Three challenges for nanosyntax

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Outline

Roots

Agree/feature-driven movement

Ordering multiple fseqs
Outline

Roots

Agree/feature-driven movement

Ordering multiple fseqs
“The essential building block of nanosyntax is the simple observation that the terminal nodes of syntactic structures have become very small as syntactic trees grew” (http://nanosyntax.auf.net/whatis.html)
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example: *bellīs* ‘wars’: Latin noun, dative, second declension, neuter, plural
Roots

(1)

$K_4P$

$K_4$ $K_3P$

$K_3$ $K_2P$

$K_2$ $K_1P$

$K_1$ $C_2P$

$C_2$ $C_1P$

$C_1$ $Gen_1P$

$Gen_1$ $Num_2P$

$Num_2$ $Num_1P$

$Num_1$ $\ldots$
Roots

(2)

analysis of roots

it's functional projections
all the way down

the bottommost node is ‘special’

it contains a root feature or placeholder

it contains a category feature
Roots

(2)

Analysis of roots

- It's functional projections
- The bottommost node is 'special'
- All the way down

- It contains a root feature or placeholder
- It contains a category feature

a. \( \ldots \)

```
Num_2 \quad Num_1
```

b. \( \ldots \)

```
Num_1 \quad \sqrt{\text{ROOT}}
```

c. \( \ldots \)

```
Num_1 \quad n/N
```
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position (I would think): functional projections all the way down
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consequence: there is no principled difference between lexical items corresponding to roots and lexical items corresponding to functional material:
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position (I would think): functional projections all the way down
- consequence: there is no principled difference between lexical items corresponding to roots and lexical items corresponding to functional material:
  - root: ⟨/phon/, ..., CONCEPT⟩
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position (I would think): functional projections all the way down
- consequence: there is no principled difference between lexical items corresponding to roots and lexical items corresponding to functional material:
  - root: </phon/, ⋯ , CONCEPT>
  - functional element: </phon/, ⋯ , CONCEPT>
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position (I would think): functional projections all the way down
- consequence: there is no principled difference between lexical items corresponding to roots and lexical items corresponding to functional material:
  - root: $\langle/\text{phon}/, \cdots, \text{CONCEPT}\rangle$
  - functional element: $\langle/\text{phon}/, \cdots, (\text{CONCEPT})\rangle$
Roots

Problems (Borer 2005):
Roots

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- roots and functional elements seem to differ in the degree of coercion, malleability, flexibility they allow
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- roots and functional elements seem to differ in the degree of coercion, malleability, flexibility they allow
- the malleability of roots productively and massively extends across category boundaries
functional vocabulary items have a fixed meaning, and are not malleable or coercable:

(3) a. *A lot of wine is/are many.
    b. *There are too much carpet in this room.
    c. *too much carpets
lexical vocabulary items/roots have a flexible meaning, are malleable and coercable:

(4)  
   a. This is too little carpet for the money.  
   b. There are three wines in the cellar.  
   c. Cat came.  
   d. The three Kims I met yesterday were all tall.
the malleability of roots extends beyond traditional category boundaries
the malleability of roots extends beyond traditional category boundaries

(5)  a. Are those *slicks* under your Dodge A-100?
    b. While not every man likes to *slick* his hair up every morning, it is wise to have a gel, wax or mousse around just in case.
    c. Oh, you’re such a *slick* girl.
the malleability of roots extends beyond traditional category boundaries

(5)  
a. Are those **slicks** under your Dodge A-100?  
b. While not every man likes to **slick** his hair up every morning, it is wise to have a gel, wax or mousse around just in case.  
c. Oh, you’re such a **slick** girl.

(6) Goedkopen kan je ook bij Carrefour.  
cheap.INF can you also at Carrefour  
‘Shopping cheaply is also possible at Carrefour.’

