control triggers reflexive through multiple embeddings.

The configurational approach extends to three structural factors to account for reflexive phenomena. C-command and Clause-mate restrictions account for the majority patterns but *picture/description* constructions as in (22)(23)(24)(25)(26)(27)(28)(29) require the invocation of an abstract subject concept, which is indirectly motivated under a number of contingent assumptions.

Configurational analyses present specific hypotheses that stimulate further and deeper investigation. They are highly effective for uncovering and probing syntactic and other effects. They reflect directly on questions of which linguistic structures and processes are compatible with human linguistic capacity, but do not, however, explore or posit reasons why any particular linguistic structure may exist or how it functions in a utilitarian context. Configurational generative analyses do not seek the founding purpose behind the reflexive construction. In our analysis we juxtapose against this limited structuralist approach a cognitactic approach using functional explanations of intent which depends on principles of cognitive strategy rather than hypotheses about specialized architectural configurations.

### *The General Case*

The generalization we arrive at for the above data is that there is a default, baseline (overridable) assumption, for purposes of likelihood and practicality, that the nominals within a single clause will not in most cases co-refer, and are prone to cause more ambiguity confusion when they do. In other words, while they occur as contrastive indicators, reflexive co-occurrences are not the unmarked syntactic norm. From this perspective it appears functionally useful to mark them overtly. Simple predications do not normally involve some attribute in a relation to itself. When a nominal does in fact co-refer, against the more general expectation, it appears as a reflexive form to show that the default unmarked expectation has been over-ridden as a measure to

preclude ambiguity in a particular clause. There is for the most part no such co-reference expectation across clause boundaries. Reflexives do not generally occur outside simplex clausal environments, because, when more than one clause is introduced, resulting in more than one predication, the possibilities of co-reference exceed the lower likelihood associated with a reflexive relation of single predication. In this way, reflexives are seen to have a purpose reflecting user intent. Their function is to reduce ambiguity by adding lexical material in a context where the differentiation is most useful

It is the specification of an intent for each form of construction or (trans)formation that distinguishes cognitactic tool grammar from other generative systems. We refer to an element introduced into a linguistic structure for some reason of user intent as an ‘actioneme’, symbolized by a string with an initial dollar sign ‘\$’. In TG we propose actioneme hypotheses to specify the function, purpose, and user intent underlying constructions such as the reflexive.

As a first approximation (to be refined) we can account for the occurrence and nonoccurrence of ‘-self forms in most of the above data in a direct way by specifying just the basic behavior associated with the introduction of the –self lexemes. We note that the simplest and broadest generalization from the data is that –self co-refers with clause-mate preceding NPs. This accounts for most of the data leaving narrow special cases to consider. As a first rough approximation, we might propose the following actioneme intent for introduction of –self anaphoric forms:

Reflexive Behavior (actioneme \$assertCoreference)

Insert a reflexive –self form for an NP under the following conditions:

There is a valid referee, co-referring NP in the same clause.

The referee precedes the NP

Note that a precedence relation appears *prima facie* to be required since co-reference is one directional.

(34) \*Himself invited Al

Reflexives referring outside the local clause into a separate tensed clause are ruled out because reflexives are restricted to clause mates in the local clause.

(35) \*Al thinks that Sue hurt himself

(36) \*Al believes that himself is the best.

We propose a cognitactic procedure to filter the unwanted sentences.

Cognitactic Filtering Procedure

1. Register specified domains for which co-reference is less expected and more prone to ambiguity.
2. Register cases where NP co-reference occurs in these domains against this expectation.
3. Replace a co-referring NP in these domains with an agreeing reflexive –self form where it follows its referee

As noted above, for purposes of higher level analysis we summarize the general features of linguistic structure actions using a form of notation we call an actioneme. In this case, to express the state of affairs for reflexives, we propose for step one above an automatic default, unmarked actioneme within each simplex clause predication:

\$registerCorefAmbiguityRiskForClauseDomain. This is a cybernetic default as discussed above reflecting the most likely and frequently expected situation. It captures a background condition, that for simple clauses, it is deemed less likely that nominals will be co-referential.

We posit a second actioneme for step 2 \$registerCoRefOverride activated when a nominal co-refers inside a clause against the expectation of step 1, i.e.

\$registerCorefAmbiguityRiskForClauseDomain. Finally \$insertReflexive, corresponding to step 3., inserts a reflexive –self form agreeing with the context.. It indicates some NP that co-refers with some other preceding NP in its domain of expectation that is not in a separately embedded sentence.

These actionemes represent structural intentions which are best understood as a part of linguistic competence.

The variety of surface forms is covered as illustrated in several examples:

- (37) I showed Ann herself
- (38) \*I showed herself Ann
- (39) The book was given by Ed to himself.
- (40) The book was given to Ed by himself

It is interesting to inquire why such processes might be formed. Beyond simple clauses, when an embedded clause is present, there arises not only an additional predication, but invariably as a result, the possibility of one or more additional nominal elements. In particular the embedded clause must admit at least of its own subject. This proliferation of nominal candidates increases the likelihood that elements may co-refer. In fact we posit that the global possibility of nominals, particularly animate ones, beyond those involved in the main simplex predication is fundamental in controlling the occurrence of the reflexive form.

### *Special Cases*

#### Case 1

The simple actionemes posited above do not yet account for cases where reflexive bridges simple clause boundaries. Consider the following cases of subject control.

- (41) Al attempted to work the radio
- (42) Al tried turning the radio on.
- (43) Al painted the wall suspended from a rope.

To handle subject control and cases such as these we propose an actioneme \$registerSameSubject that declares identity between the higher and embedded subjects.

Similarly, we posit \$registerSubjectSameAsObject for object control verbs:

- (44) Sue asked him to enroll himself/\*herself. Subject to object control
- (45) Al believes Sue to like herself/\*himself

To account for these cases we propose that as an automatic consequence of actionemes asserting same subject or object for control verbs, that the domain of unexpected co-reference is automatically extended to include the higher NP. We capture this as the actioneme:  
\$expandCorefUnexpectedDomainToControllingNP

This expansion can be recursive. When there is a chain of subject control the reflexive domain expands accordingly.

- (46) Al has to want to try to begin to save himself

Significantly also, in this example, *himself* can occur before any of the verbs.

- (47) Al (himself) has to (himself) want to (himself) try to (himself) begin to (himself) save himself

Note the following particular case showing that the functional role (subject, object) of NPs is operative rather than merely NP presence, and also that the expansion of the domain does not include intervening material:

- (48) Sue promised Al to promote herself/\*himself a note. (subject to subject control)

The following shows that the reflexive processes depend on a general notion of *precede*, rather than specific immediate precedence.

- (49) Al showed Sue (himself/herself) in the mirror

Case 2

The unified actioneme approach outlined above generally accounts for the data but further analysis is still required for exceptional cases involving representation lexemes. Consider following examples repeated from above:

- (50) Al believes any description of himself.
- (51) Sue believes Al's description of himself.
- (52) The picture of himself upset Al.

Note that these exceptional cases all involve a set of similar lexical items: *picture, description, account, photo, likeness, depiction, reflection, book*, and so forth. It is the class of nouns denoting representations. These are anomalous cases in the TG approach, and are also equally exceptional for configurational C-Command and clause mate explanations where they motivate special configurational apparatus. They bring out important questions and illustrate insights in the generative treatments that led to an explanation using a structurally articulated concept of an abstract subject (Chomsky). If such a form of abstract subject is articulated, it can explain these reflexives that otherwise appear not to be C-commanded by the referee as per the configurational solution. Both in accord and in contrast, where previous accounts posit

an abstract structural subject, in the following we follow the intuition further to ask in what that special subject relationship consists.

In cognitax, sentences are representations, and representations are of necessity about something.<sup>25</sup> The conceptual matter that a sentence representation is about is both a structural primitive and definitional (recapitulating the Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky)). It aligns with the idea of ‘subject’ in grammatical descriptions. We posit that each sentence is a representational action about something, involving a fundamental linguistic action declaring what the subject of representation is. Each sentence therefore involves the linguistic action:

\$assertSubjectOfRepresentation, or more briefly, \$chooseSubject

Similarly, each sentence representation projects a characterization of the subject.

\$assertPredicateCharacterizationofSubject, or \$choosePredicate

It follows from this that a representation that has as its subject itself a representation would be a uniquely special case. The embedded representation must have a subject, and for picture/description examples it is clear that some subject object is being pictured/described. We conclude from this that the subject of ‘picture of himself’ is the thing being pictured, or in the case above (50) it is ‘Al’. Under this analysis the above examples are neither exceptional, nor require reliance on a configurational concept such as C-Command, since the reflexive simply co-refers to the subject of the predication (representation). Nor is there a problem where the reflexive occurs in a subject clause preceding the overt occurrence of AI since ‘himself’ co-refers locally with the subject within the local clause rather than as it superficially might appear with the object position at a distance.

In the following example, on the other hand, ‘himself’ cannot co-refer to the subject of the description, since, while the description is about AI, the phrase ‘Sue’s description, at a superordinate level, has Sue as the grammatical subject displacing the logical default subject, AI, which otherwise would emerge as a trigger for reflexivization. The higher predication is that Sue is responsible for a description, and it is the description by Sue that is about AI. Since Sue appears in the vacuum created by the need for a subject, AI is suppressed as a subject of description

(53) \* AI believes Sue's description of himself.

While this analysis differs from configurational analyses, it can also be seen as building on them and penetrating further in a constructive direction. Generative analyses have found great utility in the Extended Projection Principle, which asserts that sentences must have subjects. Our analysis here depends on such a principle and seeks to probe further by asking why sentences necessarily have subjects: in TG it follows from the understanding that sentences are representations. Furthermore it appears sentences can have only one subject, since, when a grammatical subject appears as in the previous case, it displaces the logical representation subject for purposes of reflexivization.

Other examples involving reflexives that appear to precede their referee can be analyzed similarly using these notions of recessive representation subjects for the picture/description lexical class.

(54) Which book about himself did Anson write?

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<sup>25</sup> Thanks are due to John Hewson for private correspondence emphasizing the need for this perspective.



- (55) Which book about herself did Jenny say that Anson had written.
- (56) The picture of himself upset ed.
- (57) ?I gave some pictures of himself to bill

The cognitactic rules as presented work for a variety of different verbs and structures

- (58) I gave Ed some pictures of himself
- (59) Destruction by the city of itself
- (60) Destruction of the city by itself
- (61) Destruction of itself by the city

### Case 3

It should be noted that where numerous more complex examples can be constructed based on (trans)formations such as passive, dative inversion, or question formation, a variety of unacceptable sentences can be explained as the misapplication of incompatible tools. This topic is beyond the scope of the discussion of the organic reflexive process. Here are some examples:

- (62) \*To whom did you recommend himself.
- (63) ??Destruction by itself of the city
- (64) ?\*The book was given to himself by Al
- (65) ?\*The book was given by himself to Al
- (66) \*I recommended himself to Al.

### Case 4

A further special case arises in (Adger, 2002) regarding a situation in which a gladiator is being awarded his own life:

- (67) The consul's gift of the gladiator to himself.
- (68) \*The consul's gift of himself to the gladiator.
  
- (69) The consul's gift to the gladiator of himself.
- (70) The consul's gift to himself of the gladiator.

In these cases the recipient and patient are the same. It is a kind of a metaphor, being given one's self, since one cannot literally be given one's self. For a gladiator to receive himself is literally a convoluted thought. One cannot give the recipient to the recipient. The expectation is that the patient and recipient are different.

This reveals an analogical parallel to the less probable identity of reference in simple clauses where NPs are expected not to co-refer. Here it is the patient and recipient related in an impossibility, obviating the risk of ambiguity. This observation indicates that these cases can be subsumed under a single analysis. The actioneme analysis proposed earlier for clause domains can be used here by generalizing it as a function. Where we previously had a simple declaration, \$registerCorefAmbiguityRiskForClauseDomain, we can now revise this as an actioneme function: \$assertCorefUnexpectedForDomain(DomainSpecification). Now the domain specification can be either "NPsInClause" or, for a verb such as gift, "PatientAndRecipient". In

this way a single process can account for both cases.

#### Case 5

Also interesting is the case of comparatives in which –self forms can co-refer outside the local clause with some considerable degree of acceptability to some speakers:

- (71) Al knew Sue was taller than himself.
- (72) Sue said to Al Ed was taller than herself.
- (73) Sue heard from Al Tom said to Bob Ed was taller than herself.

These are particularly interesting because of the impossibility a thing exceeding itself:

- (74) \*Sue is taller than herself.

Since a thing cannot exceed itself the risk of ambiguity in the local use of a pronoun is reduced, making the –self form without function. In these cases we see the scope of co-reference may be expanded to where the functional purpose of the reflexive becomes useful. We capture these circumstances by positing that the scope widening actioneme \$assertCorefUnexpectedForDomain can be applied to include the containing clause, e.g. \$assertCorefUnexpectedForDomain(ContainingClause). To the extent that the corresponding examples such as above are acceptable, this actioneme may even be applied repeatedly, while also decrementing the felicity of the result as the longer distance potential for co-reference increases. It is beyond the scope of the present work to propose specific technical mechanisms to account for varying degrees of unacceptability, but this case is suggestive of various interesting possibilities to be considered.

#### *Higher Level Constraints*

Based on the foregoing, if we ask in general why the various ill-formed sentences discussed above are unacceptable in view of our imaginative ability to construct them, the answer comes down to the misapplication of tools. When a tool is applied where it is not called for, or when incompatible tools are used in an utterance, the result is an improper structure. These consequences can be made more explicit by reference to common sense constraints such as the following:

##### Required Purpose Constraint:

Do not override an expectation where there is none, or, in general, do not utilize a tool where its purpose will not be fulfilled

##### Vacuous Action Constraints<sup>26</sup>

Do not undertake a targeted action when there is no target to act on.

Such constraints vanish behind common sense insofar as natural language exists for a set of

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<sup>26</sup>This might conceivably be collapsed with the Required Purpose Constraint, but our view is that many hundreds of analyses must be undertaken before the universal generality of actionemes might be well motivated.

purposes and disregards for those purposes would naturally lead to dysfunctional generations.

### *Conclusions*

In summary a concise simplified cognitax solution handles the data involving four aspects of descriptive patterning: precedence, clause mate locality, C-command, and abstract subject relationship.

While our approach has been specifically to avoid the abstractness of a purely configurational approach where a preferred alternative actioneme tool analysis is attractive and well supported, we do not see the configurational approach to be wrong or misguided so much as an invaluable step in the deepening progress of understanding. We inquire further why C-Command should have the explanatory power that has been attributed to it and conclude that a true generalization has been indirectly represented, since the sisterhood referred to in C-Command is, from another perspective, a relation to a clause predication, that is a saying of something about something. The configurational branching reflects the application of predicative tools. We propose that C-Command holds to the extent it does because it corresponds to discrete actions of clause predication.

While there is this overlay and congruence, we maintain the actioneme approach is an advance, because it explains why C-Command should hold, namely, that there are tools, such as reflexive constructions, that are constrained to act principally in direct predications. We posit that reflexives outwardly/explicitly revise a probability expectation of difference of reference. The scope of that expectation is within a clause predication. As such, we believe cognitax provides an explanation why the C-Command configuration, fencing off the next higher predicate as it does, should be relevant. In this way TG can be viewed as a marginally more ambitious generalization to cover the data.

Furthermore, we believe the particular cases of picture/description reflexivization illustrate how the Extended Projection Principle points to a profound generalization over diverse phenomena in many languages. This being true, the extra measure involved in positing an actual process to choose the subject of each sentence would seem to advert quite directly to a linguistic reality.

Even the special exceptional cases of comparative and donor-recipient identity reflect back and lend support for the cognitactic analysis.

