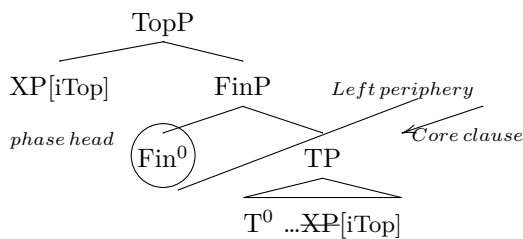# The coarse structure of the left periphery: towards a new model of the clause
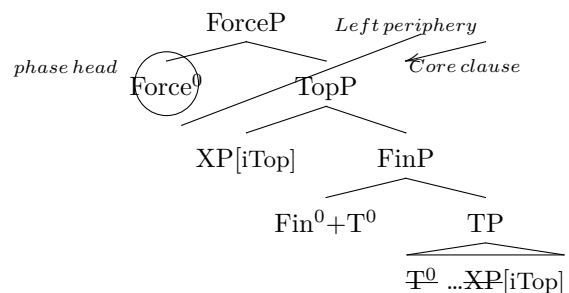
The objective of this paper is to present a new theory that derives rather than stipulates the distinction between the core clause and the periphery. The central claims are that (i) peripheries are created by a phase head in the C-domain, that (ii) all elements in the peripheries are dislocations, and that (iii) all peripheral elements are topical in nature, in the general sense whereby a topic is a domain-restrictor for the computation of the truth value expressed by the core clause (Erteschik-Shir 2007).

As for (i), this theory departs from the universal identification of the periphery with the C-domain (Rizzi 1997 et seq.) Rather, I suggest that the periphery is intimately tied to phasehood (Chomsky 2000; Gallego 2012), such that the merger of the phase head Fin^0 creates the left periphery by transferring the core clause to the interphases. Any elements added to the derivation beyond that point are peripheral, dislocated, and topical. However, in some languages like V2-languages, the finite verb moves into the head Fin^0 (Walkden 2017) This has the effect of rendering the phase inactive, such that no periphery is created. In other words, parts of the C-domain – notably the topic projection(s) – are not left peripheral in V2 languages.

(1) **The Romance clause**   **The Germanic V2 clause**

Evidence comes from the different behaviour of topics in non-V2 and V2-languages. In the former, topics are dislocated (De Cat 2007), insensitive to Weak Cross Over, and obligatorily tied to a resumptive pronoun in the core clause (2). In the latter, the exact opposite holds: topics are not dislocated, sensitive to Weak Cross Over, and not tied to a resumptive in the core clause (3).

(2) *Gianni_i, sua_i madre lo   ha sempre viziato*   *(ClLD in Standard Italian)*
     Gianni his mother him.CL has always spoilt
     'Gianni, his mother has always spoilt him'

(3) **Johnny_i har moren hans_i alltid bortskjemt*   *(V2-topicalisation in Standard Norwegian)*
     Johnny   has mother his   always spoilt
     Intended : 'Johnny, his mother has always spoilt him' (co-reference impossible)

This does not mean that V2 languages do not have peripheries, since $Force^0$ is also a phase head (cf. rightmost tree in 1). This higher periphery is activated in the ill-named *Contrastive Left-Dislocation* structure (4). Crucially, these topics behave exactly like the ClLD-construction in Romance: they are dislocated, linked to a resumptive, and seem to obviate the WCO-effect:

(4) *Johnny_i, ham_i har moren hans_i alltid likt*   *(CLD in Standard Norwegian)*
     Johnny   him   has mother his   always liked

Taken together, these data strongly suggest that it is possible to define the left periphery as a dislocated syntactic domain situated above the phase heads of the C-layer, and that the behaviour of topics with respect to phenomena like resumption and WCO is determined by whether they are merged above or below the phase head. Finally, I will also show that some elements standardly considered to be peripheral are in fact either clause internal (such as the focus projection) or maximally occupy the head of Fin itself (such as question particles). This suggests that the structure of the left periphery, as defined here, is in fact rather coarse, since it only contains topical information.

References

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