

Toward Distributed Semantics: Evidence from associative constructions

Ivona Kučerová (McMaster University)

Under the Y-model, the empirical evidence for the structure of features in narrow syntax is inevitably indirect as their morphological realization is mediated by the syntax-morphology interface, and their interpretation is mediated by the syntax-semantics interface. I will argue that the syntax-semantics interface manipulates features from narrow syntax in a way parallel to feature manipulations in Distributed Morphology. In turn, the syntax-semantics interface creates new feature bundles (~ Distributed Semantics). These new bundles are created at spell-out and become part of the phase label. Consequently, these rebundled features are fully readable by the semantics module (LF) but since they are part of the label, they are accessible to further narrow syntax operations as well. The empirical evidence comes from associative constructions in Czech. We will see that these constructions exhibit a dual behavior in a range of seemingly unrelated properties (agreement, PCC, wh-movement & binding). The proposed dual representation, i.e., features present in narrow syntax and feature bundles derived at the interface, does not only tie these properties together but it correctly determines which features are semantically interpreted and what their locality properties are. The work contributes to the current work on the role of phase heads in the syntax-semantics interface (Adger & Ramchand 2005, Kratzer 2009, Charnavel & Sportiche 2016, Zubizarreta & Pancheva 2017, Pancheva & Zubizarreta 2018, Kučerová 2018) and contributes to identifying phenomena in which semantic interpretation is directly assigned to the syntactic structure without an input of compositional semantics (cf. Schlenker 2014 for iconic features; Schäfer, 2008; Wood, 2015; Myler, 2016; Wood and Marantz, 2017 for theta roles).