To the extent that our arguments are successful in establishing the need for cognitactic processes, TG illuminates questions about the architecture of competence. Whereas generative studies have traditionally separated syntax from motivational cognitive inputs, TG would delineate a severely restricted controlled vocabulary of linguistic intents and present these as interconnected with a set of syntactic processes. The empirical basis of actionemes supports the hypothesis that there is an additional component in the architecture of linguistic competence which is the source of certain of the structures that have traditionally been the subject matter of syntax.

## **18 Poetics as an Argument for Psychological Reality**

Consider Blake's poem "Tyger" which John Ross (Ross J. R., 2000) has examined carefully for poetic structure. A hallmark of the work is the discovery of what Ross calls the 'corridor', a sort of column which is a repetition of structure in successive lines, so that a vertical pattern of recurrence sets in relief stacked corresponding items and offsetting horizontal patterns. We observe the column of alliterations in the poem per Ross's insightful and deeply considered work, but also stacked actionemes, as illustrated below. The actioneme effectors are reflected on the surface only as wh-words but the cold configurations of labeled hierarchies cannot do major duty to bring out the structure of inexorably mounting uncertainty, which is the heart of the poem. If one considers Blake's poem as a reflection of superficial wh-word alliteration alone the result is surface structural analysis unconnected to a core meaning whose emotional potential stands as an

essence of the poem. By circumventing what the poet seeks to do to the reader, one misses a core linguistic element. If language is hypothesized to involve a set of active tools, it is a good test of the proposal to see if it can partially explain the manner or enablement of art. We think a poem cannot easily be made just from phonology and configurational syntax. A poem is typically a series of impactful actions.

If we posit a linguistic action, an intention effectuator ( ‘actioneme’) \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) underlying each wh structure, the actioneme alliteration can be seen in harmony and counterpoint with phonological alliteration. We have annotated the poem itself.

### The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
 In the forests of the night:  
 [What] immortal hand or eye, \$declareUnknown  
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In [what] distant deeps or skies, \$declareUnknown  
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
 On [what] wings dare he aspire? \$declareUnknown  
 [What] the hand, dare seize the fire? \$declareUnknown

And [what] shoulder, & [what] art, \$declareUnknown,\$declareUnknown  
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
 And [when] thy heart began to beat, \$declareUnknown  
 [What] dread hand? & [what] dread feet? \$declareUnknown,\$declareUnknown

[What] the hammer? [what] the chain? \$declareUnknown,\$declareUnknown  
 In [what] furnace was thy brain? \$declareUnknown  
 [What] the anvil? [what] dread grasp, \$declareUnknown,\$declareUnknown  
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

[When] the stars threw down their spears \$declareUnknown  
 And water'd heaven with their tears:  
 [Did he] smile his work to see? \$declareUnknown  
 [Did he] [who] made the Lamb make thee \$declareUnknown,\$declareUnknown

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
 In the forests of the night:  
 [What] immortal hand or eye, \$declareUnknown  
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

There is an actioneme underlying the insertion of the wh words which corresponds to the action of asserting that something is unknown. The \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) actioneme represents a Rossian corridor that most exactly overlays the wh word syntactic column. It's perhaps anathema to think of a poem as constructed by a process devoid of artistic

meaning intent. The repetition of the action of affirming the presence of the unknown is near the heart of this poetic creation.

There is a resonant rhetorical effect here from the presence of repeated questions around an integrated theme. \$accumulateRelatedQuestions is a second order self-referential actioneme which builds the literary tension. Note that Blake's use of wh-words reflects exactly such a column/corridor, and that the syntactic pattern interplays with the phonological. To attribute the poem's power only to the colder insertion of wh items, however, is to abstract it in a way that for poetry lacks the essential emotional dimension.

For present purposes there is an overarching point to be made, as subtle as it is potentially powerful, namely, that there is an experience in reading the poem, verifiable simply by surveying good readers of poetry, that not only is not reflected but cannot be reflected by syntactic wh insertion or by any theory of syntax that lacks something like the actioneme. Is there evidence for the reality of this \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) actioneme? Certainly, the answer is yes because any sentient able reader of the poem must recognize that the essence of the artistic experience is the repetitive and accumulative pounding of the mysterious unknowns. If we are sensitive we cannot escape Blake's intent. This is not a matter of theories of linguistics or poetics but simply a fact of the data which can be independently verified. It is perhaps unprecedented to cite an artistic experience as evidence for a syntactic approach but, still, it is offered here as focused and verifiable evidence.

Without the actioneme there can be no truly comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical method or the poetic process. The subtle action-based re-framing of the wh-word occurrences enables us to represent the fact that Blake sends artistically crafted thunderbolts from the utilitarian cognitive instruments.

To summarize, as a provocation to emphasize the nature of the material we are dealing with, our analysis holds that the actioneme \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) can be observed at work in some circumstances completely apart from everyday utilitarian syntactic considerations. It is evident in art. Once a linguistic action dimension is recognized in linguistics, its power, to the extent it is real, might be expected to become pervasively evident. To deny it would be as to tell a viewer using a new high power telescope that they are not in fact seeing what they see since the viewed objects do not appear in existing maps of the skies.

Our premise is perhaps confirmed by one of the world's pre-eminent poem who has affirmed that s/he has always thought of poems as actions.<sup>27</sup>

## 19 Certainty Verb Subcategorization

Next we consider a challenging case of complement subcategorization for verbs. We illustrate that both verbs and complements can activate their own possible actions and these must be compatible if the selected tools are to be used in tandem.

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<sup>27</sup> Personal communication.

Verbs are subcategorized for propositions, exclamatives and questions, but licensing a complement versus noun phrase is separate. (Johnson, 2004)

- (1) a. John asked me what the time is/the time (Question)
- (2) b. I'll assume that he's intelligent/his intelligence (Proposition)
- (3) c. Bill couldn't believe how hot it is/the heat (Question)
  
- (4) a. John wondered what the time was/\*the time (Question)
- (5) b. I'll pretend that he's intelligent/\*his intelligence (Proposition)
- (6) c. Bill complained how hot it was/\*the heat (Exclamative)

Thus it might be supposed that categorial selection could not be derived in a straightforward manner from semantic selection classes.

In our framework verbs are tools designed for purposes, so it is elemental that they could be for asking, asserting, doubting, questioning, exclaiming and so forth. These classes follow from the basic data of observation of use. The licensing of simple noun phrases falls out from the action analysis. While 'ask', 'assume', and 'believe' involve elements with certainty assumed to be resolved, 'wonder', 'pretend', and 'complain' report inherent continued uncertainty. We propose that where the latter set is used a linguistic actioneme \$certaintyNotResolved is observed. We similarly observe the opposite actioneme \$certaintyResolved for the nominals: "the time", "his intelligence", and "the heat". It is perhaps not surprising in view of the fact that a noun is a lexical packaging strategy that there would be a tendency to allow situations of resolvable certainty to be packaged and summarily presented in nominal form, while uncertainty benefits from the increased flexibility of the fuller descriptions in a clause. We posit the cognitax actions: \$SimplyResolvedCertainty for the nominals and \$leaveCertaintyUnresolved for the clauses, and propose that these condition the constructions under consideration.

This is further illustrated by the following data (p.88-9). In the first set below we observe verbs of certainty.

- (7) Mary promised me that she would sing.
- (8) Mary promised me the ring
- (9) Jerry told me that he can't stand Mary's singing.
- (10) Jerry told me the story.
- (11) Sheila showed me that she cares.
- (12) Sheila showed me her concern.

Contrast those with the following verb of unresolved certainty:

- (13) a. Mary persuaded Bill that he should go.
- (14) b. \* Mary persuaded Bill the fact

The proposed patterning is that a tool of unresolved certainty (verb) does not pair naturally with a tool of resolved certainty (nominal): operational classes are not co-selected when they work in

opposite directions, as in this case where a certainty conflict constraint is observed. We observe that any attempt to account for such data by means only of syntactic configuration must necessarily bury and hide transparent intentional processes

## 20 Placement Alternations

Another problem that presents a challenge to configurational analysis is a documented set of placement alternations.

The phrase “at noon” seems often to follow the verb object. (data from (Johnson, 2004) p. 46)

- (1) a. Jill ate it at noon.
- (2) b. \* Jill ate at noon it.
- (3) a. Jill ate spätzle at noon.
- (4) b. \* Jill ate at noon spätzle.

But there are multiple conditions affecting acceptability that need to be considered:

- (5) a. Jill ate the rotting kumquats.
- (6) b. Jill ate at noon the rotting kumquats.
- (7) Jill ate the rotting kumquats at noon
  
- (8) \*Jill ate at noon the soup.
- (9) Jill ate at noon a bowl of rancid wonton soup

These illustrate well known heavy NP structures whereby “at noon” can be located closer to the verb in the aftermath of the creation of a heavy object, i.e. one that we might characterize, also in the spirit of heaviness, as *describeUnusualObjectWithLongDescription*. Once this cognitax action is selected, with its sizeable resource allocation and implied processing, it could be considered a natural consequence that sentence planning might trigger a compensatory (trans)formation tool in a strategy to keep the attributes of the verbal modification unit contiguous and easily associable. We might refer to this as *reassociateVerbalModifier*, a (trans)formation which moves the verbal modifier back close to the verb where it is most naturally associated. The unacceptability of [*\*Jill ate at noon the soup.*] is due in this analysis to the useless application of *reassociateVerbalModifier* when there is no triggering circumstance of intervening complexity.

In summary, we posit here the movement of the time phrase to allow easier association with the verb. These cases are analyzed in a way not significantly different in mechanics from the traditional rule of syntax-configurational Heavy NP Shift, with the difference that we see it as a tool to extricate a complex characterization away from the verb so that the association between the time phrase and the verb is not weakened, obfuscated or rendered ambiguous.

Note the similarity of this process to the alternations of dative shift:

- (10) She gave the book to the man.
- (11) She gave the man the book.
- (12) ?She gave to the man the book.
- (13) ?She gave the old-fashioned book I brought back from France that didn't have the pages cut to the man.
- (14) She gave the man the old-fashioned book I brought back from France that didn't have the pages cut which earlier in the year had been mailed.
- (15) \*She gave the old-fashioned book I brought back from France that didn't have the pages cut which earlier in the year had been mailed to the man.
- (16) She gave the man the old-fashioned book I brought back from France that didn't have the pages cut which earlier in the year had been mailed.

Dative shift is similar in its information restructuring capability but differs because it is optional when the utility of restructuring is not present, i.e. when the object NP is not heavy. This seems to be evidence that the \$reassociateVerbalModifier family of similar operations can serve multiple functions. In the case of dative shift the trigger can be not only a reorganization to avoid a difficult to interpret dispersal of verbal information, but, alternatively, to implement a possible re-ranking of affiliations of direct and indirect objects with the verb. In this case the hypothesis is that the speaker action is \$createPrimaryAssociation that effectively bonds or blocks bonding of constituents as a measure for speaker intent.

Note also a similar phenomenon cited by (McCawley, 1998) p. 66 as a “constraint against subordinate clauses in the middle of a surface constituent”

- (17) Bill told that lie to Alice
- (18) \*Bill told that Fred had quit school to Alice.
- (19) Bill told Alice that Fred had quit school.

The actioneme approach would seem to resolve difficulties with this and other analyses. Here is the characterization from (Johnson, 2004) p. 83 that summarizes the theoretical importance of the data: “the conditions governing these preferences come from something other than syntax proper.”<sup>1</sup>

Obligatory Heavy NP Shift: finite CPs:

- (20) \*Max [said that pigs fly] yesterday.
- (21) Max said yesterday that pigs fly.

Optional Heavy NP Shift: “full” NPs:

- (22) Max visited the students yesterday.
- (23) ? Max visited yesterday the students.

PPs:

- (24) Max talked to the students yesterday.



(25) Max talked yesterday to the students

Blocked Heavy NP Shift:

Pronouns:

(26) Max visited him yesterday.

(27) \* Max visited yesterday him.

“Short” NPs:

(28) Max visited children yesterday.

(29) ?\*Max visited yesterday children.

We quote Johnson on the value of a solution: “This is a deeply mysterious affair. Why should movement transformations exist? A goal of much current research in syntax is to find an answer to this mystery. “

The answer we provide is that (trans)formations are tools that exist to implement specific effects and various tools are not functionally compatible with other tools. Our approach has been to loosen the syntactic formalism as a necessary step in tightening the constraints on universal grammar and providing an alternative cognitactic approach to simply and directly account for the phenomena.

## 21 Dative Patterns

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## 22 Complement versus Adjunct in Noun Phrases

We next proceed to consider the contrast between complements vs. adjuncts as presented in (Carnie, *Syntax: A generative introduction*, 2007).

As a preliminary, consider what makes a thing a book. It has to have something like potential reading material on pages; this is essential. Yet there are many variants of books whose differences don't involve the essentials.

(1) The book of poems with a red cover

(2) \*The book with a red cover of poems.<sup>28</sup>

The complement 'of poems' modifies an essential part of the definition, i.e. a book contains reading/viewing material by definition.

(3) It's the same book with a different color cover.

(4) \*It's the same book by a different author with different content on a different subject.

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<sup>28</sup> Situations where this might be acceptable, such as in a court of law where a book with a red cover is in evidence effectively bolster the analysis, especially since special intonation is required.

A book contains reading/viewing material such as poems as an essential but color is not so involved.

The actioneme \$instantiateAnEssential ('of X') is proposed to only be applied to an essential or its part, not an expanded derivative such as "book with a red cover". A book can still be a book without a (red) cover. So if we attempt to instantiate or elaborate a definition on a decorated base that no longer has just definitional material (\$addDescriptionBeyondEssential) the result is artificial. The constraint is:

#### Constraint on Elaboration Beyond Essential

Do not to apply a tool elaborating a definition after the definition has been elaborated with non-definitional material.

The practical nature of the constraint is perhaps evoked in a crude metaphor: one might not apply a primer coat after the application of a finish coat of house paint. This illustrates how direct solutions via cognitax can become available where difficulties about in a framework with centralized configurational syntax.

## 23 Auxiliary Movement and WH in Questions

A representative syntactic analysis per (Carnie, Syntax: A generative introduction, 2007) (chapters 7,11) accounts for subject verb inversion in questions

- (1) Al can go.
- (2) Can Al go?

by positing a null unpronounced complementizer in the superordinate structure. In place of this syntactic element we propose an actioneme \$askAboutPredication<sup>29</sup> in the tool structure of interrogative sentences. Rather than specify abstract configurational rules we propose functional explanations for many aspects of word and phrase order. This (trans)formation tool<sup>30</sup> puts the predication in focus by fronting its superordinate verbal element as a way of signaling an interrogative rather than declarative intention. We similarly posit the lexical tool \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) for WH questions associated with inserting the WH word and triggering movement to focus position at the front of the sentence. In both cases fronting is correlated with doubt.

- (3) Al can see WH.
- (4) What can Al see?

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<sup>29</sup> This is an umbrella representation summarizing more than one \$unknown type: { \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve), \$askForWhomAssertionTrue } etc.

<sup>30</sup> Many structures alternations can be analyzed either as transformations or choices of related constructions. We leave these questions open but advert to both possibilities.

It would seem not to be accidental that an element for which information is unknown and requested should be fronted to focus position. Both of these tools serve to cue the listener by excluding declarative garden path interpretations involving structures that would otherwise begin as non-question constructions, only to spring question status on the listener late in processing.

Here are some actioneme analyses of common interrogative types involving \$askAboutPredication (the intent of questioning) and \$declareUnknown (holds the place of a nominal about which information is requested).

- (5) Are you meeting? \$askAboutPredication triggers auxiliary fronting
- (6) Who(m) are you meeting? \$declareUnknown, \$askAboutPredication triggers aux fronting
- (7) Who will meet you? \$declareUnknown plus \$askAboutPredication where both are already in front focus position.
- (8) \*Whom you are meeting? \$declareUnknown plus \$askAboutPredication requires fronting of both.
- (9) You are meeting who(m)? \$declareUnknown on an element in the context of previously established (echo) basic predication does not ask about predication so does not trigger subject auxiliary inversion.

