

## How to tell a syntactic phenomenon when you see it

A common theme in the last ~20 years of generative linguistics: some phenomenon  $X$ , which everybody always thought of as part of syntax, is instead relegated to “post-syntax” or the “PF branch.” Sometimes, this is because  $X$  is a poor fit for some currently-fashionable syntactic principle  $Y$ . (Example:  $X$  = head movement,  $Y$  = Extension Condition.) In other cases, this is because  $X$  is claimed to inform PF operations but no LF operations. (Example:  $X$  = ‘morphological’ case; but also:  $X$  = head movement.)

In this talk, I will argue that even if true, these are insufficient grounds on which to declare  $X$  to be “post-syntactic” or “on the PF branch.” There are two kinds of reasons for this. The first is conceptual: if a theory of  $X$  requires PF to traffic in chains/copies/traces, in c-command, and in the finer detail of syntactic phrase structure, then this theory involves considerable duplication of syntactic machinery in two different modules of grammar. The second is empirical: I will survey a number of phenomena that have been subject to this type of maneuver in recent years, and provide arguments that they cannot in fact be situated outside of syntax. These will include: phi-feature agreement; so-called ‘morphological’ case; head movement; and the Person Case Constraint.

To the extent that the results of the latter, empirical investigations hold, we can take this as a tentative indication that the former, architectural considerations were fairly reliable: if something looks syntactic, it probably is syntactic.