(7) Ik geef niks, boosde Nelis terug. (1900s Dutch)  
I give nothing angry.PST Nelis back  
‘I give nothing, Nelis replied angrily.’
Borer (2005): there is a fundamental difference between roots and functional items; the latter contain grammatical/categorial features, the former do not. The lexicon thus has two subsets:

\[(8)\]

a. **group 1**: *stone*, *light*, *cat*, ... → LVIs: no grammatical or categorial features

b. **group 2**: *those*\([D, def, dist, pl]\), *-ed*\([T, past]\), *-s*\([num, pl]\), ... → FVIs: grammatical and categorial features
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position: coercion/malleability is just another term for phrasal spell-out combined with the Superset Principle.
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position: coercion/malleability is just another term for phrasal spell-out combined with the Superset Principle
- but why then do roots and functional vocabulary items behave so differently when it comes to coercion? Shouldn’t their L-trees allow equal amounts of shrinkage?
Roots

- the nanosyntactic position: coercion/malleability is just another term for phrasal spell-out combined with the Superset Principle
- but why then do roots and functional vocabulary items behave so differently when it comes to coercion? Shouldn’t their L-trees allow equal amounts of shrinkage?
- coercion across category boundaries suggests that lexical categories such as A, N and V should also be in a subset/superset-relation, but can we build a unique, non-ambiguous functional sequence containing these elements (or whatever their constitutive parts are)? (assuming the fseq doesn’t contain gaps)
Roots

(9) \( \text{leeg}_A - \text{leeg}_V - \ast \text{leeg}_N \rightarrow \) AP and VP are adjacent syntactic layers (with NP either higher or lower)
(9) \( \text{leeg}_A - \text{leeg}_V - *\text{leeg}_N \rightarrow \text{AP and VP are adjacent syntactic layers (with NP either higher or lower)} \)

(10) \( \text{intellectueel}_A - *\text{intellectueel}_V - \text{intellectueel}_N \rightarrow \text{AP and NP are adjacent syntactic layers (with VP either higher or lower)} \)
Roots

(9) \( \text{leeg}_A - \text{leeg}_V - \ast \text{leeg}_N \rightarrow \text{AP and VP are adjacent syntactic layers (with NP either higher or lower)} \)

(10) \( \text{intellectueel}_A - \ast \text{intellectueel}_V - \text{intellectueel}_N \rightarrow \text{AP and NP are adjacent syntactic layers (with VP either higher or lower)} \)

(11) \( \ast \text{douche}_A - \text{douche}_V - \text{douche}_N \rightarrow \text{VP and NP are adjacent syntactic layers (with AP either higher or lower)} \)
(9) leeg\textsubscript{A} - leeg\textsubscript{V} - *leeg\textsubscript{N} \rightarrow AP and VP are adjacent syntactic layers (with NP either higher or lower)

(10) intellectueel\textsubscript{A} - *intellectueel\textsubscript{V} - intellectueel\textsubscript{N} \rightarrow AP and NP are adjacent syntactic layers (with VP either higher or lower)

(11) *douche\textsubscript{A} - douche\textsubscript{V} - douche\textsubscript{N} \rightarrow VP and NP are adjacent syntactic layers (with AP either higher or lower)

(12) to \textbf{up} the ante \rightarrow apparently PP should be taken up in the mix as well
Roots

note: if you’re Hagit Borer, then this whole exercise is pointless, because any lexical category can be coerced into any other lexical category (for any lexical item); any restrictions on this mechanism are only apparent and due to convention, culture, real-world knowledge, etc.
Roots

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- note: coercion (from a noun) towards an adjective seems to be much easier and more productive than the other types
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(13) That is so . . . (of her).
note: if you’re Hagit Borer, then this whole exercise is pointless, because any lexical category can be coerced into any other lexical category (for any lexical item); any restrictions on this mechanism are only apparent and due to convention, culture, real-world knowledge, etc.

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(13) That is so street (of her).
▶ note: if you’re Hagit Borer, then this whole exercise is pointless, because any lexical category can be coerced into any other lexical category (for any lexical item); any restrictions on this mechanism are only apparent and due to convention, culture, real-world knowledge, etc.