Focus movement can involve fronting somewhat generally. The composite cognitactic act involving both actionemes pairs inquiry about which individual or class might be involved (\$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve)), with inquiry about the truth of the resulting implied assertion (\$askAboutPredication). A generalization might be roughly formulated:<sup>31</sup>

#### Interrogative Focus Fronting Transformation

##### Front question items

\$askAboutPredication associates with the superordinate predicate element, which it fronts locally over the subject  
\$declareUnknown adheres to a specific focus of interrogation and moves it to the front of the sentence.

Given this framework consider

- (10) Who do you think AI will invite?
- (11) \*Who do you think that AI will invite?

By positing \$declareUnknown for ‘who’ fronting it follows that it should not be compatible with ‘that’ complements since the latter involve a packaging strategy per the ‘factive’ actioneme

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<sup>31</sup> Generally, wh questions front the interrogative in which some nominal constituent is associated with uncertainty: \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve). Both elements, the wh object and the auxiliary, are fronted: they are both targets of questioning. \$askAboutPredication is involved in auxiliary movement, and wh-movement is a reflection of \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) on the nominal.

\$assertSpecificFact. Declaring an unknown for specific established circumstances is using tools at cross purposes.

Consider indirect question verbs such as 'wonder':

- (12) I wonder are you meeting?
- (13) \*I wonder you are meeting?
- (14) I wonder whether you are meeting
- (15) \*I wonder whether are you meeting?
- (16) I wonder who will meet you.
- (17) I wonder what he has done. (Tends not to presuppose something was done.)  
\$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve),
- (18) I wonder what has he done. (Tends to presuppose something was done.)  
\$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve), \$askAboutPredication

These inherently reflect asking and can involve either an \$askAboutPredication (trans)formation or, alternatively, a 'whether' lexical actioneme \$presentBinaryOption in lieu of subject auxiliary inversion. These do not co-occur because asking generally about a predication and asking about a specific binary option are different and mutually exclusive linguistic acts.

The actioneme analyses offer simple and direct transparent solutions that enable less of a requirement for complexity and contrivance in a syntax-central system.

## 24 Islands and Embedded Wh Constructions

Wh words are used in relative clause constructions in addition to questions. What these contexts share is a role for holding a place where information is to be filled in. In this section we consider a set of classical syntactic constraints on Wh structures with a view to examining whether they can be aided, illuminated, or replaced by actioneme analysis.

Carnie's discussion (Carnie, *Syntax: A generative introduction*, 2007) (p 334) of Ross's classic movement-constrained islands includes complex phrases containing relative clauses:

- (1) What did he claim that he read t in the syntax book?  
(movement out of simple C)
- (2) \*What did Bill make the claim that he read t in the syntax book?  
(Out of C to head N)
- (3) \*Which cake did you see the man who baked t?  
(out of Adjunct to head N)

A purely syntactic approach holds that there can't be movement out of a clause if it's in a configuration dominated by a Determiner Phrase, as in a complement or adjunct to a head noun. The configurational solution is incomplete from the cognitax perspective insofar as an operational intent is not specified.

We note a parallel between

- (4) the claim that he read in the syntax book
- (5) the man who baked the cake

In both cases the embedded sentence serves to clarify information about the head, using ‘that’ and ‘who’ respectively. We propose that both structures involve \$declareUnknown(alias \$positVariableToResolve) (which claim; which man). Corresponding to ‘that’ and ‘who’ the sentence embedding tool functions to fill out the restricting or unknown information for the head nouns. We express the Wh actioneme with an alias to elaborate the functional role: \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve). The function of the embedded sentence can be characterized as \$embedSentenceToSpecifyObject.

There is no such head noun or associated structure in

- (6) He claimed that he read something in the syntax book

Evidently a reason is needed to explain why movement of the wh-word \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) can't break out of a nominal construct such as 'make a claim that' or 'see the man who', as in the unacceptable sentences above. The \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) of the wh words declares incomplete, unknown knowledge so it is natural to expect that one wouldn't ask for information via \$askAboutPredication and \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) about an element that is simultaneously being used to specify an element used to lay out the very question.

The interrogation tools are not compatible with packaging a construction designed to identify or clarify the same information. The function of the that-clause and relative clause is \$embedSentenceToSpecifyObject, for both 'the claim', and 'the man'. In this TG interpretation it is clear that the actions \$embedSentenceToSpecifyObject and \$askAboutPredication or \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) are incompatible.

These data suggest a preliminary constraint on clause specification constructs:

#### Unknown Specification Constraint (Corollary of Cross Purpose Constraint)

In the context of \$embedSentenceToSpecifyObject , use of a \$declareUnknown element is inappropriate in an embedded S functionally specifying a head, because the introduction of an unknown is at cross-purposes with the process of specification.

Finally, to illustrate further, consider the sentence below. The clause 'who baked \_\_ cake' specifies which man is spoken of. There is an inherent contradiction in using an element such as the object of 'bake' both in a process to specify a head noun and to declare an unknown in an interrogative context.

- (7) \*Did you see the man who baked which cake?

Even though there is no overt embedded sentence, a similar form of analysis can elucidate the unacceptability of

- (8) \*Whose did she buy book?

since the possessor both specifies the book and also has that role undermined by a structure which declares it unknown.

We leave detailed analysis for future work, but note there are even minimal pairs that contrast the act of specification with addition of ancillary detail. These involve ‘about’, which has a built-in looseness of specification:

- (9) He read a/the book about computer science.  
(10) He dropped a/the book about computer science.  
(11) What did he read a book about?  
(12) \*What did he read the book about?  
(13) \*What did he drop a/the book about?

Carnie also considers wh-islands involving more than one wh item in a sentence. He presents relevant data:

- (14) I wonder what John bought t with the money.  
(15) How do you think John bought the sweater t?  
(16) \*How do you wonder what John bought t1 t2?

And we add a question with two wh words:

- (17) \*What do you wonder who bought?

Some other examples:

- (18) You wonder what Al photographed.  
(19) You wonder who photographed the ape.  
(20) \*?Who do you wonder photographed the ape?  
(21) \*Who do you wonder what photographed?

And also:

- (22) You wonder who photographed what? (Echo context only)  
(23) ?Who do you wonder photographed what?  
(24) \*You wonder what who photographed.  
(25) Who saw what?  
(26) \*Who what saw?

There are infelicities in these sentences when there are two wh-phrases, especially when both of them are fronted. The wh-island constraint has often been presented as a pure syntax

configurational solution, e.g. Don't move a wh phrase skipping over another wh phrase that has been moved.

Actionemes let us approach the question by examining the compatibility of multiple unknowns.<sup>32</sup> We propose \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) for positions where wh-words occur. In case the wh-word is fronted to produce a question form (embedded or matrix) we propose the interrogative actioneme \$askAboutPredication. The \$declareUnknown element may involve manner, agent role, patient role, etc.

We propose that multiple \$declareUnknown actionemes are incompatible in a single scope involving \$askAboutPredication, since introduction of a second unknown confounds and thwarts the processing and resolution of the first unknown in the context of interrogation. There occur two \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) elements in each of the unacceptable sentences above. Use of one unknown variable requires the other elements in the local scope to be known in order to establish the possibility of reasonable questioning. The exception is an echo context where the question reflects a just previous utterance which anchors some items in the verbal exchange.

This suggests a constraint:

#### Unknown Interrogation Constraint (Corollary of Cross Purpose Constraint) V. 1

In the context of \$askAboutPredication, use of multiple \$declareUnknown elements is inappropriate, because the introduction of a gratuitous unknown is at cross-purposes with the process of questioning another one.<sup>33</sup> Doubt confounds resolution of doubt.

The questionable acceptability of

(27) ?Who do you wonder kissed the ape?

seems also to argue that the presence of two unknowns, even if one is embedded in an indirect question lacking a wh-word, can be the source of a difficulty.

In a similar way, a reprise of the traditional Subject Condition is possible:

(28) That the police would arrest several rioters was a certainty/doubtful.

(29) \*Who was that the police would arrest a certainty/doubtful?

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<sup>32</sup>The following may be echo questions, and reflect different phenomena:

?How do you think Al bought what?

?I wonder what Al bought how.

Insofar as these latter two are considered good sentences they could be reduced from compounds with equal constituent reduction but without two movements, but it seems closer to a natural consequence if use of multiple wh-words depends on the compatibility of the elements being questioned.

<sup>33</sup> This constraint may well be generalized with the foregoing one.

'That the police would arrest several rioters' is in a subject role. Frequently in syntactic analysis it is construed that wh elements can't be moved out of subjects.

Here we observe that 'was a certainty/doubtful' is used to \$assessLikelihood, while the unacceptable sentence at the same time includes \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve), which is the endpoint of uncertainty. A prerequisite of establishing likelihood would seem to be having firm premises rather than introducing one that is itself uncertain. We propose a tentative constraint subject to ongoing refinement.

### Likelihood Uncertainty Constraint

In the context of \$assessLikelihood, use of a \$declareUnknown element is inappropriate in a determining role for the proposition under assessment, because the introduction of an unknown is at cross-purposes with the process of establishing a foundation for determining likelihood. Likelihood assessment cannot be based on definitional uncertainty. Definitional uncertainty is \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) associated with an argument implied within the definition of a verb.

Finally, consider the traditional Coordinate Structure Constraint

- (30) I like Mary and John.
- (31) \*Who did you like Mary and t?
- (32) \*Who did you like t and John.
- (33) I ate some popcorn and drank some soda.
- (34) \*What did you eat t and drink some soda?
- (35) \*What did you eat some popcorn and drink?

Looking at the higher intent of these coordinate sentences, each reflects an actioneme \$expressSimilarityOrParallelismByConjoiningAssertions.

Now the act of \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) is incompatible with the explicit establishment of similarity or parallelism among assertions..

### Conjunction Constraint on Unknowns in Assertions

Assertions Conjoined for Similarity or Parallelism should not include an unknown since its lack of clarity works directly against effective comparison.

In summary, the actioneme approach recurrently presents itself as an alternative to purely syntactic traditions such as those of the structural technical solution proposed in the Minimal Link Condition (all movement is local i.e. to the closest non-filled landing position across complexes of structural tree derivations).<sup>34</sup> The attractiveness and viability of actioneme analysis

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<sup>34</sup>We forego consideration of echo questions.



here shows its promise to favorably rework numerous well-studied syntactic phenomena whose solutions have not seemed always to readily stabilize over successive generations of research. The observations of this section suggest the need for further work in wide reaches of observed syntactic complexity. If they are correct it would be expected that new principles at the level of cognitax would emerge and be validated

## 25 More on Island Constraints

In this section, we further examine various configurational syntax constraints that have been proposed to consider whether they might be enhanced or replaced by cognitactic constraints. We consider data that emerged from consideration of the A-over-A principle (a rule applying to category A must apply to the higher A) (Chomsky, Current issues in linguistic theory, 1964), the Empty Category Principle (Chomsky, Lectures on Government and Binding, 1981), and later generalizations as they were further strengthened.

Consider the following:

- (1) I treasured my trip to Africa.
- (2) \*Africa, I treasured my trip to.
- (3) My trip to Africa, I treasured.

‘my trip to Africa’ involves the actioneme \$describeExperience’, ‘to Africa’ is an action \$clarifyTrip as part of describing experience, while ‘Africa’ is \$assertPlace as part of clarifying the trip. Fronting implements \$bringToFocus so the problem with the sentence above can be characterized as focus being put on a disproportionately minor embedded detail. This suggests a constraint:

### Subordinate Focus Constraint

Don’t bring subordinate embedded details into focus without strong contrastive stress to mark awareness of the special emphasis on a minor subordinate predication.

This phenomenon doesn’t have only to do with depth of predication as the following show, but degree of details, associated with categories such as manner, place, and other predications less central to the event.

- (4) What-i did he say that he was reading i?
- (5) What-i does she believe that he said that he was reading i?
- (6) What-i are they claiming that she believes that he said that he was reading i?
- (7) What do you think that they are claiming that she believes that he said that he was reading i?
- (8) \*Howi have they forgotten which problem they should solve i?

(Santorini, 2007) p. 12

In the following we observe that wh fronting applies to the verb object when manner is declared unknown, but not vice versa. This shows a hierarchy of detail preventing a wh action on an interconnected detail ('how' is intimately related to the notion of a solution) when a more basic element is to be resolved is \$declareUnknown. Similarly, the data shows that for the verb subject to be declared unknown and fronted confuses the purpose when the essence of the unknown, i.e. selection of a particular one ('which'), is intimately connected with the manner of solution ('how').

- (9) ?Which problem have they forgotten how they should solve?
- (10) \*How have they forgotten which problem they should solve?
- (11) \*Which problem have they forgotten how should be solved?

(Santorini, 2007) p.12

In the following examples associated with the Empty Category Principle we see similar processes at work:

- (12) \*How did John ask whether Bill fixed the car?

The indirect question associated with 'whether' is inappropriate to frame an assertion in which manner is unknown. Similarly, 'that', which points to a fact (\$assertSpecificFact) is not compatible with a predication in which the subject is unknown:

- (13) \*Who does John believe that will fix the car?
- (14) Who does John believe will fix the car?

(Santorini, 2007) p. 12

Nor is it functional to interrogate an adjoined predication for which a major argument is unknown:

- (15) \*Which bike did you ride before Al fixed?
- (16) \*How i do you wonder when Al baked the cake i?

(Chomsky, Barriers, 1986)

These too show the general theme of not interrogating embedded refinement details. This points to the validity of constraints at the level of linguistic structural intention.

The above observations accumulate to a general conclusion that many constraints on configurational syntactic processes can be simplified, improved, replaced, and/or be made more general by use of cognitactic analysis.

## **26 Stevens Poetry**

A well-known poem by Wallace Stevens' shows artistic use of actionemes. We illustrate this as a

process already evident in the first verse:

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird by Wallace Stevens  
(first poem/stanza of 13)

- (1) Among twenty snowy mountains,
- (2) The only moving thing
- (3) Was the eye of the blackbird.

The larger poem, not considered here, as it moves from and beyond the beginning, has in the course of the poem to do with many levels of structure, e.g. on one level, for example, with numbers (thirteen, one, three, twenty). Putting the various levels of complexity aside and excerpting this one small piece we can observe there are dyadic pairs of dramatic semantic contrasts at the core of the reader experience. This is evident from mapping the principal actionemes in the first stanza.

|                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Among twenty snowy mountains, | \$widenHorizonToVastPerspective |
| The only moving thing         | \$isolateFocus                  |
| Was the eye of the blackbird. | \$narrowFocusToMinutePoint      |

|                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Among twenty snowy mountains, | \$backgroundOfVastStillness     |
| The only moving thing         | \$foregroundFocusSingleMovement |
| Was the eye of the blackbird. | \$foregroundMinuteSingleDot     |

|                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Among twenty snowy mountains, | \$presentStillWhiteVastExpanse |
| The only moving thing         | \$contrastFocusSingleMovement  |
| Was the eye of the blackbird. | \$presentMinuteBlackDot        |

By isolating and characterizing the actionemes, we see multiple overlaid patterns that constitute structure in the poem. Each pair is an instance of the strategic poetic actioneme: \$makeStarkContrast. The instances reverberate, one against the other. To the extent these intended actions by a poet are evident from experiencing the poem there can be less doubt about the reality of cognitactic linguistic actions as elements of language competence. How might the stylistic actions of poets ever be properly analyzed if linguistic theory does not advert to a most basic intentional aspect of linguistic generation?

