

**Notions of 'feature' in linguistic theory:
cross-theoretical and cross-linguistic perspectives**

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Although well integrated in linguistics, the concept of feature and its role differs across frameworks and traditions, and many aspects remain controversial; the notion has recently been the focus of renewed attention (Corbett 2012; Kibort & Corbett 2010), and we think there is significant potential in furthering the cross-school understanding of analytic practices pertaining to the notion.

Formally speaking, 'feature' can often be interpreted as 'property' (of a linguistic unit), and 'feature structures' in formal grammars are typically attribute-value matrices, where an 'attribute' indicates a parameter of specification, and a 'value' is the value of the parameter (see Pollard and Sag 1994, Butt et al. 1999, Bresnan 2001, Copestake 2002, on frameworks implementing these notions in large formal grammars).

In recent minimalist theory (Chomsky 2001 and references therein) the notion has been linked to that of "interpretability": the simplest notion of uninterpretable feature is as one which lacks either its attribute or its value (but see Pesetsky & Torrego 2001, 2007 for a different view). Features may interact by forming hierarchies (or feature geometries, to borrow a term from phonology). One thing that mainstream minimalist theory has overlooked, however, is the possibility that certain features may be "deeper", than others. Here several questions arise: one is the possibility that the notion of pleiotropy from genetics may be useful and, perhaps, more than just a useful analogy (Biberauer & Roberts 2015). If this idea is correct, then the question which naturally arises is which the allegedly pleiotropic features are. Nearly all frameworks have some place for notions such as Person, Tense, etc., as they are so cross-linguistically common. Hence one central theme of the workshop will be to compare treatments of these linguistic properties across frameworks, especially if they are seen as linguistically significant features.

In typological research, features have been discussed, in particular, in connection to universality of certain features (cf. universal gram-types in the sense of Bybee & Dahl 1989) and in the context of a more general question as to whether individual categories are universal or language particular (Haspelmath 2010 and Newmeyer 2010 for a response). Interaction of features has been discussed in connection to syntagmatic constraints on feature combinations (Croft 1990; Xrakovskij 1996; Plank & Schellinger 1997; Aikhenvald & Dixon 1998; Malchukov 2011). Another tradition in the study of feature interaction is that of "holistic typology": on this approach, certain features tend to co-occur possibly

leading to holistic language types (cf., e.g., early work by Czech typologists reviewed by Sgall 1985). This strand of work lines up with generative work on parametric variation, following work by Baker (1988, 1996), Huang (2015), Roberts (2012). In view of these various traditions and frameworks, we invite scholars across frameworks to present or discuss projects and research traditions from the viewpoint of the roles that features and feature representations play in them. Papers on issues related to the putatively pleiotropic features Tense, Case and Person are particularly encouraged, likewise presentations of the typological approaches mentioned; papers addressing semantic features are also very welcome. We stress that the workshop topic is formulated intentionally broadly, since one of the goals of the workshop is methodological: to promote a dialogue between typologically minded scholars representing different research traditions.

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