A. Dopo la "teoria standard": la frammentazione della scuola generativa

1. Punti di conflitto

a) L'"autonomia della sintassi"

b) La questione dei "livelli di rappresentazione" e della loro natura

c) La "realtà psicologica" della linguistica: ascesa e caduta della "teoria derivazionale della complessità" (*Derivational Theory of Complexity*; DTC)

d) Due opinioni sulla "realtà psicologica" della linguistica:

- "The proper conclusion to draw about the familiar model of transformational grammar presented in Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* may simply be that it is psychologically unrealistic" Bresnan (1978: 2).

- "What is commonly said is that theories of grammar or universal grammar, whatever their merits, have not been shown to have a mysterious property called 'psychological reality'. (…) The question is: what is 'psychological reality', as distinct from 'truth, in a certain domain?" (Chomsky 1980: 107).

2. Le "guerre linguistiche"

a) *G(enerative) S(emantics)* (Semantica generativa) vs. *E(xtended) S(tandard) T(heory)* (Teoria Standard Estesa: 'struttura profonda'

- Obiezioni fondamentali della GS alla teoria "standard": (a) la 'struttura profonda' (*deep structure*) è un concetto inutile e perciò deve essere abbandonato; (b) la descrizione linguistica deve essere "basata sulla semantica".

- Le risposte della EST: (a) è falsa, (b) è insensata. (a) è falsa perché un livello specifico di sttruttura profonda è motivato da ragioni di semplicità e generalità delle descrizioni linguistiche. (b) è insensata perché non ha senso assumere una "direzione" nella generazione dei vari livelli di rappresentazione linguistica.

- La 'rappresentazione semantica' di una frase come *Bill killed John* secondo la GS (cf. McCawley 1968):
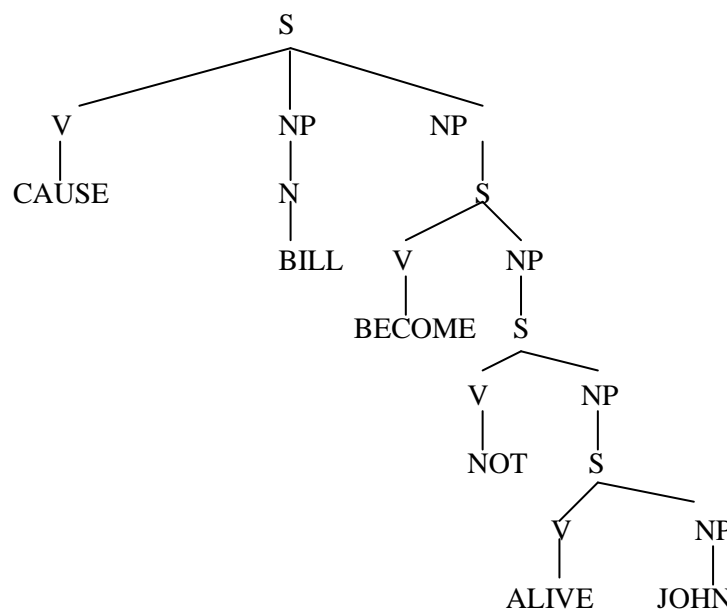
b) GS vs. EST: le questioni di fondo

- Antinucci (1976: 168): "[…] all'interno della GT coesistono due concezioni profondamente diverse del linguaggio e dei compiti della teoria linguistica […] entrambi tali concezioni originano e coesistono fin dall'inizio della GT nell'opera dello stesso Chomsky". La prima concezione è "di provenienza logico-matematica e computeristica, più che linguistica in senso stretto" (ibid., p. 169).

"[…] il linguaggio viene considerato come un oggetto formale, in astratto, e indipendentemente da quella che è la sua funzione fondamentale: la funzione comunicativa. […] Il linguaggio è in conclusione condotto ad una combinatoria di elementi" (ibid., p. 172). "Ma accanto a questo modo di impostare lo studio del linguaggio ne esiste un secondo, che Chomsky formula nel capitolo 8 di SS, riconoscendo esplicitamente che si tratta di «un modo completamente diverso e indipendente». […] Si tratta in sostanza di un modo più tradizionale di affrontare il linguaggio e la sua descrizione. Qui il compito del linguista è formulato in termini di costruire una teoria che renda conto di ciò che Chomsky chiama «comprensione della frase». Ma studiare la comprensione della frase vuol dire studiare quella capacità che permette di passare dalla forma sonora di una frase al suo significato" (ibid., pp. 174-176).