## 27 Postal Puzzles

Paul Postal has noted the significant challenge of the following profoundly puzzling data on his web page. (Postal, 2014) In citing his data we break the example sentences out by actioneme to seek a solution. We propose two types of intended action for the verb 'reach',

\$assessAgentActionSuccessOnPatient  
\$assessProcessGoalSuccess:

- (1) The director never reached Adam.  
     \$ assessAgentActionSuccessOnPatient  
     \$reportOnAgentActionTowardGoalSuccess
- (2) That book never reached Adam.  
     \$assessProcessGoalSuccess  
     \$reportOnPatientProcessTowardGoalSuccess  
     (Lacks agency)
- (3) Adam was never reached by the director.  
     Passive=\$promoteAgencyParticipantToFocus
- (4) \*Adam was never reached by that book.  
     No agent complement, i.e. patient in a process without agency.

There is a challenge to explain why the last example is not acceptable. The sentences above are annotated with actionemes including the passive (trans)formation tool, which is a tool to promote a participant in an agency action to the fronted focus position.

(\$bringPatientIntoAgencyEventFocus)

If a structure does not involve causal agency the passive tool cannot apply. If this is not present, as in the last example, there is no role for the application of the (trans)formation.

Agent Front Focus Tool (Passive) (\$bringPatientIntoAgencyEventFocus)

Promote the agency participant to front focus. As a mechanism to allow focus on the various participants in a causal agentive event, this tool cannot operate without causal agency.

The data set below allows for a similar explanation. The examples have been annotated with actionemes reflecting how agency and the Agent Participant Raising (trans)formation tool can account for the alternations. Here we observe that goal raising cannot apply if there is no agency.

- (5) Adam was difficult for the director to reach.  
     AgentParticipantRaising requires an agent  
     (director reached Adam: an agent)
- (6) \*Adam was difficult for that book to reach.  
     No AgentParticipantRaising operation if no agent  
     (book reached Adam: no agent)
- (7) Texas was difficult for him to reach  
     Goal raises if there is an agent.

- (8) (he reached Texas: an agent)  
 \*Texas was difficult for the book to reach.  
 Goal cannot raise without agency.  
 (book reached Texas)

Similarly, the ‘reaching of x by y’ and ‘unreachable by’ constructs require an agency participant.

- (9) the reaching of Adam by the director  
 (10) \*the reaching of Adam by that book  
 (11) Adam was unreachable by the director.  
 (12) \*Adam was unreachable by that book.<sup>35</sup>

We can again account for the data by positing that 'reach x by' requires an agency participant.

It is useful to ask why in each of the foregoing cases we observe constructions requiring agency. For all the constructions considered a non-agent element is presented in a focus position while the agent itself retires to a less prominent position. The verb ‘reach’ carries an implied notion of possible success for the result the agent seeks to achieve. These facts suggest that the tools presenting a non-agent in relative focus likely exist as a means to communicate a central role for the non-agent element in the agent’s pursuit of an intention. Under this interpretation, it is plausible to assume there exists a class of tools (constructs and (trans)formations) underlying these examples which puts into focus a non-agent element seen as important to the agentive action: \$focusElementImportantToAgentiveIntent. In this way cognitactic analysis can open new avenues of analysis and understanding.

## 28 Polarity Items

It is a challenge syntactically to exclude the positive form for negative polarity items in analogous constructs.<sup>36</sup> (Carnie, *Syntax: A generative introduction*, 2007) ( p 133)

- (1) I didn’t have a red cent.  
 (2) I hadn’t seen her in a blue moon.

The acceptability of the above calls for an explanation of the unacceptable positive analogs:

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<sup>35</sup> This related data is unclear so is not considered.  
 a. The director didn't reach Adam although she did Louisa.  
 b. \*That book didn't reach Adam although it did Louisa.

<sup>36</sup> Note ‘even’ can be added. Note also: \*I didn't have 5 red cents.

- (3) \*I had a red cent.
- (4) \* I. didn't have 5 red cents
- (5) \* I had seen her in a blue moon.
- (6) \* I hadn't seen her in 2 blue moons.

Consider some plausible actioneme pseudocode to represent linguistic intention for the negative cases. 'red cent' reflects a tool that utilizes a rhetorical symbol for an amount rather than inserting an actual monetary amount.:

\$addHyperbolicRhetoricalSymbolForVerySmallestAmount.

The article 'a' instantiates \$assertSingleItem. Combining these we get salient focus on there being only one, a minimal amount. These combine with \$denyHaving ('not have') to yield the derived pseudocode \$denyEvenMinimumViaSymbolForVerySmallestAmount. \$denyHaving makes use of the rhetorical device. This is a plausible account of the acceptable negative polarity sentences above. But what about the ill formed ones?

We are brought to the question: Why would one use \$ addHyperbolicRhetoricalSymbolForVerySmallestAmount and \$assertSingleItem without further purpose such as negating it rhetorically? If one wanted to assert the holding of a small amount, its literal value could be evoked, or alternatively a generality such as e.g. 'almost nothing'. But here there is not an amount but only a rhetorical symbol for a radically small amount. An amount could not even be implied because there is no such value attached to what is rather only a rhetorical device. There is evidence here for a constraint on actionemes: "Don't add purposeful rhetorical elements and then not use them".

To elaborate in more detail, 'a red cent' is rhetorically useful as a worthless mythical absolute minimal symbolic denomination. For stylistic effect, some tools used together implement a useful construct. There is no role for \$ addHyperbolicRhetoricalSymbolForVerySmallestAmount ('red cent') if it is not put to some use.

Here is similar construction illustrating the same relationships:

- (7) He doesn't have a penny to his name
- (8) \* He has a penny to his name

This analysis suggests that negative polarity is not a phenomenon of configurational syntax but one of sentence construction actions. A similar analysis applies to 'blue moon'.

Lawler offers a collected overview of negative polarity with key examples which we consider below. (Lawler)

- (9) He didn't ever see it.
- (10) \* He ever saw it.

Also: 'ever the fool' means without end, over endless time

'ever' = \$assertOverTimeEndNotReached  
Negation is present \$assertNotSee

For stylistic effect, these tools together implement \$assertFailToSeeOverTimeEndNotReached. There is no role for \$assertOverTimeEndNotReached ('ever') if it is not put to some use since the same circumstance is effected by use of \$assertFailToSee in its bare form. This is an example of the

#### Superfluous/Null Construct Constraint

Do not introduce an actioneme if the result would be the same as if it were not introduced.

Now consider:

- (11) He hasn't called in weeks/hours/days/years/eons.
- (12) \*He called in weeks.

"in weeks" = \$assertUnexpectedlyLongTime  
Negation is present in \$assertFailToCall

For stylistic effect, these tools together implement \$assertFailToCallOverLongTime. There is no role for \$assertUnexpectedlyLongTime ('in weeks') if it is not put to some use. Without negation the actions sum to an effect whereby the event happened at any point during a time longer than would be expected, which leaves open the possibility that it happened within the expected time frame. This also is ruled out by the Superfluous/Null Construct Constraint.

Consider also that positive polarity items are unacceptable when negated:

- (13) I would rather have pie.
- (14) \* I wouldn't rather have pie. (Except as echo.)

'rather' = \$assertPreferredAlternative

This actioneme is incompatible with a negative insofar as it convoluted to propose an alternative in order not to use it, i.e. it avoids wasted effort to set up a circular disuse of an alternative.

- (15) I sorta like cake.
- (16) \* I don't sorta like cake.

'sorta' = \$assertIndefinitePartialDegree

This is ruled out because one must avoid building extra detailed structure for a partial degree of predication, when the predication is vacated by negation. This illustrates a constraint to rule out building gratuitous structure for no purpose. When structure is created it must be utilized.

These positive and negative polarity phenomena indicate a need for a constraint on the combination of actionemes in building sentences:

#### Wasteful Structure Constraint

Don't build complex actioneme structures then not use them, or contradict them, or circumvent them.

In reality the operative factor in polarity patterning is not negation, as the name negative polarity might suggest, but useless elaboration. Negation rather can be a valid form of use for rhetorical elaboration.

Now consider examples from (Giannakidou), used to argue that some current explanations of negative polarity, i.e. downward entailment and nonveridical conditioning, can't explain the full range of data.

Analysis of logical implication in polarity constructs has led to a hypothesis that negative polarity items are sanctioned by downward entailment, but Giannakidou cites counter examples lacking negation that are not downward entailing: (Giannakidou)

- (17) He doesn't have any sense.
- (18) \* He has any sense

'any' = \$anticipateAtLeastSomething  
Negation is present in \$assertFailToHave

For stylistic effect, these tools together implement \$assertFailToHaveAbsoluteMinimum. There is no role for \$anticipateAtLeastSomething ('any') if it is not put to some use, since without negation it asserts vacuously that what might occur in bland circumstances is what would in any case be expected. This amounts to insinuating an attitude into the situation that has no purpose since circumstances are such that the attitude is not appropriate.

Consider also:

- (19) Most children with any sense steal candy.
- (20) Children with any sense steal candy.

Here we have a similar situation, susceptible to the foregoing actioneme analysis, except that negation is not overt but implied by the partitive formation which countenances children of different types. A varied collection can involve individuals of varying degrees sub-selected by having or not having the anticipated sense so there is a useful role for the actionemes.

Now consider an idiom showing actioneme structure similar to 'any' above.

- (21) He wouldn't lift a finger.
- (22) \* He would lift a finger.



‘lift a finger’ = \$positSymbolOfNegligibleEffort  
Negation is present in \$assertFailTo

For stylistic effect, these tools together implement \$assertFailToMakeNegligibleEffort. There is no role for \$positSymbolOfNegligibleEffort (‘lift a finger’) if it is not put to some use.

These constructs are in the family of actionemes used for disparagement, referred to as ‘minimizers’. Note that there also exist disparagement contexts that do not involve explicit negation, but do so implicitly by dividing groups of people into classes with and without the property, thereby introducing the implied negation:

- (23) Most people who would lift a finger have their own reasons.
- (24) People who would lift a finger have their own reasons.

Also from Giannakidou, consider that polarity items can be licensed in interrogative and conditional environments. Here is the context:

- (25) Ruth didn’t lift a finger to help.
- (26) \*Ruth lifted a finger to help.

Anticlimax: This is ruled out as an unused minimizer for dramatic effect.

- (27) Ruth doesn’t give a damn what I think.
- (28) \*Ruth gives a damn what I think.

Anticlimax: This is ruled out as a superfluous, unused minimizer introduced for dramatic effect.

These negative polarity items are sanctioned in questions and conditionals:

- (29) Did Ruth lift a finger to help?

In the question, ‘lift a finger’ arises in the context of interrogative possibility that a dramatic minimizer could be appropriate.

- (30) If you give a damn, you’ll listen.

Here too the possibility is raised by the question that dramatic minimization could be appropriate since every question raises the possibility of a positive and a negative.

Giannakidou further cites data that are a problem for both the nonveridical and descending entailment conditioning of polarity items. Consider ‘only’ and emotive factive verbal contexts:

- (31) I am glad he said a word!
- (32) ‘I’m glad we got any tickets.

- (33) Mary regrets that she lifted a finger.  
 (34) Only Mary {gives a damn/said anything}

Both ‘glad’ and ‘regret’ are \$assertPossibilityofAlternative so the dramatizing minimizer is licensed by implication of the negative possibility. Similarly, ‘only’ asserts the possibility of others with different properties so can contrastively utilize the dramatizing minimizer.<sup>37</sup>

In summary, we have observed that cases of negative and positive polarity can be quite generally understood by means of analysis of the linguistic actions involved in utterances, and that a configurational syntax account, which has been uncertain and problematic, is challenged by the empirical potential of the cognitactic perspective.

## 29 Syntax Emerging from Action Semantics: Lexical Selections & Categorizations

As we posit cognitax rules and their related constraints, we observe that such representations have not emerged historically as a well defined level in the extra-syntactic domain of semantics. This appears to be true because their manifestation can be more directly associated with syntactic than interpretational phenomena. What seems superficially to be syntactic can often be profitably reanalyzed as inferentially rooted in structural action semantics.<sup>38</sup>

This question as to what is syntactic and what is cognitactic is illustrated in data such as the following which illustrate \$indicateSpecific ‘the’ and \$indicatePossessor possessive ‘s’:  
 (Johnson, 2004)

- (1) \* the Mary’s book  
 (2) \* the the man’s toy  
 (3) \* a the man on the moon’s nose

Just as a verb cannot receive multiple subjects, indirect objects, etc. so a noun cannot have multiple determiners selected from the set: definite, indefinite, possessive. There is only one slot in the lexical tool’s compatibility matrix. This is generalized as a syntactic phenomenon insofar as the definitional, lexical nature of a noun specifies that it is subcategorized and checked for no more than a single determiner.

These facts have been viewed as particularly syntactic as evidenced e.g. by phrase structure rules and other implementations of theory, but there is a connection to structural action semantics worthy of consideration. The relationship between syntax and semantics is usefully viewed as functionally intimate given user intentions and cognitactic constraints are evident. It seems inefficient and infelicitous, for example, that a noun would be subject to \$identifyPossessor and \$indicateSpecific since specifying a possessor tends itself to make the possessed element specific. Adding two specifiers is similarly redundant and of no purpose, or cognitactically

<sup>37</sup> We do not consider scalarity, which Giannakakos rejects

<sup>38</sup> We need not immediately resort, however, to any view that all traditional syntactic processes should be recast as basically semantic, and must leave issues in this area open for future research. We advert to various possibilities that a syntactic component and syntactic processing can be independently required as intermediations.

contradictory if one is definite and the other indefinite. The action evident in adding a determiner may be subject to a constraint proscribing a duplicate or contradictory application of a specifying tool.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, syntactic structure is not immediately and radically diminished by addition of a level of linguistic structural intent.. Basic, pared down syntactic information remains necessary to formally define the notion of 'duplicate': various elements must be assigned to the specifying class in order to formulate a constraint that repeated elements should not be specified. One could try to move toward formalizing this by positing an actioneme \$ascribe\$specificity to cover definite and indefinite determiners, possessives, numerals, etc. A portmanteau could of course be created in cognitax to implement a syntactic slot category but this would still need to be aligned with some lexical categorization. This approach may be challenged as partially begging the question as to the nature and relations of syntax. If syntactic phenomena are coded in lexical entries there remains a syntactic presence whose extent is indeterminate without extensive investigation of the cognitactic level.. Under all theoretical models intimate connections between syntax and cognitax appear to persist and require formal recognition.

Ongoing research is nevertheless required because actions involved in lexical selection may interact with other cognitax actions in ways that suggest that a variety of selection restrictions could often be recast as cognitax action constraints. In the following cases cognitax interactions appear to be at least partially at work.

- (4) \* Many happy the puppies barked. (Johnson, 2004)
- (5) \* He ate should apples.

In the first, we observe that 'many happy' and 'the' both assert manners of specificity, but do so in conflict by juxtaposing a set with a singleton. In the second, obligation modality is applied to a passive object rather than a willful action, violating an actioneme constraint: "Create obligations only for will-enabled actions."

Co-occurrence constraints and substitution classes are extensively discussed in (Johnson, 2004) leading to the same sorts of questions.

Note, for example, there are adverbs where it is not transparently and immediately evident how a syntactic solution would be displaced by cognitactic constraints.

- (6) A very happy child
- (7) The extremely large boat
  
- (8) I have deliberately misled.
- (9) I have noticeably erred.
  
- (10)       A deliberately angry child
- (11)       The noticeably large boat

- (12) \* I have very misled.  
(13) \* I have extremely erred.  
(Johnson, 2004)

But note:

- (14) I have very much misled.  
(15) I have erred to an extreme degree.

To keep some questions open, in cases like these it is nevertheless interesting to consider a cognitax solution. It is possible to analyze 'very' and 'extreme' as asserting degree on some dimension: \$assertExtremeDegreeOnDimension. On this account the unacceptability of verbal modification for these adverbs could be ascribed to the absence of an explicit dimension for the verbs 'misled' and 'erred' in contrast with 'happy' and 'large'.

