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on

Language without narrow syntax

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Abstract

In this talk, I will argue that there is no narrow syntax, and that the language faculty merely consists of the semantic and phonological components, and linking between these and other systems. It follows as a logical consequence from the latest works of Chomsky (2007 et seq.) and Hauser et al. (2002) who argue that narrow syntax consists of as few features as possible, ideally only recursive embedding and mapping to the interfaces, and Nordström (2014) who shows that the language faculty cannot involve recursive embedding if one wants it to be able to handle discrete infinity, but must merely be a discrete combinatorial system. As such, it shares features with many other mental processes, such as tool making, and should not be seen as a separate module. The discrete combinatorial processes, as argued here, take place in the semantic and phonological components, which are linked by an axonal pathway. I will further show that other potential features of narrow syntax, namely word order, agreement and case (Pinker and Jackendoff 2005; Chomsky 2000 et seq.) can also perfectly well be located within the semantic and phonological components, dispensing with so-called uninterpretable features and leading to the ultimate conclusion that there is no narrow syntax.