

Deriving syntactic relations

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Abstrak

A pioneering new approach to a long-debated topic at the heart of syntax: what are the primitive concepts and operations of syntax? This book argues, appealing in part to the logic of Chomsky's Minimalist Program, that the primitive operations of syntax form relations between words rather than combining words to form constituents. Just three basic relations, definable in terms of inherent selection properties of words, are required in natural language syntax: projection, argument selection, and modification. In the radically simplified account of generative grammar Bowers proposes there are just two interface levels, which interact with our conceptual and sensory systems, and a lexicon from which an infinite number of sentences can be constructed. The theory also provides a natural interpretation of phase theory, enabling a better formulation of many island constraints, as well as providing the basis for a unified approach to ellipsis phenomena