

1. Strengths and Weaknesses

A. What have been the main strengths of generative-syntactic research, with particular emphasis on the early 21st century, and what do you think is wrong with the field of generative syntax today?

Syntactic research in the past decades has focused on the architecture of grammar, the exploration of the core computational operations Merge and Move, the role of Economy Principles and the nature of cross-linguistic variation. Derivations have been convincingly argued to proceed cyclically, and intervention effects have been studied in detail. Important insights have emerged from the discussion of overt and covert movement and their interaction in the T-model, as opposed to Single Output models. The exploration of cross-linguistic variation from a wide typological perspective has led to a better understanding of Case, Agreement, Ergativity, A-movement and A'-movement.

In the Minimalist Program, particular emphasis is placed on the interfaces, a natural consequence of the shift from the conception of grammar as a complex system of interacting modules with language-specific Principles and Parameters operating at different levels of representation to a recursive system of Merge feeding the sensory-motor interface and a conceptual-intentional interface and of placing variation at the interfaces. As a consequence of the interest in the interfaces, there is intense research on the relationship between abstract Case and morphological case, the relationship between Agree and agreement, the relationship between syntax and morphology. Interesting empirical arguments have been provided in favor of lexical decomposition in syntax leading to the view that grammatical function changing phenomena (passives, anticausatives, antipassives, applicatives) should not be treated in terms of lexical operations manipulating lexical entries but rather in terms of the hypothesis that argument realization is determined syntactically. We have a good understanding of the shape of the syntax-semantics interface due to the excellent research that has been conducted in this domain (e.g. QR, reconstruction, variable binding, ellipsis, modality, negation, comparatives, focus) and there is progress in the study of features from the perspective of morphology, semantics and syntax. More work is necessary on the Syntax-PF interface, linearization, the relationship between word order and intonation and the proper analysis of optional movement phenomena.

Concerning the weaknesses, I see the following ones:

a) Due to the high level of abstraction, syntactic analyses have become inaccessible to a wider audience. This has consequences for attracting students to linguistics but also for convincing colleagues and students working in other areas of why theoretical syntax matters. We must explain to students in humanities why generative syntax presents an excellent strategy for learning scientific methodology (see e.g. Larson's textbook) and why it is an indispensable tool for teaching grammar. It is important to make explicit where cognitive, constructionist and other functional explanations fail.

b) There is a growing tendency to combine theoretical syntax with experimental linguistics and typological studies, partly as a response to funding restrictions inherent in national and transnational (EC) research programs. While such an experimental orientation is certainly desirable and a step forward, it also has negative side effects. The pressure to embed theoretical linguistics into large scale experimental projects in order to succeed in grant applications prevents some linguistics from freely pursuing their own research agendas and marginalizes others, either because they prefer to work individually, or are inclined to focus on topics of purely theoretical interest or are affiliated with institutions that lack proper funding for labs. Moreover, there is a growing trend to base theories solely on experimental data collected with the help of 'rigorous' techniques, rather than on the traditional method of introspective judgments. This entails that theoretical linguists also have to be trained in new areas like statistics, experimental design and the psychology of grammaticality judgments. Even though there is no doubt that experimental research produces valuable insights and has the potential to resolve data controversies inhibiting progress, adopting these changes in methodological orientation does not generally yield better results: experimental work requires time and funding, which at times slows down theoretical research.

c) Syntacticians are often highly selective in the way they read and cite, and they adopt mainstream proposals without questioning their basic assumptions. At the same time, interesting theoretical work is ignored if it is not fashionable or produced at the right places. This imbalance does not encourage free thinking. Success measures are often one-sided and the pressure for increased productivity does not always outweigh the cost of decrease in depth.

B. *How do you think the field could/should go about addressing the current problems?*

I am not sure that the field collectively sees the problems I mentioned above as problems. If they are indeed problems, being aware of them is the first step.

2. Central unresolved theoretical issues

A. *What are the major open questions in the field of generative syntax today?*

Here are some of the questions I have more generally and some phenomena I do not understand:

- the relation between hierarchical order and linearization; the status of the LCA, e.g. in the analysis of head-finality.
- categories and roots: is there evidence for acategorial roots in languages other than Semitic? What is the ontology of roots, do they denote properties of individuals or events or states or manner – results?
- syntactic vs. morphological case, syntactic vs. morphological agreement: the relation between Case and Agreement; agreement markers and clitics: is there a real distinction between them, what are criteria to distinguish between them? the inter- and intra-linguistic variability of dative case,
 - the representation of 3rd person and gender features, and their relation to each other.
 - the Resultativity Parameter (is there one?) and its relation to compounding.
 - Quotative inversion in English
 - the English prefix *re-*
 - second position and embedded second-position phenomena
 - prefixes vs. suffixes
 - control and backward control,
 - passives, adjectival passives, middles and their crosslinguistic distribution.
 - coercion, systematic syncretism in many empirical domains.

B. *What is or ought (not) to be in the field's theoretical core?*

3. Syntax in relation to other fields of inquiry

A. *What are the main success stories and bottlenecks in the interaction between syntax and the other core-theoretical subdisciplines (semantics, phonology, morphology)?*

Research on the interfaces requires formal knowledge of more subdisciplines than just syntax. Undergraduate and PhD programs that take this into account are more successful than those that don't.

B. *What are the main success stories and bottlenecks in the interaction between*

syntax and the experimental subdisciplines (language acquisition, sentence processing, neurolinguistics), and how can syntax be more useful to those?

4. The road ahead

A. *What do you see as the biggest challenges for generative-syntactic research in the coming years/decades?*

Points (a)-(c) mentioned under 1A.

B. *In which direction(s) would you like to see the field proceed, and where would you like the field to be in ten or twenty years' time?*