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Abstracts:

THE GEOMETRY OF INTERPRETABLE FEATURES: INFL IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Elizabeth Cowper

University of Toronto

This article proposes a feature-geometric analysis of the interpretable features of Infl, using MINIMALIST syntax and DISTRIBUTED MORPHOLOGY. A small universal set of monovalent interpretable features and a set of entailment relations among them provide the basis for a principled account of the tense systems of English and Spanish. While each feature, each lexical item, and each vocabulary item has a unified representation, surface polysemy is shown to arise from the mappings between them. Crosslinguistic variation is shown to arise from the different features chosen by each language and from the ways in which each language assembles its features into lexical items and vocabulary items. In addition, the presence or absence of a dependent feature F in a given language is shown to have important consequences for the semantic interpretation of the feature dominating F. These three possible differences interact to produce the significant superficial differences between the tense systems of the two languages.

ITERATIVE FOOTING AND PROMINENCE-DRIVEN STRESS IN NANTI (KAMPA)

Megan J. Crowhurst

The University of Texas, Austin

Lev D. Michael

The University of Texas, Austin

In this article we describe and develop an optimality-theoretic (OT) analysis of foot-level (secondary) and word-level (primary) stress in Nanti, a Kampa language of Peru. The distribution of stress in Nanti is sensitive to rhythmic factors, syllable quantity, vowel quality, and to whether a syllable is open or closed. The interaction of these independent variables produces a complex, multigrade stress scale married to an iterative stress system whose default preference is alternating, iambic rhythm. While each of the interacting factors in this system is familiar to phonologists, Nanti is special because the particular combination of influences and factors in Nanti contributes to a complexity of interactions that has not been documented in any other language to date.

ENGLISH VERB-PREPOSITION CONSTRUCTIONS: CONSTITUENCY AND ORDER

Patrick Farrell

University of California, Davis

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the constituent-structure and linear-order properties of English transitive and intransitive V-P constructions involving so-called ‘particles’ (*turn on the lights/the lights on, mess up the song/the song up, shut up, sit down, etc.*). Drawing on both standard and certain new evidence and arguments, it is proposed that V-P constructions generally come in one or both of two varieties: lexical compounds (*mess up* in *mess up the song*) and/or discontinuous verbs, that is, lexemes with more than one piece projected as a word or phrase (*mess ... up* in *mess the song up*), and that the alternation, for those that have both manifestations, reflects different argument structure possibilities for a lexeme with the same overall conceptual semantics. The internal structure of VPs built on V-P lexemes is examined in some detail. The popular ‘small-clause’ approach, according to which the DP of transitive V-P structures is the subject of a phrase that has the P as its predicate, is shown to be problematic, primarily because there in fact exists a true small-clause construction that can have a P as its predicate and the putative small clause of cases like *mess the song up* systematically lacks the defining properties of this construction. The word-order restrictions that the small-clause approach is designed, in part, to account for are shown to follow from a set of independently needed linearization constraints, which are motivated by functional principles.

TWO TYPES OF SYNTACTIC NOUN INCORPORATION: NOUN INCORPORATION IN MAPUDUNGUN AND ITS TYPOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Mark C. Baker

Rutgers University

Roberto Aranovich

University of Pittsburgh

Lucía A. Golluscio

National Council for Scientific and Technological Research, and University of Buenos Aires

NOUN INCORPORATION (NI) in Mapudungun is different from NI in better-studied languages like Mohawk in three ways: the incorporated noun is invisible to verbal agreement, incorporation into unaccusative verbs is impossible unless a possessor is stranded, and possessors are the only modifiers that can be stranded. These differences can be explained by saying that the trace of NI retains its person, number, and gender features in Mohawk but not in Mapudungun. Those aspects of grammar that do not involve these features treat NI in the two languages the same; thus, NI has the same gross distribution and anaphoric possibilities in both languages. We extend these results to Nahuatl, Chukchee, Ainu, Southern Tiwa, Mayali, and Wichita, showing that our theory accounts for Mithun’s (1984) distinction between Type III and Type IV noun incorporation in a general way.*

PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION IN CHILD-DIRECTED SPEECH

Paul Foulkes

University of York

Gerard Docherty

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Dominic Watt

University of Aberdeen

Segmental features of child-directed speech (CDS) were studied in a corpus drawn from thirty-nine mothers living in Tyneside, England. Focus was on the phonetic variants used for (t) in word-medial and word-final prevocalic contexts since it is known that these variants display clear sociolinguistic patterning in the adult community. Variant usage in CDS was found to differ markedly from that in interadult speech. Effects were also found with respect to the age and gender of the children being addressed. Speech to girls generally contained more standard variants than speech to boys, which, by contrast, contained higher rates of vernacular variants. The differentiation by gender was most apparent for the youngest children. The findings are assessed in comparison to other studies of CDS. It has previously been claimed that modifications made in the CDS register help children to learn linguistic structures and also to learn that speech is a social activity. Our findings suggest that CDS may play an additional role, providing boys and girls as young as 2;0 with differential opportunities to learn the social-indexical values of sociolinguistic variables.

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