**Languages with less than full syntax**

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The Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff 2002) invites one to consider the possibility of *linear grammars*: languages in which syntax plays little or no role in coordinating phonological structure with meaning. In such languages, words would not have parts of speech, and grammatical relations such as subject and object would not play a role. Rather, linear word order, available in phonological structure, would map directly into combinatorial meaning, through principles such as Agent First and Modified Before Modifier. There would be no grammatical inflection and no function words; morphology (if there were to be any) would be built on semantic principles (object vs. action) rather than syntactic ones (noun vs. verb). Semantic constituency could be mapped to prosodic constituency, but there would be no such thing as syntactic constituency, hence no syntactic recursion. Pragmatics would play a major role in interpreting utterances.

Something very close to linear grammar is attested in Riau Indonesian, and also in a particular stage of acquisition of second languages. Pidgins arguably share many of these characteristics as well. Moreover, some subsystems of English grammar, such as compounding and possibly discourse semantics, are basically governed by linear grammar considerations. Data from ABSL and especially CTSL suggest that emerging sign languages too display many symptoms of linear grammar.

The question then arises of how we can tell when a language “has syntax”, or at least is partly syntactified. I will discuss some possible considerations, in the hope that participants in the workshop can help clarify the issues.