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(13) That is so Britney (of her).
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note: coercion (from a noun) towards an adjective seems to be much easier and more productive than the other types

(13) That is so university (of her).
Roots
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note: coercion (from a noun) towards an adjective seems to be much easier and more productive than the other types

(13) That is so wall (of her).
Summing up:

- there is at least a residue of Borer’s “roots are malleable, functional items are not”-argument that isn’t straightforwardly covered by phrasal spell-out and the Superset Principle
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- there is at least a residue of Borer’s “roots are malleable, functional items are not”-argument that isn’t straightforwardly covered by phrasal spell-out and the Superset Principle
- there is no unique unambiguous fseq linking up the various lexical categories in a subset/superset-relation and data involving coercion across category boundaries make it unlikely that one is forthcoming
Outline

Roots

Agree/feature-driven movement

Ordering multiple fseqs
Agree/feature-driven movement

“This technology in fact predicts an interesting class of movements: movements that swap the order of two constituents, not matter how big, and which have no detectable semantic or classically syntactic triggers.” (Starke 2011:12)
Agree/feature-driven movement

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- Spell-Out driven movement:
Agree/feature-driven movement

“This technology in fact predicts an interesting class of movements: movements that swap the order of two constituents, not matter how big, and which have no detectable semantic or classically syntactic triggers.” (Starke 2011:12)

Spell-Out driven movement:

- strictly local
Agree/feature-driven movement

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Spell-Out driven movement:
  - strictly local
  - no scopal effects, no reconstruction
Agree/feature-driven movement

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Spell-Out driven movement:

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- no scopal effects, no reconstruction
- no trace/copy
Agree/feature-driven movement

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Spell-Out driven movement:
  ▶ strictly local
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“other” movement:
  ▶ not local
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- Spell-Out driven movement:
  - strictly local
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- “other” movement:
  - not local
  - can have scopal effects, can show reconstruction
Agree/feature-driven movement

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▶ Spell-Out driven movement:
  ▶ strictly local
  ▶ no scopal effects, no reconstruction
  ▶ no trace/copy

▶ “other” movement:
  ▶ not local
  ▶ can have scopal effects, can show reconstruction
  ▶ does leave copy or trace
Agree/feature-driven movement

- how do these “other” movements work in nanosyntax?
Agree/feature-driven movement

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- traditional answer: a Probe with unvalued/uninterpretable features probes for, Agrees with and attracts a Goal with valued/interpretable features
Agree/feature-driven movement

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(14)

```
TP
/     \
|      |
T_uφ   vP
|      |
/     /
DP_iφ  ...
```
Agree/feature-driven movement

down’t work in nanosyntax:
Agree/feature-driven movement

doesn’t work in nanosyntax:

- $\phi$ constitutes more than a single feature and so cannot be on a single syntactic head (in fact, it constitutes many, many more than a single feature)
Agree/feature-driven movement

this won’t work in nanosyntax:

▶ $\phi$ constitutes more than a single feature and so cannot be on a single syntactic head (in fact, it constitutes many, many more than a single feature)

▶ even if $\phi$ were a single feature, it makes no sense to talk about “the $\phi$-feature on/of T” vs “the $\phi$-feature on/of D” (because that once again implies multiple features on a single syntactic terminal): there is only the $\phi$-feature that is the head of $\phi$P
agree/feature-driven movement

this won’t work in nanosyntax:

- $\phi$ constitutes more than a single feature and so cannot be on a single syntactic head (in fact, it constitutes many, many more than a single feature)
- even if $\phi$ were a single feature, it makes no sense to talk about “the $\phi$-feature on/of T” vs “the $\phi$-feature on/of D” (because that once again implies multiple features on a single syntactic terminal): there is only the $\phi$-feature that is the head of $\phi P$
- there is no notion of (un)valued/(un)interpretable
Agree/feature-driven movement

alternatives?
Agree/feature-driven movement

alternatives?

▶ movement is driven by feature identity: a $\phi P$ in the nominal domain moves by virtue of being identical to a $\phi P$ in the TP-domain
Agree/feature-driven movement

alternatives?

▶ movement is driven by feature identity: a $\phi P$ in the nominal domain moves by virtue of being identical to a $\phi P$ in the TP-domain

▶ still not entirely clear, though, how this would work: if T agrees for number, say plural, with the subject and plural in fact corresponds to a whole series of functional projections, does that mean all those projections have to be reproduced in the TP-domain?
Agree/feature-driven movement

alternatives?

- movement is driven by feature identity: a $\phi P$ in the nominal domain moves by virtue of being identical to a $\phi P$ in the TP-domain
  - still not entirely clear, though, how this would work: if $T$ agrees for number, say plural, with the subject and plural in fact corresponds to a whole series of functional projections, does that mean all those projections have to be reproduced in the TP-domain?

