

## **C-selection and the verb phrase**

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In this talk, I want to zoom in on the conditions governing clause construction and discuss how they impact our notion of a “transformation”. Since Chomsky (1995), it has been common to treat Merge as a feature-checking mechanism, a process by which uninterpretable features on a head get “checked” or “deleted” before a structure is sent to the interfaces. In principle, a feature-driven view of Merge makes no distinction between Merge operations induced by “selection” vs. Merge operations characterized by movement (i.e. there is no formal distinction between internal and external Merge). Despite this fact, Merge and Move operations have often been treated as governed by separate feature sets, which exist on separate lexical items, rather than as two logically possible responses to the same feature set.

Taking inspiration from Longenbaugh (2019) (who in turn takes inspiration from Müller (2010)), I propose that we not do this. Instead, I propose to treat features that induce Merge as properties of functional categories, which may be satisfied either by internal or external Merge, so long as the result satisfies interface requirements. Thus, two different lexical heads may look featurally identical from the perspective of the syntax, but the syntax is flexible enough to generate structures that can satisfy the different interface requirements of each one.

I propose that employing this view of Merge in the domain of verb phrase syntax explains many otherwise elusive properties of verb phrases and their alternations, including 1) the fact that so many languages have some semblance of a dative alternation, 2) the different behaviors of DP and non-DP arguments with respect to passivization and wh-movement.