c) Alla fine delle "guerre linguistiche", GS "ha perso" e EST "ha vinto": perché?
- Secondo G. Lakoff (in Huck & Goldsmith 1995: 116), per il potere accademico di Chomsky: "In 1967, when Chomsky started attacking us, I was 26, Haj [i.e., Ross] and Jim [i.e., Mc Cawley] were 29, and Paul [i.e., Postal] was 30. We were kids, with no position at all, and we got sucked into a fight with the most powerful linguist in history – a fight on his terms" (id.: 116).
- Secondo Newmeyer (1986; 1996), GS fu abbandonata perché dimostrata empiricamente falsa.
- "If the Interpretivists had given up and declared Generative Semantics to have 'won', I would still have given up on formal logic and transformational derivations and moved on to work on Cognitive Linguistics, and so would be at odds with both Generative Semanticists and Interpretive Semanticists" (G. Lakoff, in Huck & Goldsmith 1995: 117).
- Le 'rappresentazioni semantiche' nelle ultime fasi della GS: (1a) è grammaticale solo se è vera la sua 'presupposizione' (1b) (Lakoff 1971):
  (1) a. John told Mary that she was beautiful and then she insulted him.
      b. That John told Mary that she was beautiful entails that John insulted Mary.

d) Una spiegazione alternativa: l'interpretazione "psico-biologica" della teoria linguistica.
Let us define "universal grammar" (UG) the system of principles, conditions and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages not merely by accident but by necessity – of course, I mean biological, not logical, necessity. Thus UG can be taken as expressing "the essence of human language". UG will be invariant among humans. UG will specify what language learning must achieve, if it takes place successfully (Chomsky 1975: 29).
Cf. *Materiali*, parte I (pp. 5-6): le "condizioni sulle trasformazioni" dal punto di vista "metodologico" a quello "psicologico".

B. Il "programma chomskiano"

1. Le "condizioni sulle trasformazioni", la "traccia" e la "Forma Logica"
- CNPC di Ross (cf. *Materiali*, parte I, p. 5) vs. "condizione di soggiacenza"
- La "condizione di soggiacenza" :
  I will understand the subjacency condition as holding that a cyclic rule cannot move a phrase from position *Y* to position *X* (or conversely) in:
  ...*X*...[α...[β...*Y*...]...]...*X*..., where α and β are cyclic nodes (Chomsky 1977: 73).
- Esempi della "condizione di soggiacenza" e della nozione di "traccia":

  (1) Chi pensi che Maria affermi che Pietro vuole sposare
  (2) Penso che Maria affermi che Pietro vuole sposare Anna
  (3) *Chi pensi all'affermazione di Maria che Pietro vuole sposare?
  (4) Penso all'affermazione di Maria che Pietro vuole sposare Anna.

  (1a) [$_{S'}$ Chi [$_S$ pensi [$_{S'}$ che [$_S$ Maria affermi [$_{S'}$ che [$_S$ Pietro vuole [$_S$ sposare t$_i$]]]]]]]

  (3a) [$_{S'}$ Chi$_i$ [$_S$ pensi [$_{NP}$ all'affermazione di Maria [$_{S'}$ che [$_S$ Pietro vuole [$_S$ sposare t$_i$]]]]]]]

- "Tracce" e "Forma Logica" (Logical Form, LF):

We may think of the wh-word in a question (direct or indirect) as a kind of quantfier. Thus, the "logical form" of (1) can be taken to be (1b) [N.B: *il testo di C. è stato modificato per adattarlo agli esempi qui sopra*]:
(1a) per quale persona *x*, tu pensi che Maria affermi che Pietro vuole sposare *x*

In these logical forms, there is a variable *x* and a quantifier, "for which *x*", binding it. Suppose that we were to identify the variable *x* with the trace *t* left by the movement rule. (Chomsky 1975: 93-94).

2. Il modello a "principi e parametri" (Chomsky 1981)

a) *E-Language* vs. *I-Language*

Structural and descriptive linguistics, behavioral psychology, and other contemporary approaches tended to view a language as a collection of actions, or utterances, or linguistic forms (words, sentences) paired with meanings , or as a system of linguistics forms or events. […] Let us refer to such technical concepts as instances of "externalized language" (E-language), in the sense that the construct is understood independently of the properties of the mind/brain. Chomsky 1986: 19-20).

