

**Taking MP's 'measure'** Norbert Corver (Utrecht University [Norbert.Corver@uu.nl](mailto:Norbert.Corver@uu.nl))

**1. A unified approach to Measure Phrases.** As was first observed in Ross (1964), Measure Phrases (MPs) are found across categories, as in: *an inch of rope* (DP-domain) *two feet long* (AP-domain) *two miles down the road* (PP-domain) and *John weighs sixty kilos* (clausal domain). As is clear from his statement that "[O]ne might hope to be able to derive the MP occurring in these four environments from one basic source" (p.1), Ross advocated a unified approach towards the syntax of MPs. The same position was taken by Jackendoff (1977: 140), who tried to uniformly define MPs in terms of their hierarchical position in X-bar structure ('A *measure phrase* is an N<sup>'''</sup> immediately dominated by X<sup>'''</sup>). This uniform definition of MPs led Jackendoff to the analysis in (1) of pre-head and post-head PP-internal MPs.

(1) a. [PP [P<sup>'''</sup> 3 miles [P<sup>'''</sup> down the road]]] (there is a gas station)

b. [PP [P<sup>'''</sup> [P<sup>'''</sup> down the road] 3 miles]] (there is a gas station)

In this phrase structural analysis, one hierarchical position, viz. the one occupied by MP, can be associated with more than one linear order. From the perspective of Kayne's (1994) LCA, according to which a difference in linear order implies a difference in hierarchical structure, the MPs in (1a) and (1b) must occupy different structural positions.

Notice also the distributional patterns in (2a) and (2b). According to Jackendoff, (2a) represents the base order, and (2b) is derived by rightward movement (and right-adjunction to AP). Again, from the perspective of Kayne's LCA, this treatment of the MP in (2b) is blocked; rightward movement does not exist.

(2) a. John is [AP [DegP [Deg<sup>'''</sup> 2 inches too]] [A<sup>'''</sup> tall]]

b. John is [AP too tall by 2 inches]

**2. MPs as nominal/prepositional predicates.** Adopting Kayne's LCA, I will also take a unified approach towards the syntactic treatment of MPs. More in particular, I will argue for the following: **(I)** MP behaves like a predicate (see also Schwarzschild 2005) and can be input to predicate displacement. Under the assumption that a predicate starts out in a position following its subject (i.e. the constituent predicated over; 'the measuree'), the order 'Measure Phrase – Measuree' is a derived one. **(II)** Besides nominal MPs, there are prepositional ones. Consequently, besides displacement of nominal MPs, there is displacement of prepositional MPs. **(III)** Measure phrase constructions have much in common with possessive constructions, which have also been analyzed in the literature as instances of predicate displacement (cf. Kayne 1994, Den Dikken 1998).

**3. Analysis.** I will show that MPs behave like predicates rather than (referential) arguments. Evidence will come from: (i) the absence of determiners with MPs, (ii) island behavior; (iii) absence of scrambling and parasitic gap licensing. It will subsequently be shown that a nominal construction like *an inch of rope*, which features the MP *an inch*, displays properties similar to that of the *N of N*-construction (e.g. *that idiot of a policeman*), which has been treated in terms of DP-internal predicate displacement (cf. Kayne 1994, Den Dikken 1995). Turning next to PP-internal MPs, I will argue that the MP predicates over the spatial argument role (i.e. *Place* or *Path*) of the preposition (cf. Jackendoff 1990; Zwarts 1992). It will be shown that MPs that modify locative PPs (e.g. *2 meters behind the gate*) are PPs and that MPs that modify directional PPs are NPs (e.g. *2 miles into the woods*). The MP starts out in a position following the measuree (e.g. *down the road 3 miles*) and the order *3 miles down the road* is derived by PP-internal predicate displacement. As for the MPs that go with degree words, I will claim that *2 inches too tall* (2a) is a word order derived by predicate displacement of the MP. An important ingredient in my analysis will be that *too* is not a degree word but simply a preposition. It will, finally, be shown that expressions like *2 meters tall* (and its equivalents in other languages; e.g. Fr. *long de deux metres*; It. *lungo due metri*) have much in common with possessive constructions, which in recent studies have been treated in terms of predicate movement as well.