

## **Doing More with Less UG**

Charles Yang

University of Pennsylvania

A theory of Universal Grammar, which aims to define the limit of human language, can only do so by studying what is permissible and impermissible in specific languages. It is thus possible that some linguistic facts are not due to general structural principles of UG but the result of experience-dependent learning (Chomsky 2005).

In this talk, I suggest that some proposed primitives of Universal Grammar may be instances of theoretical overreach. They are in fact dispensable, as long as the child can learn and discover the linguistic generalizations that these structural principles are designed to account for. Focusing primarily on morphology and its interface with phonology and syntax, I study several long-standing problems such as locality constraints on word formation, lexical gaps, and the dative constructions. The resulting theory of Universal Grammar is simplified but augmented by an independently motivated theory of language learning, one which is rooted in the principle of efficient computation.