

Without $\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$

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Throughout the history of generative grammar, the categorial information/feature of heads has been considered to be at the heart of the notion ‘projection’ (or ‘label’ in more recent terms). Thus, for example, the categorial information of a head was the (sole) obligatory element in the Phrase Structure rules (e.g. $NP \rightarrow (Det) N (PP)$) and in the X-bar template of the Government and Binding framework (Chomsky 1981), each phrase was understood to be ‘projected’ from the category of its corresponding head. Although the pivotal role of the categorial feature of heads in formation of phrases weakened to some degree in early minimalism (Chomsky 1993, 1995), not only has it been resurfaced in the more recent version of the minimalist framework (Chomsky 2013, 2015) but a novel form of label has also been introduced. One instance of this newly proposed label takes the form of a pair of agreeing φ -features between two heads, i.e. $\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$.

As will be discussed in what follows, however, the label $\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$ poses conceptual, theory-internal problems, especially with respect to its interpretability at the interface. I will thus argue against the proposed label $\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$ and present an alternative analysis where LA seeks only the categorial feature of heads.