Seminar on Syntax - Morphosyntax
The Syntax of Number

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In the syntactic derivation, number features are typically located in a NumberP that is fairly low in the nominal spine. However, there is a growing and diverse body of research claiming that this cannot be the whole story. Recent work has proposed that number features may or must be located on other projections, such as n, Div(ider) or #. Additionally, it has been proposed that number features may or must be adjoined at either the root, nP or DP level -- and thus they do not form part of the nominal spine itself.

In this seminar, we will take a close-up look at the syntax of number, with the goal of sorting through and making sense of this new array of options. We will focus on the kind of empirical evidence that can be brought to bear on locating number, and students are encouraged to bring their own number-related syntax puzzles. Related topics on the syntax of number that may be covered along the way include double plurals (marking of plurality twice on the same nominal, whether contentfully or not) and the lack of number marking altogether (also known as general number or number neutrality). Throughout, the focus will tend to be on morphology and syntax than on semantics (based on my own interest and expertise), but this orientation is flexible depending on student interest.

GOALS
• Gain a solid understanding of the central proposals and key issues concerning the syntax of number within contemporary (minimalist) syntactic theory
• Become familiar with the central questions asked and progress made in several different empirical areas of research on syntactic number
• Gain skills in reading, summarizing, and discussing linguistic research and in conducting linguistic research on number

REQUIREMENTS
• Journal entries (shameless steal from Dustin). You will be asked to write three “journal entries” throughout the course of the semester. A journal entry is a (maximum) 2-page reaction to the readings for a week, and will be due before the class meets to discuss that reading. You can write about some tension that you see between the readings, some surprising connection or disconnect, or some idea that you have on how to extend one or more of the papers to a new question. In grading the journal entries, I will be looking for evidence of synthesizing ideas from that week’s readings.

• Leading class discussion. You will take the reins during one class session this semester. It’s excellent training for leading your own seminar in the future. You will be assessed on comprehension of the material and preparation to lead critical discussion of it.
• **Final paper.** 15–20 pages, due 5/16 (one week after the last class)
  o The paper will ideally analyze a syntactic number-related phenomenon in a particular language(s). I will consider other types of papers as long as they engage with the themes of the seminar (e.g., a proposed experiment about the syntactic location of number, a paper driven by a burning theoretical question about the syntax of number, rather than a set of data). Treat this as an opportunity to investigate something interesting and to see whether it could pan out in the future into a publication (or even a research agenda).
  o So that you can start working early and receive lots of feedback, there are four components to the final paper:
    ▪ A proposal (due 4/4 at the latest)
    ▪ A rough draft (due 5/2)
    ▪ A class presentation (on 5/9, last day of class)
    ▪ A final draft (due 5/16)
  o The final draft will be worth 25% of your grade, the rough draft 15%, and the proposal and class presentation are each 10%.

• **Read and respond.** Since this is a seminar, you are expected to closely read the assigned papers before class and to participate regularly in the discussion. The papers will be minimally summarized in the class – let’s focus on open issues, unclear claims, the structure of the arguments, the organization and quality of the data, the main consequences and predictions of the proposals.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal entries</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15</td>
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**TENTATIVE LIST OF READINGS** (optional readings in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 1    | 25-Jan | The morphosyntactic typology of number; motivating a functional category | ▪ Corbett 2000: Chapters 1 and 5  
      |      |                                                                      | ▪ Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou 2007: 227-246 |       |
|      |      |                                                                      |                                                                        |       |
      |      |                                                                      | ▪ Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou 2007: 246-281  
<pre><code>  |      |                                                                      | ▪ Carstens 1991: 74-81 |       |
</code></pre>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion Leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8-Feb</td>
<td>Number words and NumP, con.</td>
<td>Aboh 2004: Ch. 3, (Dryer 1989), Li 1999</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>15-Feb</td>
<td>No class (President’s Day)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>22-Feb</td>
<td># and Div</td>
<td>Borer 2005: Chs. 1-2, 4, 6</td>
<td>Yohei leads discussion</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>29-Feb</td>
<td># and Div, con.</td>
<td>Ouwayda 2014: Chs. 1 and 2, Mathieu 2012</td>
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| 6    | 7-Mar | Number on 
| 0    | 14-Mar | No class (Spring Break) | | |
| 7    | 21-Mar | Number on 
lexical plurals edition | Acquaviva 2008: Chs. 1-4, 7, 9 | Maria leads discussion |
| 8    | 28-Mar | Number on 
and elsewhere | Harbour 2011, Mathieu 2014 | |
| 10   | 11-Apr | No NumP at all/general number | Ghomeshi 2003, Déprez 2005, (Kwon and Zribi-Hertz 2004) | |
| 11   | 18-Apr | General number, con. | Paul 2012, Öztürk 2009, (Massam 2001), Wiltschko 2014: Chs. 1 and 3 | Jeff leads discussion |
| 12   | 25-Apr | The markedness of number | Farkas and de Swart 2010, Bale, Gagnon and Khanjian 2011 | |
| 13   | 2-May | The syntax of numerals | Ouwayda 2014: Chapters 3 and 4, Danon 2012 | Rough draft due |
Almost everything here is flexible, subject to your input, my tinkering, or just the direction that the course seems to be headed in.

Potential additional topics:
• the conditioning of number marking by a feature (e.g., animacy)
• the nature of number features (e.g., [DUAL] or [-SINGULAR][-AUGMENTED])?
• associative plurals ([X-PL 'X and his/her associates/friends/family'])
• the syntax of numerals
• collective/distributive syntax
• number as nominal aspect
• Japanese plurals (Hirose 2004, Munakata 2012)
• Nominal and verbal plurality (Collins 2001, Henderson 2013)

[Deleted from schedule: Mass/count and the syntax of number
• Ghomeshi and Massam 2012
• Cowper and Hall 2012
• Alexiadou 2011
• (Gillon 2010)]

BIBLIOGRAPHY