The I-language […] is some element of the mind of a person who knows the language, acquired by the learner, and used by the speaker-hearer. (id.: 22)

b) *Dalle regole ai principi*

■ Le regole S(truttura) S(intagmatica) (*Phrase Structure rules*) possono essere completamente eliminate tramite: (i) lo "schema X-barra"; (ii) le proprietà lessicali della testa del costituente; (iii) un parametro che fissa l'ordine rispettivo della testa e del complemento ("parametro della testa").

■ "(…) the differences between Move-*wh*, Move-NP, Move-PP, and so forth can be in large part (perhaps completely) explained in other terms, so that we are left with the rule Move-α, α being an arbitrary category" (Chomsky 1986: 73).

c) *Principi e parametri*

■ "The theory of UG must be sufficiently rich and highly structured to provide descriptively adequate grammars. At the same time, it must be sufficiently open to allow for the variety of languages. Consideration of the nature of the problem at a qualitative level leads to the expectation that UG consists of a highly structured and restrictive system of principles with certain open parameters, to be fixed by experience" (Chomsky 1981: 38).

d) *I livelli di rappresentazione nel modello a principi e parametri*
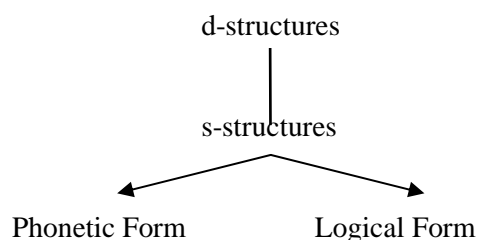
e) *Qualche esempio di principi: i "principi del legamento" (Binding Principles)*

■ A. An anaphor is bound in its governing category.
■ B. A pronominal is free in its governing category.
■ C. An R-expression is free.

1. *The men expected [$_{S'}$ that each other would win]
2. *The men want [$_{S'}$ John to like each other]
3. The men$_i$ want [$_{S'}$ John to like them$_{i, j, k…}$]
4. The men expected [$_{S'}$ that they$_{i, j. k…}$ would win]
5. He$_i$ expected [$_{S'}$ that John$_{*i}$ would win]

f) *Qualche esempio di parametro*

   - il "parametro del soggetto nullo" (o "parametro pro-drop")
1. *pro* parlo
2. *pro* hablo
3. **pro* speak vs. I speak
4. **pro* parle vs. je parle
5. **pro* spreche vs. ich spreche

- *il "parametro della testa"*

Italiano   *Giapponese*

$[_{VP}[_{V'}[_V$ scrisse$]$ $[_{NP}$ una lettera$]]]$ $[_{VP}[_{V'}$ $[_{NP}$ tegami-o$]$ $[_V$ kaita$]]]$

                                                                                      lettera-ACC   scrisse

$[_{PP}[_{P'}$ $[_P$ in$]$ $[_{NP}$ Italia$]]]$ $[_{PP}[_{P'}[_{NP}$ Nikon$]$ ni$]]]$

                                                                                Giappone   in

$[_{NP}[_{Det}$il$]$ $[_{N'}[_{NP}$padre$]$ $[_{NP}$di Taroo$]]]$ $[_{NP}[_{N'}[_{NP}$Taroo-no$]$ $[_N$otosan-ga$]]]$

                                                                               Taroo-di   padre-NOM

$[_{AP}[_{A'}[_A$desideroso$]$ $[_{NP}$di denaro$]]]$ $[_{AP}[_{A'}[$Aokane-ga$]$ $[_{NP}$hosii$]]]$

                                                                              denaro-NOM desideroso

- *il parametro del "movimento palese" vs. "movimento nascosto"*

Inglese:

Who$_i$ did Taroo give the money to t_i?

Giapponese:

Taroo wa sono okane o dare ni yatta ka

Taroo-NOM –il-denaro-ACC-chi-a-diede-PRT: INT.

La "forma logica" in entrambe le lingue è:

per quale persona *x*, Taroo ha dato i soldi a *x*

"In brief, Chinese-Japanese and English share D-Structure and LF representations (apart from choice of lexical items and other properties such as word order) but differ at S-structure; in Chinese-Japanese S-structure is the same as D-structure, whereas in English S-Structure is the same as LF" (Chomsky 1986: 75).

