

LEXICAL RELATIONAL STRUCTURES IN THE MINIMALIST PROGRAM

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Hale & Keyser (1991, 1993, etc.) propose that the lexicon is organized very much in syntactic terms. In particular, they claim that lexical items are associated with Lexical Relational Structures (LRSs) which conform to the X-bar schema (more specifically, Larson's (1988) incarnation of it), move alpha and the ECP. Thus, a verb like *shelve* is derived by incorporating the noun *shelf* into an abstract preposition indicating location, and by moving the resulting complex successive-cyclically first to a semi-light verb denoting position akin to *put* and then to an abstract causative verb. Although LRSs have a syntactic structure, Hale & Keyser still maintain that there is a distinction between l-syntax (prior to DS) and s-syntax, after lexical insertion. Chomsky (1993), however, while in favor of the overall proposal made by Hale & Keyser, does not adhere to the distinction between l- and s-syntax, which is incompatible with a model in which levels of representation such as D and S-Structure have no status, and in which lexical insertion does not take place in one single operation.

This paper is an attempt to recast Hale & Keyser's LRSs in terms compatible with Chomsky's Minimalist Program. I would like to propose that much in the same way as lexical items enter the computational system with inflectional features that need to be checked and ultimately canceled out before or after Spell-Out (depending on whether they are strong or weak, respectively), they also come associated with thematic (or conceptual) features which must also be checked at some point in the derivation. Thus, a verb like *shelve* will have to raise to P, and the two V positions in the VP (assuming Larson's VP structure) in order to check its [location], [position], and [cause] features, respectively. Finally, the complex predicate will raise out of its VP (either overtly or covertly) to check out whatever inflectional features it might be associated with.

We still need to decide whether the conceptual features of morphologically derived lexical items such as *shelve* must be checked before or after Spell-Out. I would like to argue that those features must be checked overtly, since to a greater or lesser extent they are usually associated with special derivational morphology which, naturally, counts as strong and can therefore override Procrastinate. In counterparts with light or semi-light predicates, on the other hand, feature-checking will take place at LF. Being devoid of content, light predicates will be invisible at LF, and so raising of the predicative element in the LRS is necessary to ensure that the arguments are theta-marked. In the case of semi-light predicates, feature checking is required to make sure that the categorical and semantic-conceptual features associated with each predicative element in the VP are compatible with each other.

Finally, I would like to suggest that Hale & Keyser's view of the lexicon recast in the Minimalist assumptions discussed above can provide a way of dispensing with the Projection Principle and Theta Criterion. In order to check the relevant features associated with predicative elements we need to build the necessary structure (in conformity with the dictums of X-bar theory, of course) or else the derivation would crash.