

# Principles of Syntax

## Linguistics 322-3

Feature Values:

- (1) Universal principles used in 322 (informally stated):  
If a feature has no value, a value must be found for it:

Empty Feature Value Prohibition:

- (2) All features must be assigned a binary value.  
The first feature prohibits chaining the value of a feature, which ultimately could change the meaning of the sentence:

Fixed Feature Value

- (3) The value of a feature cannot be changed under any circumstance.

Features must agree when one governs the other:

Agreement:

- (4) If a feature X1 governs X2,  
where X is the same feature,  
then the value of X1 must agree with X2.

The fourth principle is morphological in nature:

Bound Forms:

- (5) A bound form ([+Host] or [-Free] affix) requires a host or the structure will crash.

The next principle states that all sentence must have a subject:

(6) The Extended Projection Principle

All sentences must have a subject.

This may not be so much a principle but rather an important property of the operator Prominence (the subject). We will not consider this a distinct principle.

The fifth principle permits a process to apply only if there is no other solution. This principle affect *Do-Support*., *Be-Support* and *Have-Support*, and the insertion of pleonastic pronouns:

Last Resort

(7) Apply this rule only if no other rule can apply.

The sixth principle permits only one lexical item per node This principle bars one node from moving into a node that is already occupied.:

Head Node Lexical Item Constraint

(8) A head level node may not contain more than one lexical item.

The seventh principle prevents unnecessary (and unwanted) processes:

Least Effort

(9) Don't do it if you don't have to.

The eighth principle (in essence a universal property) states the CP and NP are cycles:

Cyclicity

(10) CP and NP are each a cycle.

Cyclicity refers to the application of rules within the scope of certain categories. All the rules that refer to an NP must occur before the rules can move to the next NP or to CP. Since We consider C to be an operator modifying the verb, then the verb V is considered cyclic. V and N are considered the two fundamental categories of syntax, as evidenced by some languages which do not differentiate more than two of them.

The next principle states that all phonetic NPs must be assigned Case

The Case Filter

(11) \*NP, if NP has phonetic form and no Case.

The Case filter needs to be reworded to correctly capture the ideas currently under study:

(12) \*NP, of NP has phonetic form and no Case Feature value.

Actually, the Case filter includes small 'pro,' which has no phonetic form but must have Case.

The Case Filter can be derived from First Principle Empty Feature Value Prohibition.

- The next principle states that only one theta role may be assigned to a projection, and

The Theta Criterion

(13) Each argument bears one and only one theta role, and each theta role is assigned to one and only one argument.

[NOTE: this one is debatable and is being challenged as a principle of syntax, but maintained as a principle of semantics.]

## 1 A few sub-principles fall out from the Least Effort Principle:

Minimal distance movement.

- a. If a category must move, it must move the shortest possible distance.  
This is reapplied to feature copying through a link.  
This sub-principle rules out long-distance movement.
- b. The D-structure of a sentence must be as minimal as possible.
- c. If anything is predictable, it does not occur in D-structure, the base structure of syntax.
- d. Do not build unnecessary structures.

## 2 - Strategies

- Copy a feature

- (14) The value of feature may be copied to another like feature under terms of government. Copying cannot break any of the above principles.

Adjoin a feature

- (15) A feature may be copied and adjoined to a feature bundle in order to satisfy hosting properties

Insert a dummy word

- (16) This strategy inserts a dummy word in order to satisfy the hosting properties of certain morphemes that cannot be otherwise resolved.

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