The Prenominal Origin of Relative Clauses
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Ideally, the different relative clause (RC) types found in the languages of the world (postnominal, prenominal, internally headed, free or headless, correlative) should be derivable from one and the same structure. If one were to take English-type, postnominal, relatives to (most closely) reflect the structure of Merge, with prenominal ones (and others) derived from them, the [DP D CP] plus Head raising analysis of Kayne (1994) is, as he notes, virtually forced by Antisymmetry.

In this presentation I will explore an analysis, also compatible with Antisymmetry, which instead takes prenominal relatives to more directly reflect the structure of Merge for relative clauses, with postnominal (and the other types of) relatives derived from them.

This change of perspective finds some basis, I submit, in the more general observation that constituents found to the right of a head are possibly never merged there, but come to be there as a consequence of the head moving leftward past them.

The main evidence for this conclusion comes from a pervasive left-right asymmetry found cross-linguistically, which I will briefly review.

Concerning their location of Merge, typological evidence seems to indicate that prenominal RCs are introduced between the numeral and the demonstrative, though the lower location between the numeral and (direct modification) adjectives is also an option, especially for reduced RCs.

The prenominal merger of RCs also appears compatible with both a "raising" and a "matching" derivation of the Head. This may prove a welcome result if both raising and matching must be available, as some facts discussed in the recent literature seem to indicate.

Finally, the prenominal merger of RCs will also be discussed in relation to the task of providing a unified structure from which to derive the different types of RCs mentioned at the outset (postnominal, prenominal, internally headed, free or headless, and correlative).