3. Il "programma minimalista"

a) Il linguaggio e gli altri sistemi biologici

(…) the language faculty is nonredundant, in that particular phenomena are not 'overdetermined' by principles of language" (Chomsky 1995: 168).

(…) we seek to determine just how far the evidence really carries us toward attributing specific structure to the language faculty, requiring that every departure from "perfection" be closely analyzed and well motivated (id.: 9).

Evidently, development of language in the individual must involve three factors: (1) genetic endowment, which sets limits on the attainable languages, thereby making language acquisition possible; (2) external data, converted to the experience that selects one or another language within a narrow range; (3) principles not specific to F[aculty of]L[anguage]. Some of the third factor principles have the flavor of the constraints that enter into all facets of growth and evolution, and that are now being explored intensively in the "evo-devo revolution." Among these are principles of efficient computation, which would be expected to be of particular significance for generative systems such as I-language. Insofar as the third factor can be shown to be operative in the design of FL, explanation can proceed "beyond explanatory adequacy" in the technical sense, raising new questions: not only asking what mechanisms suffice to determine I-language from data available, but why these mechanisms should exist, and whether they are real or just dispensable descriptive technology. The task of accounting for the evolution of language would also be correspondingly eased, for the same reasons that hold for inquiry into evolution generally: the less attributed to genetic information (in our case, the topic of UG) for determining the development of an organism, the more feasible the study of its evolution. (Chomsky 2007: 3-4)

b) I livelli di rappresentazione secondo il programma minimalista

Gli unici livelli necessari sono "a Phonetic Representation that is legible to the sensorimotor systems, and a semantic representation that is legible to conceptual and other systems of thought and action" (Chomsky 2000: 10).

One question is whether there are levels other than the interface levels. Are there levels "internal" to language, in particular the levels of deep and surface structure that have been postulated in modern work? (…) The minimalist program seeks to show that everything that has been accounted for in terms of these

levels has been misdescribed, and is as well or better understood in terms of legibility conditions at the interface (ibid.).

c) Il meccanismo generativo: l'operazione Merge*; External Merge (EM)* e *Internal Merge (IM)*
The simplest such operation takes a pair of syntactic objects (SO_i, SO_j) and replaces them by a new combined syntactic object SO_{ij}. Call this operation Merge. (Chomsky 1995: 226).

A Merge-based system of derivation involves parallel operations. Thus if X and Y are merged, each first has to be constructed by iterated Merge. The process has a loose resemblance to early theories of generalized transformations, abandoned in the early 1960s for good reasons, now resurrected in a far simpler form for better reasons. But a generative system involves no temporal dimension. In this respect, generation of expressions is similar to other recursive processes such as construction of formal proofs. Intuitively, the proof "begins" with axioms and each line is added to earlier lines by rules of inference or additional axioms. But this implies no temporal ordering. It is simply a description of the structural properties of the geometrical object "proof." The actual construction of a proof may well begin with its last line, involve independently generated lemmas, etc. The choice of axioms might come last. The same is true of generation vs production of an expression, a familiar competence-performance distinction. But even if one were to take the intuitive interpretation literally, generation of an expression is not strictly "bottom-up," because of the parallelism of operations. A strict "bottom-up" interpretation is, for example, compatible in principle with the assumption that in performance, the first XP (say a noun phrase) is produced or perceived first, even if later merged into some ultimately embedded expression (as internal or external argument, for example). Or many other assumptions about use of language. (Chomsky 2007: 6)
In addition to Merge applicable without bounds, UG must at least provide atomic elements, lexical items LI, each a structured array of properties (*features*) to which Merge and other operations apply to form expressions. (id.: 6)

Suppose that X and Y are merged (for expository purposes, think of Y as merged to X). Either Y is not part of X (*external Merge*, EM) or Y is part of X (*internal Merge*, IM). In both cases, Merge yields {X, Y}. IM yields two *copies* of Y in {X, Y}, one external to X, one within X. IM is the operation *Move* under the "copy theory of movement," which is the null hypothesis in this framework […]. Unless there is some stipulation to the contrary, which would require sufficient empirical evidence, both kinds of Merge are available for F[aculty of]L[anguage] and IM creates copies. (Chomsky 2008)

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