It would appear some verbs could be binary with regard to inherent understanding of degree or extent, e.g. \$assertInherentDegreeDimension. For others, degree or extent is expressed in an ancillary element of extent, degree or amount. So it would be infelicitous to have \$assertExtremeDegree unless degree or extent had been specified via 'much' or 'degree'.

These examples illustrate what may currently appear to be a fungible boundary between syntax and semantics and point to a need for further research. We leave these questions open and believe they raise useful problems, but ones that can only be fully understood if the role of linguistic action is considered.

### **30 Limitations of Cognitax Constraints to Displace Mechanisms of Syntax**

The intent of TG is to argue the advantages of including structural action semantics in linguistic rules as a means to better formulate constraints on language generation processes. As noted, questions of the boundaries circumscribed around syntax per se remain. Whether cognitax mechanisms are limited to enabling a circumscribed set of better syntactic descriptions or go a distance further toward more fully eliminating the burden placed on syntactic mechanisms is left open as a principal research question. In this section we briefly consider a number of cases in order to highlight these questions rather than to resolve them. Some of the data is drawn from (McCawley, 1998)

The word order of auxiliary verbs can be used to illustrate fundamental syntax, as for example in McCawley's recitation that "passive 'be' cannot precede any other verb": (McCawley, 1998) p.1

- (1) John has been arrested.  
(2) \*John is had arrested.

We leave the most fundamental questions to one side, allowing that syntactic mechanisms can be at work here, but note that a cognitax solution may be possible insofar as the 'had arrested' tool complex indicating past action calls for an agent, while the 'is' tool to establish some state itself calls for a patientive subject. A possible view of the ill-formedness is that it reflects trying to do

two things at once using tools which, even if they were compatible, independently need resources which are not supplied.

In another case, simple stipulative word order specification seems at work and the existence of syntactic functionality cannot reasonably be denied given current insights: (McCawley, 1998) p. 2:

(3) I admire her.

(4) \*I her admire.

(5) Je l'admire. 'I admire her.' Fr.

Nevertheless, each case of required word order must be analyzed separately to understand if there might be a cognitive intention underlying some observed alternation. Contrast the following data, for which a case can be made that the word order constraints are cognitive rather than syntactic: (McCawley, 1998) p. 2

(6) I will go to Boston soon/tomorrow.

(7) I will soon/\*tomorrow go to Boston.

(8) I \*tomorrow/soon will go to Boston.

(9) Tomorrow/soon I will go to Boston.

We hypothesize that rather than a simple predication of syntactic order on 'soon' and 'tomorrow' cognitive rules may be involved. For 'tomorrow' we countenance the actioneme \$assertSpecificTimeOfFutureEvent as a specific expectation of time, while 'soon' is more an assertion of general expectation \$assertGeneralExpectationOfEarlyFutureEvent. In this analysis '\*will tomorrow go to Boston' is less felicitous because a specific expectation requires the essential specifics of an entire proposition, including the subject, action and goal. At an interior location it breaks apart the wholeness of the integral material it would seek to modify; the adverb of time is inserted between the time modal and the rest of the predicate, misleadingly, as if the whole were subdivided for a reason. The specificity involves increased certainty requiring the target object to be packaged without countervailing internal complexity.

On the other hand 'will soon go to Boston' has the more general time adverb placed in position immediately between phrasal constituents it can modify since a general expectation of time can apply monotonously to an internal constituent, i.e. the modal or 'go to Boston'.

Similarly, for '\*tomorrow/soon will go', 'soon' placed here is more acceptable because there is a reason for pre-posing it to modify 'will', namely that the special expectation of time 'soon' is connected to the intention or expectation of 'will'. Placing the specific 'tomorrow' before 'will' displaces it away from a default position modifying a packaged proposition to a placement for exploiting a relationship to the modal verb, where the uncertainty of internal factors goes against the certainty of the time adverb.

We present this analysis as a plausible approach for relegating a superficially syntactic

phenomenon to cognitactic processes. The analysis can benefit from further investigation and validation, but is particularly interesting because the constraint it implies is a hypothesis that the faculty of language has special mechanisms for managing uncertainty in the structures it generates. We observe these principles of cognitive organization elsewhere in our reprise of configurational analyses to an extent that indicates the possibility of an important operation in the faculty of language.

Despite the evident intrusion of cognitax hypotheses into traditional syntactic domains it appears clear that a set of processes seem to persist as more purely configurational syntactic mechanisms. These include well known patterns of syntactic agreement, for example, as well as the necessity that lexical insertions, most conspicuously verbs, bring in subcategorization possibilities and constraints that impose requirements on the syntactic output. The following data illustrate this point: (McCawley, 1998) p. 2, p 17 <sup>39</sup>

- (10) I put it there.
- (11) \*I put there.
- (12) \*John put in the vase.<sup>40</sup>
- (13) \*John put the flowers.
- (14) \*I wish Jerry would stop looking at.
- (15) \*They spent the whole evening thinking about.
- (16) \*This drug has only been used in the treatment of.

The comments of this section illustrate that while the scope of the present work does not extend to the boundary between cognitax processes and those of a more purely syntactic character, it does raise unanswered and important questions that can only be addressed by careful investigation of linguistic intent and action.

### 31 Even/Only Phenomena

In this section we consider some aspects of the phenomena surrounding the use of ‘even/only’. Erlewine references a basic principle in reference to ‘only’ that depends on the configurational notion of c-command: (Erlewine, 2011)

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<sup>39</sup> At the same time it is attractive but speculative to consider that any lexical piece might have an actioneme functional specification that could explain syntactic patterns. To illustrate with one example among an exceedingly large number of candidates, if ‘see’ involves \$assertVisualPerception, it would be natural to expect the perception to be encoded without an overt targeting preposition. Similarly, if ‘look’ implies \$assertVisualTarget the occurrence of the target preposition ‘at’ might also be anticipated.

- (1) I saw (\*at) John.
- (2) I looked at/\*0 John.

<sup>40</sup> Some sentences in this set would be acceptable in discourse environments supplying the missing elements. This raises another set of questions and leaves open the question of additional ways that cognitax might explain the patterning of utterances.

The associate of *only* must be in its scope:  
(1) \* [Which boy]^ does John only like \_\_\_ ?

**Principle of Lexical Association (PLA)** An operator like *only* must be associated with a lexical constituent in its c-command domain [at S-structure].

As an alternative analysis, we posit that 'only' reflects an actioneme \$specificMeasureLessThanPreconceived, implying a preconceived amount or degree, so it is infelicitous also to attach \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve), as in wh phrases, with an element that has been specifically determined.

This violates a constraint:

#### Specific Expectation Compatibility Constraint

Don't declare an unknown on an element when the uncertainty conflicts with a specific expectation.

Next, Erlewine considers quantification with 'every':

- (2) Someone wants to meet [every boy in the room].
- (3) \*Someone wants to **only** meet [every [boy] <sub>F</sub> in the room] .

Because we associate 'every' with \$assertTotality there is an inherent and natural contradiction when \$specificMeasureLessThanPreconceived is also present. This can be characterized:

#### Incompatible Estimation Constraint

In the same structure don't at once characterize something as less than preconceived and also the total possible.

We can similarly treat the expectation of PLA effects with other operators:

- (4) Someone wants to **even** meet [every [boy] <sub>F</sub> in the room].
- (5) John [<sub>p</sub> wanted to **even** [<sub>p</sub> read [every book that [Mary] <sub>F</sub> did \_\_\_ (want to read)].

We posit \$beyondEventPreConceptionOrExpectation for 'even' and \$specificMeasureLessThanPreconceived for 'only' so no parallelism or compatibility would be anticipated between these. In contrast, as in these examples, 'even' is compatible with 'every' since it is natural that \$beyondEventPreConceptionOrExpectation would fit with \$assertTotality since a maximum is compatible with exceeding some threshold.

Additionally, Erlewine shows the incompatibility of \$declareUnknown (alias \$positVariableToResolve) with \$specificMeasureLessThanPreconceived on a deictically specific nominal.

(6) \*Which boy is such that John only likes [that (contextually specific) boy].

This too manifests as a violation of the Specific Expectation Compatibility Constraint.

These examples show the potential for cognitactic solutions to widen understanding of linguistic phenomena and illuminate the underlying essence of fundamentally configurational solutions involving c-command by pointing to processes at a level of representation beneath the configurational one.

## 32 Covert Modification in Floated Quantifiers: Iteration and Totality

English quantifiers ‘all’, ‘both’, ‘each’ do not behave like ‘most’, ‘one’, and ‘many’ since they permit ‘floating’ from a subject NP to a position to its right, as illustrated by (McCawley, 1998) p. 98:

- (1) All/Most of the Chopin etudes give me great pleasure.
- (2) The Chopin etudes all/\*most give me great pleasure.
- (3) Each/One of the guests made a speech.
- (4) The guests each/\*one made a speech.
- (5) Both of Tom’s hands were filthy.
- (6) Tom’s hands were both filthy.

An actioneme account for these data can involve positing \$assertTotality for ‘all’, ‘both’, and \$assertIteratonOverAll for ‘each’.<sup>41</sup> As such, representing the total set, they are logically free to be introduced as modifiers after the presentation of the base noun phrase. In contrast, ‘most’, ‘one’, and ‘many’ restrict the membership of the noun phrase, so if post-posed can result in a misleading construct insofar as they would cause a discordant re-adjustment of meaning from that set up by the prior noun phrase, having as it does, a default interpretation of totality. This is a form of garden path constraint.

### Advance Notice Quantification Constraint

Avoid placing a restrictive quantifier later than the noun phrase it modifies if the latter has set up a prior strong default interpretation of totality.

We see a related restriction among McCawley’s further observations concerning quantifiers that occur among and following direct and indirect objects:

- (7) Each of/all/both the visitors gave the children a dollar.
- (8) The visitors each/all/both gave the children a dollar.
- (9) The visitors gave each of/all/both the children a dollar.
- (10) The visitors gave the children each/all/both a dollar.
- (11) The visitors gave the children a dollar each/\*all/\*both.

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<sup>41</sup> In this account it is logical to think of the predication involving an iteration over a set of individuals as coextensive with, and equivalent to, the predication on the total set established in the noun phrase, so they are meaning preserving in a basic sense even while they add a dimension of focus on the mental act of iteration.



Note the ambiguity of the last sentence, for which ‘each’ applies either to the visitors or the children.<sup>42</sup>

The pattern in the last sentence can be explained by observing that ‘each’ refers to an iteration of a predication for an entire set of entities, i.e. visitors, children, or dollars. We propose \$assertPredicationIteratingOverTotalSet as follows:

- (12) The visitors each (for each visitor) gave the children a dollar
- (13) The visitors gave the children each (for each child) a dollar

We contrast this with ‘all, both’ which more simply refer to a totality modifying ‘visitors’ or ‘children’ \$assertTotality as follows:

- (14) The visitors all/both (all/both the visitors) gave the children a dollar
- (15) The visitors gave the children all/both (all/both the children) a dollar.

It is therefore not surprising that ‘all, both, each’ occur post-posed as clarifications next to constituents they modify, i.e. ‘visitors’ and ‘children’.

In our proposal, ‘each’ differs from ‘all, both’ in that it asserts a repeated predication over a set, and therefore involves, modifying beyond just the set (nominal), but also, in an essential way, the actual predication: the predication is iterated over the items of the set. It has higher adverbial attributes. The speaker is affirming that in running through a set one by one the predication will hold. In a sense ‘each’ modifies the larger predication adverbially conceptually beyond the nominal adjectivally. From this point of view it is understandable, and perhaps elegant, that the quantifier ‘each’ might occur at the end of the predication itself without specifying which noun phrase the iteration applies to, thereby affording a systematic ambiguity. This is a device that leaves the scope of iteration unspecified and ambiguous as we observe it is in the above sentence.

(McCawley, 1998) p. 101 also cites quantifiers after objects which are pronouns:

- (16) Arrau played them all.
- (17) \*Arrau played the Beethoven concertos all.
- (18) Arrau played them both.
- (19) \*Arrau played the Brahms concertos both.
- (20) I have listened to them all.
- (21) \*I have listened to the Beethoven sonatas all.
- (22)

We see here again the potential for understanding floating quantifiers as governed by actionemes. Since pronouns involve the linguistic action \$referToPreviouslyMentionedSet they naturally

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<sup>42</sup> We find unclarity in the acceptability judgments for McCawley’s other sentence: The visitors gave the children each/\*all/\*??both a dollar.

allow a question whether the entire set is being referred to. In light of this ambiguity it is not unnatural that pronouns should accept extent modifiers where full noun phrases involving no indirection of reference do not. They contrast with the situation where a definite noun phrase such as ‘the Beethoven sonatas’ refers by default to the totality of items it encompasses. By this logic it would be a misuse of the linguistic tool \$assertTotality (‘both, all’) to apply it where it would redundantly have no effect given the default interpretation. There is a constraint against using a tool where it is ineffectual, as noted elsewhere.

This case accumulates with the foregoing to motivate the potential for mechanisms of linguistic intention in developing explanatory theories.

### **33 Testability, Verifiability, Formalism**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

### **34 Theoretical Status, Universals and the Architecture of Competence in the Chomskyan Framework**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

### **35 Toward a TG Generative Framework**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

### **36 Extending the Minimalist Rule Framework for Cognitax Tool Grammar**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

### **37 Relationship of TG Cognitax to Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## 38 Relationship to Speech Act Research

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## 39 Dynamic Semantics and Discourse Representation Theory

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## 40 Donkey Pronouns

TG posits a set of linguistic actions for use in the formulation of syntactic rules. It affords cognitive utilitarian solutions to syntactic problems without, since they are separable, directly facing the mass of significantly resistant linguistic issues that have been investigated in the disciplines of semantics, pragmatics, and philosophy. Nevertheless, since these can overlap and interact extensively with syntactic analysis, there is reasonable hope that TG solutions might offer new perspectives even in these disciplines. It is worthwhile, therefore, briefly to illustrate that TG analyses may extend beyond syntactic problems to issues in traditional semantics and pragmatics. TG may be especially helpful where confounding issues of acceptability and permissible interpretation of particular utterances arise. In this section we address the classical problem of so-called “donkey pronouns” that is associated with theories of dynamic semantics and discourse representation theory.

First, let us establish the importance of donkey sentences for work in semantics and pragmatics generally. It follows that it is important if TG can provide a substantive explanation because the issues surrounding the donkey sentence problem underlie a significant set of analyses in dynamic semantics. To quote (Geurts, 2011):

“In large part, the motivation for developing dynamic theories of interpretation, beginning with DRT, was the realization that the dichotomy between referential and bound-variable (occurrences of) pronouns is less natural than one might think—less natural in the sense that some pronouns don't fit comfortably in either category.”

We provide and contrast an alternative TG analysis using analysis and examples drawn from this survey article (Geurts, 2011) (GA):

In the following sentence GA takes ‘his’ to refer to ‘Pedro’, illustrating a referential use of the pronoun.

(1) Pedro beats his donkey.

In TG we would postulate linguistic actions such as the following for elements of the above sentence.

**\$assertReferenceToPedro<sup>43</sup> ('his')**  
**\$assertPedroHasDonkey ('his')**  
**\$assertPedroBeatsDonkey ('beats')**

GA holds that, in the following, “no farmer” cannot be referential, so the pronoun ‘his’, which refers to it, cannot be either. With a reference analysis ruled out, the pronoun is viewed as being one of binding that involves quantifiers.

(2) No farmer beats his donkey.