- there is no feature-driven movement in the traditional sense (i.e. movements triggered by the need to satisfy morphosyntactic features); all the “other” movements are directly driven by the need to satisfy LF-requirements
Agree/feature-driven movement

Summing up:

- the traditional view on Agree and feature-driven movement cannot be maintained in nanosyntax
Agree/feature-driven movement

Summing up:

▶ the traditional view on Agree and feature-driven movement cannot be maintained in nanosyntax
▶ non-local movements with scopal effects, reconstruction etc. might be driven by the need to satisfy LF-requirements, but constructing such a theory is a tall order
Outline

Roots

Agree/feature-driven movement

Ordering multiple fseqs
Ordering multiple fseqs

The Latin Case sequence (Caha 2009:123):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>war, SG.</th>
<th>star, SG.</th>
<th>thing, SG.</th>
<th>war, PL.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>bell-um</td>
<td>stell-a</td>
<td>r-ēs</td>
<td>bell-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>bell-um</td>
<td>stell-am</td>
<td>r-em</td>
<td>bell-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>bell-ī</td>
<td>stell-ae</td>
<td>r-eī</td>
<td>bell-ōrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>bell-ō</td>
<td>stell-ae</td>
<td>r-eī</td>
<td>bell-īs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>bell-ō</td>
<td>stell-ā</td>
<td>r-ē</td>
<td>bell-īs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ordering multiple fseqs

(15) $K_4P$

$K_4$ $K_3P$

$K_3$ $K_2P$

$K_2$ $K_1P$

$K_1$ ...
Ordering multiple fseqs

The Latin Declension class sequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>abl.pl.fem</th>
<th>nom.sg.m</th>
<th>abl.pl.m</th>
<th>acc.sg.m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>ís</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>ís</td>
<td>am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>ís</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>ís</td>
<td>um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>íbus</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>íbus</td>
<td>um</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>íbus</td>
<td>ø/o/s/is</td>
<td>íbus</td>
<td>em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>ēbus</td>
<td>ēs</td>
<td>ēbus</td>
<td>em</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ordering multiple fseqs

(16) $C_4 P$

$C_4$ --- $C_3 P$

$C_3$ --- $C_2 P$

$C_2$ --- $C_1 P$

$C_1$ --- ...
Ordering multiple fseqs

how are $C_n P$ and $K_n P$ ordered with respect to one another?
Ordering multiple fseqs

how are $C_nP$ and $K_nP$ ordered with respect to one another?
three options:

- $K > C$

(17)
Ordering multiple fseqs

- C>K

(18)

\[
\begin{align*}
C_4P & \\
C_4 & \quad C_3P \\
C_3 & \quad C_2P \\
C_2 & \quad C_1P \\
C_1 & \quad K_4P \\
K_4 & \quad K_3P \\
K_3 & \quad \ldots
\end{align*}
\]
Ordering multiple fseqs

