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## Abstracts:

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### ANTISYMMETRY AND WORD ORDER IN SERIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Vicki Carstens

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Strict head-final surface order derives from underlying left-headedness in Ijò, a Niger-Congo language of Nigeria. A word order anomaly in Ijò SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS (SVCs) strongly suggests this, and left-to-right asymmetric c-command among internal arguments of SVCs confirms it. The anomaly is universal among surface right-headed languages with SVCs, indicating that deep left-headedness is universal, as antisymmetry theory predicts (Kayne 1994). Assuming complements are in Specs, and that a light verb  $v$  selects every VP (Chomsky 1999), I derive VOVO from OVOV by two instances of V-to- $v$  movement. I argue for a nonuniform approach to SVCs, involving relations of both raising (Campbell 1989) and control (Collins 1997). Other aspects of SVC word order are predictable from a universal thematic hierarchy nontheme > theme, and short scrambling (Takano 1998).

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### A PHONETICALLY DRIVEN ACCOUNT OF SYLLABLE WEIGHT

Matthew Gordon

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The author proposes that syllable weight is driven by considerations of phonetic effectiveness and phonological simplicity, and that the phonetically best distinctions are those which divide syllables into groups that are phonetically most distinct from each other. Phonologically complex distinctions are those which exceed an upper threshold in the number of phonological predicates to which they refer. It is claimed that languages adopt weight distinctions that are phonetically most effective without being overly complex phonologically. Syllable weight thus reflects a compromise between phonetic and phonological factors. The proposed model of weight further suggests that phonological weight distinctions are ultimately predictable from other basic phonological properties, such as syllable structure.

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## FEATURE CLASSES IN PHONOLOGY

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This article argues for a particular understanding of feature class behavior—the recurrent patterning together of certain phonological features, such as place of articulation and laryngeal features. The proposals build on the well-known work of feature geometry in assuming the importance of feature classes in phonology, but differ in that features of a class are targeted directly and individually by constraints (or rules), even when a feature class such as Place is mentioned. Further, constraints mentioning feature classes are gradiently violable. Evidence for this view of feature classes comes from two sources. First, assimilation involving feature classes is sometimes only partially successful; an adequate understanding of such cases requires the proposed view of feature classes. Second, there are broad categories of feature class generalization that require it, including dissimilatory effects usually handled by the obligatory contour principle. Overall, the proposals broaden the explanatory potential of the feature class idea due to feature geometry. At a more general level, the results here suggest that linguistic representations sometimes need to be reconsidered in the context of optimality theory (Prince & Smolensky 1993), since they can effectively function as inviolable constraints and so hinder our understanding of the more subtle kind of phenomena revealed by analyses employing gradiently violable constraints.

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## THE SEMANTICS OF GENDER IN MAYALI: PARTIALLY PARALLEL SYSTEMS AND FORMAL IMPLEMENTATION

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Mayali has four genders and five morphological classes, with formal identity between the gender prefixes and four of the morphological class prefixes. Gender and morphological class are assigned according to different but largely overlapping semantic principles. We analyze these partially overlapping systems within the NETWORK MORPHOLOGY framework; an implemented model demonstrates that the analysis gives the correct forms for the majority of nouns in a basic lexicon, and further extends to understanding assignment in the avoidance register. Our account depends on recognizing two different types of default: NORMAL CASE DEFAULT, the expected outcome in a given domain, and EXCEPTIONAL CASE DEFAULT, the last resort short of full lexical specification.

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