TG avoids reliance on abstract theoretical distinctions of reference vs. binding and favors a less cultivated treatment based on direct linguistic actions. In contrast with the previous example, illustrating reference to ‘Pedro’, TG here posits cognitive actions involving reference to concepts or thought constructs. This makes unnecessary an analysis built on a pivotal assumption that there can be no reference to a set that can be empty:

**\$imagineFarmer ('farmer') = concept**  
**\$imagineFarmerHasDonkey ('his')**  
**\$imagineFarmerBeatsDonkey ('beats')**  
**\$assertNoRealInstantiationsOfImaginedFarmer('no')**

Beyond this, the TG approach also enables us to avoid reliance on configurational constraints to explain patterns of occurrence for particular interpretations. Where a syntactic configurational constraint is called upon in GA, namely that a pronoun must be C-commanded by that to which it refers (i.e. be a sister constituent or contained in one) TG relies on cognitive utilitarian constraints. Thus, in the following sentence the fact that ‘his’ cannot refer to ‘farmer’ would be explained in a syntactic account because ‘his’ is not C-commanded by farmer.

(3) His donkey likes no farmer.

In contrast, the cognitactic TG approach provides an alternative hypothesis based on a natural role for sequencing of cognitive processes referring to mental constructs:

### **Imaginary Construct Sequence Constraint**

**Don't refer to an imaginary concept until the act of imagination has been stimulated in the utterance.**

Above, our analysis enabled us to obviate the substantiation of the abstract claim that in “Pedro beats his donkey” ‘his’ can function either as a referential term or a bound variable. This distinction was also called on in GA to explain the difference in interpretation of the following sentences:

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<sup>43</sup> Linguistic actions can be naturally expressed as functions such as \$assertReference(Pedro), \$assertHas(Pedro,Donkey), but we forestall detailed formalizations in this paper which seeks only to show the viability of a TG approach.

- (4) Pedro beats his donkey, and Juan beats his donkey, too.  
 (5) Every farmer beats his donkey, and Juan beats his donkey, too.

In the first, but not the second of these sentences the second “his donkey” refers either to Juan’s donkey or Pedro’s donkey. In the second sentence ‘his’ must refer to Juan. This is attributed to the proposed distinction by GA that ‘his’ can be construed, abstractly, either as a referential item or bound variable, but there is an alternative explanation in TG. In the first clause of the second sentence a conceptual construct is referenced:

- (6) Pedro beats his donkey.

**\$assertReferenceToPedro ('his')**  
**\$assertPedroHasDonkey ('his')**  
**\$assertPedroBeatsDonkey ('beats')**

- (7) Every farmer beats his donkey.

**\$imagineFarmer ('farmer') = concept**  
**\$imagineFarmerHasDonkey ('his')**  
**\$imagineSetOfAllFarmers ('every')**  
**\$assertInstantiationOfAllFarmersBeatDonkeys ('beats')**

Given an action analysis, we are able to account for the fact that ‘his’ refers only to Juan in the second sentence by postulating a natural constraint on use of imaginary concepts to avoid semantically confusing situations:

### **Imaginary Construct Differentiation Constraint**

**Don’t coordinate an imaginary concept inside a construct involving parallel assertions about a parallel non-imaginary referential element.**

In the second sentence “Juan beats...” sets up a concrete referential context which is incompatible with the imaginary construct reference in “Every farmer beats...”.

In further consideration, GA illustrate their general point that “the dichotomy between referential and bound-variable (occurrences of) pronouns is less natural than one might think”:

- (8) Pedro owns a donkey.  
 (9) It is grey.

GA dismisses a co-reference account for ‘it’, first because “a donkey” is not seen as itself referential based on the fact that the negation of the first sentence “Pedro doesn’t own a donkey” doesn’t refer to some donkey Pedro doesn’t own, but rather denies there is any such donkey. Further, the negation makes the second sentence unacceptable.

- (10) Pedro doesn't own a donkey.

(11) \*It is grey.

This is taken to point toward a conclusion that indefinites such as “a donkey” are quantifiers rather than referential items. But general problems arise here, as GA describes. We quote at length:

“However, if we construe “a donkey” as an existential quantifier, how does it manage to bind the pronoun across a sentence boundary?”

“The problem ... is related to the fact that the pronoun and its indefinite antecedent occur in different sentences. The following examples show, however, that similar problems arise within sentences:

If Pedro owns a donkey, he beats it.  
Every farmer who owns a donkey beats it.”

“...it is obvious that the pronouns don't refer, so they can't be co-referential with their antecedents, either. Nor are the pronouns bound by their antecedents, for they aren't c-commanded by them. “

“a donkey” is too deeply embedded for it to c-command “it”. [...] Hence, the neuter pronouns in these sentences cannot be construed as bound variables.”

“apparently, indefinites are neither quantifiers nor referential terms, and this problem entrains another one, for as long as it unclear what indefinites mean, it will also remain obscure how they can serve as antecedents to pronouns. “

The TG approach shifts the entire problem to an account that would rely instead on a principle of avoiding useless actions. The following actionemes are involved in imaginary cases of indefinites such as “doesn't own a donkey”

(12) \*If Pedro doesn't own a donkey, he beats it.

(13) \*Every farmer who doesn't own a donkey beats it.”

**\$ImagineDonkey**

**\$ImagineXownsDonkey**

**\$AssertXdoesn'tOwnDonkey**

In a TG treatment a cognitive utilitarian constraint such as the following would account for the data:

**Concept Negation Closure Constraint**

**Don't refer to an imaginary concept invoked for the purpose of establishing its negated existence.**

The above overview illustrates some cases where TG brings the possibility of a wider range of solutions to areas of investigation where syntax, semantics and pragmatics intersect. We have shown the relevance of action analysis for some general preliminary questions of pragmatics and discourse representation theory, but have not attempted to examine the extensive detailed analysis of GA or the extensive literature of these fields, presenting only some preliminary contrasts to indicate where further investigation can be fruitful. While our general purpose is to propose an approach to facilitate better understanding of syntactic problems, we have endeavored in this section to illustrate how action-based analysis interacts with some problems of traditional semantics, pragmatics and the philosophy of language to reduce the burdens of explanation or restrict the domain of unexplained data. The linguistic intent of cognitax is available to contribute to the investigations in the philosophy of language and its border areas.

## **41 TG and Information Structure**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

## **42 Wh-islands in degree questions**

### Introduction

(Abrusan, 2011) proposes in an extensive investigation that degree questions with wh-islands are unacceptable exactly when they are not susceptible in formal semantic analysis to a most informative true answer. This approach follows in the spirit of earlier semantic analysis (Fox, 2007), which argues that other types of weak islands are blocked by Maximization Failure (MF), wherein maximization functions fail for certain operator scale conditions. This vein of work involves important assumptions about the architecture of cognition which contrast with those that we will explore. Our purpose is to propose and support more direct and simpler, less elaborated hypotheses regarding the representation of degree scales as universally dense (Fox, 2007).

We present a simple analysis based on Tool Grammar (TG). TG holds, simply, that for each element of structure in a sentence there must be specified an element of linguistic structural intent, and that the intents of some tools are mutually incompatible, thereby explaining patterns of acceptability/unacceptability. There are various ways in which TG might be formulated, but they have in common the constant of specification of linguistic action intent for each structural element, which is the element of TG theory considered here.

Evidently, the intents of TG to be presented could be conceivably be recast in a custom tailored formalism of e.g. intensional/propositional logic. / They do not in themselves logically exclude the general thesis of a semantic analysis for wh-degree terms but do present a narrowed analysis restricted to a more limited domain of structural intent. Using a pseudo code representation, as is standard for architectural design for symbolic systems, we postpone formalization in order to

focus on the fundamental issue of what are the controlling factors underlying wh-island patternings.

An important theme of this section is that the TG approach raises the possibility of simplifying solutions not only for theories of syntax, but for the theories of semantics and pragmatics as well. This is made possible by introducing a new level of data representation which is not included in most forms of linguistic analysis, namely that of speaker intent. To the extent that this modularization is natural to the underlying systems for the purposes of explaining linguistic patterns, it is expected that the resulting analyses can involve both simpler argumentation and simpler solutions than those of approaches lacking such a perspective. Since they are based on field observations by native speakers, TG specifications can be inoculated against the view that they are merely stipulative or reductionist. These are supported to the extent that the addition of a new dimension of recordable and verifiable data is subject to independent validation.

We assume familiarity with (Abrusan, 2011) and (Fox, 2007) without reconstructing their arguments. We proceed by extracting the data from the work in question and proposing for it a TG analysis involving structural intents. These are examined for intention conflicts and principles of incompatibility are proposed.

Both MF and TG raise important questions about the architecture of linguistic competence in a cognitive framework. It is beyond the scope of the present section to attempt fully to investigate these issues here, but we seek to advance the level of understanding by presenting the fundamental tenets of TG to contrast with those underlying MF.

## Brief Orientation

The problem we address can be observed in the following data<sup>44</sup>:

- (1) a. Which glass of wine do you know whether you should poison t?
- (2) b. \*How much wine do you know whether you should poison t?

When wh questions are formed from with degree constructions they are acceptable in some cases and unacceptable in others. This is explained in (Abrusan, 2011) by undertaking formal semantic analysis to show that no meaning interpretation is possible for the ill-formed sentences. The problem is cast not as syntactic but one of filtering structures whereby interpretation is blocked. An alternative architecture views sentence generation as a separate process from semantic interpretation and accepts the challenge of excluding the ill-formed sentences as part of structure formation. TG essentially associates a linguistic intent with each structural element and seeks convincing rationales why some combinations of intents may be incompatible. Based on experience with complex symbolic systems, it is commonly found that natural generalizations are only possible if sought at the appropriate level of representation, and undue complexity may otherwise result. The TG hypothesis is that when intents are associated with structures simpler and more natural solutions can result. For TG, semantic analysis remains valid and important

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<sup>44</sup> Data is from the source papers referenced above.



but is construed as more centered in the processes of interpretation than generation. This approach can leave an analysis such as (Abrusan, 2011) valid and highly interesting, but less explanatory for the process of generation.

In the above example (Abrusan, 2011) would posit that there is no viable semantic interpretation for 1b. We do not review the arguments which are well explained in the source article. For TG a sentence is a set of linguistic mental actions in which various intentions are exercised to produce a linguistic representation for interpretation by the addressee. TG proposes that there can be a limited, finite controlled vocabulary of linguistic intents which is putatively available and universal to some considerable degree, although those latter possibilities are not explored here.<sup>45</sup> For 1b., we might propose that the structure “How much wine” reflects an intent to inquire about a continuous scale judgment, while “do you know whether” represents an intent to inquire about a definite determination. We represent these intents in TG using dollar symbol phrases that we refer to as actionemes:

- |                           |    |   |
|---------------------------|----|---|
| (3) “How much wine”       | =~ | \$inquireContinuousScaledJudgment (CSJ)           |
| (4) “do you know whether” | =~ | \$inquireDefiniteDetermination (DD) <sup>46</sup> |

The fundamental claim of this section is that intents such as these can be incompatible. A sentence would not be generated to simultaneously inquire about a definite determination when it is predicated on the burden of a second unresolved inquiry about a judgment on a continuous scale. We will discuss this further below, but the general claim is that there is evidence for a constraint in natural language against aggregation of too much uncertainty (duty of inquiry) in cognitive representations. The over-arching generalization is that cognitive processing can impose constraints to manage representations that involve uncertainty. We posit controls on uncertainty overload as a defining cognitive factor in the definition of natural languages.

#### Source of Actionemes

Tool Grammar is inspired by the observation that natural languages include numerous terms to describe linguistic actions (assert, deny, ask, tell, etc.), so there is reason to believe that transcribed observations about action intents can provide a form of scientifically valuable primary data about the processes underlying language behavior. The contention is that language itself provides some metadata about language and that this can provide a basis for developing a closed, controlled vocabulary for systematically transcribing the linguistic intents associated with linguistic structures. The Tool Grammar framework includes the hypothesis that those competent in a language are thereby competent in ascertaining intents underlying linguistic utterances, albeit in a naïve, unformalized form that, for linguistic analysis, ultimately requires additional extensive refinement in a standard scientific process. Beyond conscious awareness and the formulation of a controlled vocabulary of actioneme primitives, a central goal of a theory of action intents is integration with processes of structure formation in an overall theory of

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<sup>45</sup> The vocabulary of intents may well be largely shared among languages but the structures reflecting intents is evidently much more various and subject to universalities of a different order. Furthermore, the constraints on cognitive may have components of universality as well as specificity to particular languages.

<sup>46</sup> The intent is not actually associated with the phrases presented here but is rendered that way here for purposes of discussion.

structural linguistic action. TG furthermore has the potential to reveal that constraints on well-formedness correspond often to high level cognitive disciplines and strategies for managing complexity, uncertainty, integrity, consistency, information density and other cybernetic principles of information representation. TG can therefore be summarized as a theory of cognitive utilitarian meta-linguistic structural action intents.

### Formalization of Actionemes

Actioneme symbols (represented with initial '\$') are utilized for methodological convenience with an understanding that the process of formalizing TG should call eventually for a range of mathematically explicit, more rigorous elements and forms. Actionemes often require phrases and reflect an internal complexity. This suggests the possibility either of a form of feature representation (e.g. \$inquireJudgment [+inquire, +judgment]) or of embeddable function representation. (e.g. inquire(judgment()) ), involving, possibly, mixed representations. The use of embedded functions implies a tree representation, begging the question, which we leave open, whether representation of action intentions fits naturally into the merged tree structures that result from lexical selection and assembly into increasingly larger units. Whatever the form of improved theoretical statements, our hypothesis is that constraints on cognitive compatibility among linguistic tools can be formulated as patterns of actioneme feature or function sets, and that, furthermore, these can be integrated into the larger matrix of a linguistic theory. The general thesis is that linguistic tool intents are involved in a restrictive cognitive utilitarian mechanics, which can explain many linguistic phenomena, and is compatible with a variety of linguistic theories. Our current purpose is to advocate for the usefulness of the general approach so issues of formalization are not here addressed.

### A TG Prospectus for wh Agreement

(Abrusan, 2011) proposes in an extensive investigation that a set of degree questions with wh-islands have patterns of acceptability that can be explained by a theory that the ill-formed sentences are excluded because they can receive no semantic interpretation. These arguments proceed along the lines of (Fox, 2007), based on the thesis that any question must have a maximally informative answer, i.e. one that implies all other true answers. Our purpose is not to dispute the semantic analysis presented, which is careful and sophisticated, nor to deny the underlying insights, but to open the question whether there might be some account that could explain why sentences ill-suited to understanding might not be generated in the first place.

### The Conflicted Determinacy Thesis

In this section, we present a TG thesis that there are four structural intents that interact to preclude the principle set of unacceptable sentences presented in (Abrusan, 2011). We analyze the verbal data as involving in some cases an inquiry about a process of evaluation and other times one involving an establishment of a definite determination. We distinguish these as distinctly different linguistic actions. For the wh elements, we also distinguish crucially between the act of selection from a limited pre-selected set and a judgment about a continuous scale of measurement. Each of these intents is introduced by means of lexical item tools, with which they are associated.

Here are the associations of intents, with lexical material covered by a basic set of examples in the article. We note that a rigorous test of the semantic filtering hypothesis presented would benefit from examination of a wider range of lexical items and structures, but we restrict ourselves here to the specific patterns presented in the paper since space limitations prevent a full examination of a number of pertinent structural features.<sup>47</sup>

\$inquireEvaluation:

“think that you should”  
“need to know whether”  
“arguing about whether”

\$inquireDefiniteDetermination

“know whether”

\$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet

“which glass”  
“how many books” if inquiring about a known count

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment

“how much wine”  
“how many books” if inquiring about unknown count  
“how many pounds”  
“how many points”

We use the following abbreviations to represent the compatibility or conflict of intents

|     |   |                                       |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|
| E   | = | \$inquireEvaluation                   |
| DD  | = | \$inquireDefiniteDetermination        |
| PS  | = | \$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet |
| CSJ | = | \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment      |

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<sup>47</sup> A full examination of the semantic filtering hypothesis might draw on a wide sample of structural contexts. Here are sample patterns that incline to favor the tool grammar approach: *\*Is determined, can you determine, \*is listed, \*is ascertained, is to be ascertained, \*did you find, do you find, \*is specified, is recommended.* Note also that the yes/know feature of *\*know whether* is not compared semantically against the instrumental *\*know how*, and these too conform to tool grammar expectations.

