

The domain of content

Hagit Borer

Queen Mary University of London

The past two decades have seen the emergence, within theoretical linguistics, of a Neo-Constructionist perspective which, broadly speaking, seeks to minimize or altogether eliminate the lexicon as a locus of formal information or formal rule application. Within Neo-Constructionism it is broadly assumed that e.g. argument structure, categorization and complex words all should be explained by appealing to a syntactic, rather than lexical, toolkit. The aim of this presentation is to lend strong support that perspective. Specifically, I will look into a few puzzles that come to us from the properties of derived nominals, showing that the resolution of these puzzles makes a phase-based syntactic approach to argument structure and to the derivation of complex words just about inevitable, with lexicon-based accounts systematically and across the board failing to give rise to the correct results.