- K and C are interspersed

(19)

```
K_4P
  / \     /
K_4  C_4P  K_3P
   /     /
C_4  K_3P  C_3P
    /     /
K_3  C_3P  K_2P
     /     /
C_3  K_2P  C_2P
      /     /
K_2  C_2P  ...
```

```
Ordering multiple fseqs

- note:

  once the syntactic terminals get so dramatically
  submorphemic, word order is no longer a useful diagnostic for
determining ordering among fseqs

  nor is morpheme ordering: root-aff
  can be derived via spec-to-spec or roll-up movement (and head-final structures
(aff
-root) are typologically much rarer)

  ordering among fseqs matters:
  because predictions about cross-dimensional syncretisms
  crucially depend on inter-fseq-ordering
  because it might bring back old demons
Ordering multiple fseqs

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Ordering multiple fseqs

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Old demons

challenges for cartography (I):

▶ transitivity failures (Nilsen 2003, Van Craenenbroeck 2006)
Old demons

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- transitivity failures (Nilsen 2003, Van Craenenbroeck 2006)

(20) Ståle har <*ikke> muligens <ikke> spist
S. has not possibly <not> eaten
hvetekakene sine.
the.wheaties his
‘Stanley possibly hasn’t eaten his wheaties.’

(21) Ståle har <*alltid> ikke <alltid> spist
S. has always not <always> eaten
hvetekakene sine.
the.wheaties his
‘Stanley hadn’t always eaten his wheaties.’
Dette er et morsomt gratis spill hvor spillerne alltid muligens er et klikk fra åa vine $1000! always possibly are one click from to win $1000 ‘This is a fun, free game where you’re always possibly a click away from winning $1000!’
Old demons

- translating transitivity failures into nanosyntax:
  - $X < Y$
  - $Y < Z$
  - $Z < X$
  
  to the extent that *ABA is robust, it might retroactively provide support for the position that transitivity failures are only apparent and can be solved via movement or multiplication of projections
Old demons

- translating transitivity failures into nanosyntax:
  - $X < Y$
  - $Y < Z$
  - $Z < X$
  - AAB
  - ABB
  - ABA

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Old demons

- translating transitivity failures into nanosyntax:
  \[
  X < Y \quad \text{AAB}
  
  Y < Z \quad \text{ABB}
  
  Z < X \quad \text{ABA}
  \]

- to the extent that *ABA is robust, it might retroactively provide support for the position that transitivity failures are only apparent and can be solved via movement or multiplication of projections
challenges for cartography (II):

- Bobaljik-paradoxes (Bobaljik 1999)
Old demons

challenges for cartography (II):

▶ Bobaljik-paradoxes (Bobaljik 1999)

(23)  a. Non hanno mangiato mica più.
    neg they.have eaten not any.longer
    ‘They haven’t eaten any longer.’

    b. Non hanno mica più mangiato.

    c. Non hanno mica mangiato più.

    d. *Non hanno più mangiato mica.

    e. *Non hanno più mica mangiato.

    f. *Non hanno mangiato più mica.
Old demons

challenges for cartography (II):

- Bobaljik-paradoxes (Bobaljik 1999)

\[(23)\]

a. Non hanno mangiato mica più.

They haven’t eaten any longer.

b. Non hanno mica più mangiato.

c. Non hanno mica mangiato più.

d. *Non hanno più mangiato mica.

e. *Non hanno più mica mangiato.

f. *Non hanno mangiato più mica.

- the position of the two adverbs remains constant regardless of their position vis-à-vis the participle
a. Non hanno mangiato mica più.
b. Non hanno mica mangiato più.
c. Gianni stupidamente mica gli ha più
   Gianni stupidly not to.him has no.longer telefonato.
   phoned.
   ‘Gianni stupidly hasn’t called him any more.’
d. *Gianni stupidamente telefonato mica gli ha più.
e. *Gianni stupidamente telefonato gli ha mica più.
f. *Gianni stupidamente mica telefonato gli ha più.
Old demons

(24)  
a. Non hanno mangiato mica più.
b. Non hanno mica mangiato più.
c. Gianni stupidamente mica gli ha più
   Gianni stupidly not to.him has no.longer telefonato.
   phoned.
   ‘Gianni stupidly hasn’t called him any more.’
d. *Gianni stupidamente telefonato mica gli ha più.
e. *Gianni stupidamente telefonato gli ha mica più.
f. *Gianni stupidamente mica telefonato gli ha più.

the position of the auxiliary and the participle remains constant regardless of their position vis-à-vis the adverb mica
Old demons

Bobaljik (1999): “Examining the general picture, the effect given by the data is one of multiple hierarchies (at least, perhaps at most, two) interleaved among one another. (..) It is exactly this interleaving effect that I would suggest here is evidence of a separate, but intrinsically ordered, tier on which adverbs occur, ultimately collapsed together with the argument/head tier by a form of tier conflation”
Summing up:

- while the nanosyntactic tools seem well-suited to explore the inner workings of a single fseq, combinations of multiple fseqs raise questions
Ordering multiple fseqs

Summing up:

▶ while the nanosyntactic tools seem well-suited to explore the inner workings of a single fseq, combinations of multiple fseqs raise questions

▶ ordering is one of them, others include merger (how do nominal fseqs merge in the verbal/clausal spine? is this merge operation triggered/feature-driven? does it interfere with the phrasal spell-out of the functional spine?) or ‘alignment’ (how does concord work, i.e. how do we ensure that all the material within, say, a single DP (determiner, adjective, noun, etc.) grows to exactly the same fseq-height?)
End

Thanks!