Here is the intent compatibility table:

|     | E  | DD |
|-----|----|----|
| PS  | OK | OK |
| CSJ | OK | *  |

Intent Compatibility Table

This pattern of compatibility is attributed to a principle of cognitax (syntax grounded in higher cognition) which is hypothesized to control the uncertainty or indeterminacy in an inquiry. A definite determination has a higher requirement to reduce uncertainty, while an evaluation process evidently would have built-in expectations of uncertainty. Inquiry about a continuous scale judgment is interpreted as having a higher level of inherent uncertainty and indeterminacy than inquiry about a pre-selected set.

#### Principle: Conflicted Determinacy Constraint

Inquiring about a continuous scale judgment conflicts with the aspiration to high certainty inherent in inquiring simultaneously about definite determination, since prior cognitive processing is a pre-requisite to laying the groundwork for determinacy. Binary absolute judgment can't be determined based on an uncertain categorization judgment. There is a stricture not to overload inquiry about a definite determination with excessive unresolved uncertainty: preselection is tolerable, discrimination on a continuous scale is excessive

Note: Continuous scale judgments are more uncertain and cognitively burdened than predetermined selection.

Corollary: It's ok to embed inquiry about an uncertainty into an inquiry about an evaluation

Following are the data from (Abrusan, 2011) illustrating the application of this constraint. We interpret sentences marked with '?' as basically acceptable with possible overtones of less determinacy associated with secondary variables which are beyond the scope of the present work.

- (5) a. Which glass of wine do you know whether you should poison t?  
\$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet  
\$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
PS/DD
- (6) b. \*How much wine do you know whether you should poison t?  
\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
\*CSJ/DD

- (7) a. Which glass of wine do you think t0 that you should poison t?  
 \$inquireSelectionFromPreSelectedSet  
 \$inquireJudgment  
 PS/E
- (8) b. \*How much wine do you know whether you should poison t? (=1b)  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
 \*CSJ/DD
- (9) c. How much wine do you think you should poison t? (Our example)  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireJudgment  
 CSJ/E

- (10) How many books do you know whether you should burn t?

There are two theoretical intents here contrasting \$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet with \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment. Only the former results in an acceptable sentence.

\$inquireSelectionFromPre-selectedSet  
 \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
 PS/DD  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
 \*CSJ/DD

- (11) (4) a. \*How many pounds does the World Anti-Doping Agency know whether the boxers lost last year?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
 \*CSJ/DD
- (12) b. ?How many pounds does the World Anti-Doping Agency need to know whether the boxers lost last year?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireJudgment  
 CSJ/E
- (13) (5) How many points are the judges arguing about whether to deduct?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
 CSJ/E

Based on the regularity of patterning in the above we propose that a TG solution should be considered as against the semantic filtering solution proposed by Abrusan, particularly since the actioneme transcriptions represent independent primary data, confirmable by consulting with

native speakers.

### The Vacuous Judgment Thesis

We present next a second TG thesis employing three structural intents that interact to preclude a further set of unacceptable sentences presented in (Abrusan, 2011). We analyze the verbal data to involve inquiry whether or not a set of circumstances is, or is not, the case. We advert to the possibility that this distinction bears a relation to that of a pre-selected set as in the previous section, but treat it as distinct for purposes of initial analysis and explication here. For the wh elements, all examples involve judgment about a continuous scale of measurement, which is the action intent we presented previously. Each of these intents is introduced by means of lexical item tools, with which they are associated.

Here are the associations of intents with lexical material:

\$inquireIsTheCase:

“did drive”

“does have children”

\$inquireIsNotTheCase

“didn’t drive”

“doesn’t have children”

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment

“how fast”

“how many”

We use the following abbreviations to represent the compatibility or conflict of intents

|     |   |                                       |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|
| ITC | = | \$inquireIsTheCase                    |
| NTC | = | \$inquireNotTheCase                   |
| CSJ | = | \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment      |
| (PS | = | \$inquireSelectionFromPreSelectedSet) |

Here is the intent compatibility table:

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
|     | ITC | NTC |
| (PS | OK  | OK) |
| CSJ | OK  | *   |

Intent Compatibility Table

An important aspect of this analysis is the observation that selections from pre-selected sets are inherently negatable in the sense that negation of a subset can be interpreted as the complement. In this sense we propose that SelectionFromPreSelectedSet is meaningfully negated by taking the complement, while ContinuousScaleJudgment cannot be.

With this in mind, the pattern of compatibility in data taken from the paper is attributed to a principle of cognitive utilitarian mechanics oriented to avoiding useless constructions reflecting vacuous situations. An inquiry about a judgment on a specific situation that never occurs has no value. This is an instance of a general avoidance of useless constructions, and may be considered axiomatic in a system where each structural element is introduced by specific intent for specific purpose.

Principle: Vacuous Judgment Constraint in Non-negatable Circumstances

Inquiring about a judgment concerning a specific circumstance that never occurs fails to be generated because it serves no purpose to posit a value for a non-entity.

Caveat/Qualification: In the case where alternatives are intended (\$inquireSelectionFromPreSelectedSet), negation of a circumstance can imply the occurrence of the alternative circumstance which is non-vacuous.

Following are the data from (Abrusan, 2011) that illustrate the application of this constraint.<sup>48</sup>

- (14) (6) a. How fast did John drive?  
\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireIfTheCase  
CSJ/ITC
- (15) b. \*How fast didn't John drive?  
\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireNotTheCase  
\*CSJ/NTC

---

<sup>48</sup> The following data support the conclusion that the operative factor is CSJ vs. PS.  
How many records didn't John break? (of a list)  
How many types of errors didn't John make? (known types)  
How many time trials didn't John drive? (in the schedule)  
How long didn't John drive? (if e.g. split between drivers or activities)  
How many models didn't he drive in his Nascar career?  
\*How many races didn't John enter? (unless types of races)  
\*How many miles didn't John drive (unless e.g. comparing alternate drivers)  
How many laps didn't John drive (in the race)?  
\*How exhausted wasn't John?  
\*How important wasn't John?  
\*??How important didn't John feel?

- (16) (7) a. How many children does John have?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireIfTheCase  
 CSJ/ITC
- (17) b. \*How many children doesn't John have?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireNotTheCase  
 \*CSJ/NTC

But notice the acceptability of both of the following:

- (18) (8) a. How many colors did Al pick?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireIfTheCase  
 PS/ITC
- (19) b. How many colors didn't Al pick?  
 \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
 \$inquireNotTheCase  
 Ps/NTC

Since the constraint seems a reasonable one for structure generation, is based on transcribable primary data, and covers the data presented, we propose that a TG analysis should be evaluated for its simplicity and explanatory value along side semantic and syntactic accounts.

### The Scalable Modifier Thesis

In this section, we present a TG thesis that there are three structural intents that interact to preclude the data presented for responsive and rogative verbs (Karttunen, 1977)<sup>49</sup>. We assume familiarity with these categories and their use in the (Abrusan, 2011) paper.

Here are the associations of intents with lexical material:

\$assertScalableStateOfResultantKnowing :

knows/told us/remembered/guessed/forgot

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<sup>49</sup> Responsive predicates (know-class)

Verbs of retaining knowledge know, be aware, recall, remember, forget

Verbs of acquiring knowledge learn, notice, find out

Verbs of communication tell, show, indicate

Verbs of decision decide, determine, specify, agree on

Opinion verbs be certain about, be convinced about

Rogative predicates (wonder-class)

Inquisitive verbs wonder, ask, investigate, examine, consider

Verbs of relevance matter, be relevant, be important, care

Verbs of dependency depend on, be related to, have an influence on, make a difference to



\$assertBinaryStateOfUncertainInquiry

wondered/asked/investigated

\$assertAboveAverageDegree

mostly

We use the following abbreviations to represent the compatibility or conflict of intents

- AAD = \$assertAboveAverageDegree
- SSRK = \$assertScalableStateOfResultantKnowing (responsive)
- BSUI = \$assertBinaryStateOfUncertainInquiry (rogative)

Here is the intent compatibility table:

|     |      |      |
|-----|------|------|
|     | SSRK | BSUI |
| AAD | OK   | *    |

Intent Compatibility Table

This pattern of compatibility is attributed to a principle of cognitax which is pro-forma intended to prevent combined modifications (predications) using fundamentally incompatible predicates. (Since multiple categories of such incompatibility are envisaged we anticipate a feature checking mechanism, even though a feature formalism is not extensively developed in this section. Note also that we might propose a specific “Degree Scale Compatibility” constraint to prevent the conflict of strictly binary categorical predicates with inherently opposite scaled degree ones, but choose to generalize the constraint in anticipation of an extended inventory of such conflicts.)

Principle: Compatible Modification (Predication) Constraint

Structures involving incompatible modification (predication) features are precluded, such as those which on the one hand imply degree scales, and those that in their binariness preclude them.

In this case elements which do not match for scalable modification are blocked.

Following are the data from (Abrusan, 2011) illustrating the application of this constraint.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Note that there are various dimensions of useful data which are not presented in Abrusan. We restrict analysis here but note that the following are generally supportive of our thesis. rarely wondered

- (20) (8) John mostly knows/told us/remembered/guessed/forgot which girls came to the party.  
 ‘mostly’ = \$assertAboveAverageDegree  
 Responsive verbs = \$assertScalableStateOfResultantKnowing  
 AAD/SSRK
- (21) (9) \*John mostly wondered/asked/investigated which girls came to the party.  
 ‘mostly’ = \$assertAboveAverageDegree  
 Rogative verbs = \$assertBinaryStateOfUncertainInquiry  
 \* AAD /BSUI

We conclude that a TG solution based on the primary data of linguistic intention offers a simple, direct alternative to semantic filtering.

#### Additional Conflicted Determinacy Data

In this section we extend earlier analysis and consider a complement of data presented in (Abrusan, 2011). To a considerable extent this section overlaps and reflects the data and processes already covered. We present a TG analysis here for completeness in covering the source paper.

We again present a TG thesis that there are four structural intents that interact to preclude the starred, unacceptable sentences from being generated. Although TG offers solutions for more nuanced irregularities in those sentences marked with ‘?’ we do not consider them here.

Here are the associations of intents with lexical material, overlapping, as we have indicated, with what has been presented previously.

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment CSJ  
 “how many inches, wine, kilograms, pounds”  
 “how tall, much”

\$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet PS  
 “what hair color”  
 “which problem”

- 
- \* individually wondered which girls (Plural)
  - \*Partially wondered
  - \*Overall wondered
  - mostly hypothesized
  - mostly speculated
  - Mostly wondered which of
  - John mostly *wondered/asked/investigated* which of the girls came to the party.
  - \*I partially wonder where she is.
  - I partially know where she is.

“how fast”  
“how many, X or Y”

**\$inquireJudgment E**

“are considering whether we can”  
“investigating whether it is useful”  
“wondering whether it is worth losing”

**\$inquireDefinitiveDetermination DD**

“find out whether”  
“discover whether”  
“forget whether”  
“know whether”  
“know who”  
“predict who”  
“regret who”

We again use the following abbreviations to represent the compatibility or conflict of intents

E = \$inquireEvaluation  
DD = \$inquireDefiniteDetermination  
PS = \$inquireSelectionFromPre-SelectedSet  
CSJ = \$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment

Here is the intent compatibility table:

|     |    |    |
|-----|----|----|
|     | E  | DD |
| PS  | OK | OK |
| CSJ | OK | *  |

**Intent Compatibility Table**

Again, this pattern of compatibility is attributed to a principle of cognitax which is understood to control the uncertainty or indeterminacy in an inquiry. The data in this section is covered by the Conflicted Determinacy Constraint presented earlier. We reproduce it here for reference in reading the examples below.

**Principle: Conflicted Determinacy Constraint**

Inquiring about a continuous scale judgment conflicts with the aspiration to high certainty inherent in inquiring simultaneously about definite determination, since prior cognitive processing is a pre-requisite to laying the groundwork for determinacy. Binary absolute judgment can't be determined based on an uncertain categorization judgment. Don't overload inquiry about a definite determination with excessive unresolved uncertainty: preselection is tolerable, discrimination on a continuous scale is

excessive

Note: Continuous scale judgments are more uncertain and cognitively burdened than predetermined selection.

Corollary: It's ok to embed inquiry about an uncertainty into an inquiry about an evaluation

Following are the data from (Abrusan, 2011) illustrating the application of this constraint.

- (22) (10) a. ?How many inches of legroom are the airline executives considering whether we can remove from economy class cabins (without people noticing)?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireJudgment  
CSJ/E

- (23) \*How many inches of legroom did the airline executives find out whether we can remove from economy class cabins (without people noticing)?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireDefinitiveDetermination  
\*CSJ/DD

- (24) (11) a. ?How much wine are scientists investigating/examining whether it is useful to drink in order to stay healthy?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireJudgment  
CSJ/E

- (25) b. \*How much wine did scientists discover whether it is useful to drink in order to stay healthy?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
definitiveDetermination  
\*CSJ/DD

- (26) (12) a. ?How many kilograms are the boxers wondering whether it is worth losing next year (in order to have a better chance to win)?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireJudgment  
CSJ/E

- (27) b. \*How many kilograms did the boxers forget/realize/tell you whether it was worth losing last year?

\$inquireContinuousScaleJudgment  
\$inquireDefinitiveDetermination  
\*CSJ/DD

(13) \*How tall does Mary know whether she should be? (in order to join the basketball team)

\*CSJ/DD

But PS is ok: What hair color does Mary know whether she should try?

PS/DD

(28) (14) a. ?Which problem does Mary know who should solve?

PS/DD (plus extra unknown 'who', which adds excessive uncertainty for inquiry seeking a definitive determination).

(29) b. \*How tall does Mary know who should be?

\*CSJ/DD plus extra unknown 'who' same issue as above

(30) (15) \*How fast did Mary predict who should be?

\*CSJ/DD plus extra unknown 'who' same issue as above

(31) (16) \*How fast does Mary regret who should be?

\*CSJ/DD plus extra unknown 'who' same issue as above

(32) (17) a. ?How many pounds are the boxers wondering whether to lose next year?

CSJ/E

(33) (18) ?How much cough syrup does the WADA need to know whether you took?

CSJ/E

(34) (19) ?How many pounds does the WADA want to know whether the boxers lost?

CSJ/E

(35) (20) ?How many pounds do the boxers know whether they need to lose next year:  
5 pounds or 7 pounds?

PS/DD

In conclusion we find that this data also conforms to the TG analysis, suggesting it should be considered as a viable explanation for the observed patterning.

## Conclusions

The goal in this section has been to widen the discussion of possible explanations of degree term phenomena. We have presented a novel approach using the linguistic action intents of Cognitax Tool Grammar and shown how it efficiently covers a set of previously analyzed data using only common sense constraints.

This approach involves an architecture of competence which is different from that underlying previous syntactic and semantic analyses, so emerges as an important part of an evaluation of competing theoretical frameworks.

The TG analysis is neither stipulative nor reductionist because it includes an additional level of data representation compared to other approaches, and this data can be directly elicited and transcribed from native speakers.

