

Labeling, Transfer, and Theta Configurations

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Chomsky (2013, 2015) introduces a fixed labeling algorithm for determining the label of a syntactic object (SO) and develops two ideas for how to label an XP-YP configuration: either the SO is modified by Internal Merge (IM) so that there is only one visible head, or X and Y share prominent features (ϕ or Q) in common. Tonoike (2014) and Takita et al. (2016), however, point out that the IM-based mechanism of labeling is incompatible with the copy theory of movement. As a solution to this problem, I will follow Takita et al. (2016) in assuming that Transfer contributes to labeling by reducing an XP-YP structure into an H-XP structure. This specific conception of Transfer has the effect of reanalyzing a specifier as a complement, which paves the way for resolving the problem of structural asymmetry in theta configurations (cf. Epstein and Shim 2015). That is, it allows for an external argument to be theta-marked in a Head-Complement configuration. Following this line of thought, I will pursue the hypothesis that the structural configuration for all theta-marking is Head-Complement.

References

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