

## **Some history of historical syntax: the Transparency Principle**

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Work on diachronic syntax proceeds productively when ideas from syntactic theory turn out to yield insights for work on change. Early generative work permitted new approaches to diachronic work and the formulation of a Transparency Principle (Lightfoot 1979) in a context where generative grammar was not compatible with good analyses of language variation. The focus on I-languages from Chomsky 1986 onwards and on competing grammars (Kroch 1989) permitted better approaches to variation and change and rendered the Transparency Principle unnecessary and superfluous, while its positive effects could be captured differently. New emphases within the Minimalist Program also have consequences for work in diachrony.

### **References**

Chomsky, N. 1986. *Knowledge of Language: Its nature, origin and use* (Praeger)

Kroch, A. 1989. 'Reflexes of grammar in patterns of language change.' *Language Variation and Change* 1:199–244 .

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