The structural intents of TG could be formalized using a custom tailored application of intensional/propositional/possible world logic

The TG approach does not encompass full semantic interpretation, so cannot exclude the general thesis of a semantic analysis for wh-degree terms. It only presents evidence for the viability of a narrowed syntactic analysis restricted to a domain of structural intent. Parallel ongoing research extends the arguments for the TG approach, based on analyses of a wide range of syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic phenomena. To the extent that the TG approach proves viable and scientifically illuminating it can provide a level of structural cognitive compatibility explaining why many ill-formed sentences might not normally be generated. The filtering consequences of incompatible intents undertake, when proven generally well motivated, to reflect an important module in the architecture of competence and serve to simplify theories of natural language sentence generation by removing complex cases to a level where they might be more naturally resolved.

## **43 Rhetorical Structure Theory<sup>51</sup>**

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

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<sup>51</sup>Computational approaches generally do not aim so directly toward formulations of psychological theories for the faculties of language. We limit ourselves by not covering other approaches connected with machine computation, such as computational semantics, computational pragmatics, bidirectional optimality theory, spoken dialog systems, and Bayesian methods in general.

## 44 Stronger Constraints for Modeling the Faculty of Language<sup>52</sup>

Analysis of particular linguistic problems in the TG framework yields a set of putative constraints on linguistic structure formation. We have proposed a preliminary set of constraints at the level of cognitive intentional formation:<sup>53</sup>

- Single Focus Constraint
- Overlapping Exclusion Constraint
- Cross Purpose Constraint
- Required Purpose Constraint
- Vacuous Action Constraint
  
- Constraint on Elaboration Beyond Essential
  
- Unknown Specification Constraint
- Unknown Interrogation Constraint
- Likelihood Uncertainty Constraint
- Subordinate Focus Constraint
- Conjunction Constraint on Unknowns in Assertions
- Superfluous/Null Construct Constraint
- Wasteful Structure Constraint
- Specific Expectation Constraint
- Incompatible Estimation Constraint
- Advanced Notice Quantification Constraint
- Imaginary Construct Sequence Constraint
- Imaginary Construct Differentiation Constraint
- Concept Negation Closure Constraint
- Conflicted Determinacy Constraint
- Vacuous Judgment Constraint in Non-negatable Circumstances
- Compatible Modification Constraint
- Conflicted Determinacy Constraint

These constraints remain individually to be validated in further investigations over time but even in their first proposals they accumulate to attest to a reality in the faculty of language that underlies rapidly learned creative language use based on sparse data. They clearly overlap in ways that suggest that they can be combined to produce a smaller more general set. The constraints combine to impose the possibility of more concentrated and stronger limitations on the notion of possible human language than those resulting from the analysis of syntax-centric configurational rules alone without incorporating factors of linguistic action and intent. It is evident that many of them may be conflatable in a strictly formal analysis to a single meta constraint:

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<sup>52</sup>Computational approaches generally do not aim so directly toward formulations of psychological theories for the faculties of language. We limit ourselves by not covering other approaches connected with machine computation, such as computational semantics, computational pragmatics, bidirectional optimality theory, spoken dialog systems, and Bayesian methods in general.

<sup>53</sup> Some of these constraints are discussed only in the expanded version of this paper.

## Linguistic Intention Umbrella Constraint

In selecting an element for construction of a sentence to represent meaning do not make a choice which conflicts in intent with another element chosen for this sentence.

This general conclusion places the present work distinctly within the Chomskyan paradigm, even if it proposes a subparadigmatic shift in perspective, because stronger constraints on the characterization of the human faculty of language contribute to an understanding of infinite linguistic creativity from finite resources and how it is that children learn language so quickly when the data experience to them is so limited.

## 45 Summary and the Architecture of Competence

[NB: This updated section is available on request in the extended document.]

We have presented arguments that humans are not so extensively and fundamentally “syntactical animals” (Searle, June 29, 1972) as is assumed in the pervasive Chomskyan Generative Program. Instead, Tool Grammar (TG) postulates that sentence generation exhibits linguistic cognitive intention actions most fundamentally and syntax processes more procedurally. Evidence has been presented to demonstrate that there exists an empirically evident necessity for representation of linguistic structural intent which has been generally overlooked in the theory of language, including notably centralized configurational syntax in the generative program. The creativity of sentence generation is positioned in the context of speaker intention at a higher cognitive level than syntax formation. This revision of the architecture of competence extends the potential of the generative program beyond current limitations.

Arguments for TG emerge from considering a range of difficult and vexing problems in syntactic theory. We have pursued empirically transparent and radically penetrating solutions for these problems under strong constraints on the bounds of human language. We find support for the hypothesis that syntactic theory requires specification of structural intent in order properly to solve a set of the most difficult theoretical challenges, and, further, that this brings unavoidable implications for the architecture of linguistic competence.

Evidence has been presented that the notion of possible human language may be more narrowly constrained by means of limitations on processing in the sphere of intention and action than by those available by consideration of syntactic processes alone without components of intention and action. This work, therefore, while compatible with aspects of many approaches, is in support of the primary Chomskyan goal of explaining infinite linguistic creativity from finite resources and rapid child language learning in spite of a poverty of stimulus data.

A sentence in TG is a set of actions, a structure building performance where the initiative of intention is central rather than any primary syntactic scaffolding. Each tool is an intentional device for specific effect in the process of utterance generation. It is distinguished from the



traditional concept of a linguistic ‘rule’ by the explicit specification of intent added to the standard structural input and output conditions.

Language has communication, via external representations of internal meaning, as a purpose and tools as a means of action. Tools include lexical items, build/merge/move mechanisms and functional manipulations [(trans)formations)] under constraints on usage and context. The initial structure of sentences is implicit in the choice of lexical items to effect intent. They are assembled by merge operations which aggregate elements into larger constituents.<sup>54</sup>

(Trans)formations are manipulative tools applied to basic structures to realize the intent, manner and impact of delivery. Tools, lexical and (trans)formational, embody observed regularities traditionally captured as ‘rules’ in linguistic descriptions but they always include as an essential core component the specification of purposeful utility for intentional structural effect. Natural constraints on the cognitive inter-compatibility of tools render many rules and constraints on configurational syntax unnecessary, since unacceptable sentences often result from the incompatible misapplication of tools.

Recursive functions of language in TG are formed in cognitive ideation rather than just within operational syntax, and they precede language specific structure formation. Creative, generative and recursive linguistic capabilities emanate not from a source syntactic component but from pre-syntactic linguistic cognitive abilities that result in linguistic action directives. Recursive, anticipative, and creative linguistic productivity is located in a higher level linguistic cognitive facility, cognate with those of semantic extraction, inference, or pragmatic derivation. The latter are interpretive and characteristically more oriented to the perspective of the addressee. Language tools are more operational than interpretive and mediate between cognition and expression by providing the necessary structure..

The data essential for motivating linguistic descriptions can be enhanced by explicit field transcriptions of evident user action and intent using a controlled scientific vocabulary. Linguists traditionally transcribe phonology, lexicology, morphology and syntax, but less consistently the intentional force of utterance components. Transcriptions of structural action semantics are restricted and accessible, as well as observationally prior, compared to truth semantics or intensional logic, which are inferential, indirect, derived, more obscure and proportionately complex. They may or may not necessarily adhere to principles of traditional semantics such as strict compositionality. Full semantic processing involves secondary procedural information often associated with addressee interpretation, rather than declarative knowledge that is basic to sentence origination and generation. Semantic action directives use only the simpler restricted action elements of meaning involved in the intentions of sentence generation, not full-blown interpretive semantics. Semantic interpretation, anticipation, inference, pragmatic construal and model theoretic mappings are deferred to the separate capabilities associated with general cognition and linguistic understanding. The formalization of linguistic intents requires a new technical controlled vocabulary containing a restricted set of general action descriptors centered on a universal central core.<sup>55</sup> As a methodological aid for linguistic description, adding linguistic

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<sup>54</sup> John Hewson (personal communication) observes the history of syntax might have been redirected by the postulation of NP + VP => S, rather than S => NP + VP.

<sup>55</sup> If there are universal tendencies in the inventory and taxonomy of linguistic actions this clearly does not necessarily extend directly to the range of structures used to represent those actions since languages have highly

intent to linguistic structure building rules ultimately lessens the burden on the separate disciplines of semantics and pragmatics. The transcription of linguistic intent, of which speakers may be conscious, inoculates the approach against the view that its elements are purely stipulative.

TG describes a performative mechanism for generating externalized representations of meaning from which conveyed meaning is derived by means of a separate interpretation by the addressee. Action tools build structures to externalize representations of meaning. Sentence formation is not direct communication but the posting or publication of representations of thoughts left to be interpreted by addressees to extract and construe meaning. Sentence formation is fundamentally different and separate from sentence interpretation. Linguistic utterances satisfy internal intentions by presenting characterizations of thoughts mediated by conventionalized linguistic devices. A word is a fundamental language schema bridge used to map thoughts to external representations.

TG represents a sub-paradigmatic shift in syntactic/semantic theory to the extent it can be integrated to the generative program. Although not an essential scientific purpose, in accordance with traditional formalist definitions of a language as a set of acceptable sentences<sup>56</sup>, tools, properly formalized and operating under natural constraints, together with a component able to generate linguistic intentions, have the recombinant generative capacity to output all and only the well-formed sentences of a language, but crucially involve notations of functional role as a scientifically empowering dimension.<sup>57</sup> Certain syntactic and cognitive dimensions of language can be conflated by adding an explicit level of structural action semantics subject to cognitive compatibility constraints. Traditional generative theories seeking to account for the speed of child language learning and universal structure would benefit in their aims from a universally available vocabulary of possible sentence intent elements. TG also seeks to address the vast variability in linguistic patterning among natural languages as a natural consequence of the possibilities of new tool invention and recombination under the constraints of functional compatibility. Speed of child language learning can be further understood to the extent that constraints on structure formation can be shown to follow from natural universal cognitive restrictions on tool formation and compatibility.

The difference between semantics and grammar is seen as the difference between ideation and expression. Semantic ill-formedness results from incompatible ideas ('colorless green'), while grammatical ill-formedness results from the incompatible use of tools ('colorless sleeps').

A swath of linguistic ill-formedness can evidently be attributed to the presence of incompatible cognitive intents in the elements of unacceptable sentences. When syntactic phenomena are understood to be conditioned by linguistic action/intent descriptors, various difficult problems evidently yield to straightforward solutions: conflicting intents yield ill-formed sentences. TG

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diverse means of expression.

<sup>56</sup> We reject the definition of a language as a set of sentences, but propose that TG could be configured to generate such a set for those committed to this view.

<sup>57</sup> The mounting complexity of contemporary solutions to syntactic problems can be symptomatic of what is known in software systems as a 'kludge', i.e. an addition of ad hoc complexity that may not be necessary if the system is structurally reorganized on different principles.

seeks to bring much of the subtlety of syntax over into the realm of cognitive utilitarian mechanics, lifting burdens of explanation from syntax and transporting them to a specialized facility for utilitarian cognitive efficiency. This is accomplished while separating the utilitarian mechanics of externalization by the speaker from cognitive issues of semantic interpretation, anticipation, disambiguation, inference, and so forth, leaving the fields of semantics and pragmatics unconfounded, and separated as a domain of higher order cognition. Intentions result in the generation of thought-representational sentences, but neither interpretation nor communication can be fully effected until after a separate process of extraction is carried out by the addressee. Many formerly syntactic problems appear vulnerable to the thesis of incompatible intent, separating and reducing the challenges for theories of syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

When generalizations in symbolic systems are sought at an incorrect and incapable level of representation, unnatural and unnecessarily contrived solutions unavoidably result. Re-modularization of cognitive systems can afford more rational coverage of observed phenomena. By incorporating one dimension of action meaning into linguistic structure building, a large set of syntactic problems acquires a facilitative functional means: much of syntax becomes utilitarian mechanics of a specialized cognitive kind. Fundamentals of syntax are reducible to a particular form of cognitive utilitarian processes. The theory of grammar enjoys benefits when the complex model of linguistic cognition is re-modularized around the separate domains of expression and understanding.

TG seeks to model the psychological mechanisms underlying observable language. A specific language is a set of tools for posting and interpreting representations of thought adapted to a particular culture. Language (competence), in conformance with the generative paradigm, consists of the facility for linguistic tools governed by natural constraints on their formation and inter-compatibility. The set of sentences in a language is an effectuation rather than its embodiment or definition. The end purpose of linguistic descriptions is to create models of the natural human competence to learn and employ the world's languages.

We have proposed a new level of constraints on generation using representation of linguistic intent and hypothesize that generalizations at this level can simplify the statement of linguistic universals which is essential for generative grammar.

Linguistic rules evidently require linguistic structural intentions, a theoretical position that has not heretofore been thoroughly presented. From a preponderance of diverse cases involving linguistic problems that resist authoritative solutions, we have argued that linguistic theory must incorporate components of linguistic action and intention. A set of problems in linguistic theory has served to demonstrate that the dimension of structural intent must necessarily be considered for adequate solutions to emerge. The absence of this level of representation in syntactic theory can plausibly account for limitations in advancing the theory in linear progress toward additional foundational achievements.

We conclude that there is evidence for the hypothesis that the exclusion of linguistic intention and action from generative rules introduces artefactual complexity and undesirably precludes the strongest possible natural constraints on characterizations of the human faculty of language. The inclusion of intention in linguistic rules evidently both enables solutions of otherwise intractable

problems and enables simpler, more natural solutions generally. Theorizing based on linguistic intent shows potential to provide a thinner, simplified, more directly empirical argumentation compared to the indirections necessitated by complex syntactic analysis based on central configurational syntax. . TG argumentation can be not infrequently inoculated against the view that it is merely stipulative or reductionist because the addition of a new dimension of recordable and verifiable data is based on primary field transcription and is subject to independent validation.

Finally, with regard to recent developments in the generative program, we note that our own investigations highlight the thesis that the Merge view of syntactic organization may likely be revalidated in TG as a fundamental discovery in the sphere of linguistic competence, a topic whose full major implications are beyond the reach of the present work.. We conclude that scientific validity can be enhanced by revising the architecture of generative linguistics from a merely mathematical sound-meaning connection to a functional connection between linguistic intention and linguistic expression.

## **46 Shortcomings and Future Work**

We have presented the broad outlines of an alternative approach to (syntactic) utterance generation by motivating the need to include specifications of intent in formulations of linguistic processes. We supported the proposals by presenting an array of solutions to challenging problems. It would be premature to propose a fully elaborated system architecture but we have considered broadly some consequences and implications for linguistic theory and the architecture of competence. The work is limited to schematic analysis in support of a TG framework without attempting detailed formalization, broad coverage of the full range of syntactic processes. Similarly, we withhold analysis and judgment on the large number of syntactic processes which may be presented as derivational transformations, but are also (often equivalently) amenable as elaborated structures inserted directly from the lexicon making structural transformation unnecessary.

Any work such as the present must necessarily have shortcomings due to the newness and comprehensiveness of the general approach, as well as the limitations of early stage analysis. It is expected that further research can improve the particular analyses presented here. There are many particular shortcomings including the absence or insufficient coverage of morphology, diachronic issues, cross-language data, opportunities for experimental validation, and so forth. It is hoped, nevertheless, that the general approach might afford new insights to the many language phenomena which remain today mysterious. The constraints on construct formation in particular might be expected to undergo ongoing revision as future work proceeds. Much depends on the extent to which future work might help articulate and reinforce further constraints on the formation of linguistic structures at the level of intentional action.

A principal secondary hope for this theoretical work has been that a framework might emerge

which could eventually lead to the engineering of new systems for language generation and recognition. While pursuing linguistic theory, it is advantageous to advance linguistic science toward modeling linguistic competence in software. If the thesis that linguistic structural action semantics are operationally at the center of human, it is possible that the formulation of linguistic tools could lead to new engineering possibilities for Chomsky's generative program. Much future work is required and progress may depend on other shifts in perspective by the next generation of linguistic scholars.

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