The logical language of phonological features NECPhon 2020

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- Phonological features in some form are present in almost every modern theory of phonology.
- ▶ It is rare to find a formal definition of phonological features and how they combine (see Bale and Reiss (2018) for one example).
- ▶ What can we learn by using logic to explore feature systems?
- ▶ What are the minimally necessary aspect of features systems that give phonologists what they want out of them?

The goal of this talk is to investigate phonological feature systems in order to better understand their computational properties. Because of this...

- ▶ I will assume features are discrete categories.
- ▶ I will make no claim on whether features are innate or emergent.
- ▶ I will make no claim on how much and/or what type of phonetic substance is found in features.

The origin of distinctive feature theory is traced back to the Prague school (Trubetzkoy, 1939; Jakobson et al., 1951).

- ▶ Based on phonetic properties.
- ▶ Trubetzkoy: features can be privative, gradual, or equipollent.
- ▶ JFH: binary features only.

- ▶ Privative: [voice] vs []
- ▶ Gradual: [height 1], [height 2], ... [height n]
- ▶ equipollent: [labial], [coronal], [dorsal]
- ▶ Binary: [+voice] vs [-voice]

Natural classes can be defined in two ways (Mielke, 2008).

- ▶ A group of sounds in an inventory which share one or more distinctive features, to the exclusion of all other sounds in the inventory.
- A group of sounds in an inventory which may participate in an alternation or static distributional restriction, to the exclusion of all other sounds in the inventory.

The Use of Zeros

Many feature systems include "0" notation to indicate no value for a feature. Below is a sample from Hayes (2011).

	Manner features				rynį atu						I	Plac	e f	eat	ure	s										
		consonantal	sonorant	continuant	delayed release	approximant	tap	trill	nasal	voice	spread gl	constr gl	labial	round	labiodental	coronal	anterior	distributed	strident	lateral	dorsal	high	low	front	back	tense
	p	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
	b	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
bilabial	φ	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
lia	β	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
1	m	+	+	-	0	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
	в	+	+	+	0	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
-	pf	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
labiodental	f	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
ba	v	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
iq	ŋ	+	+	-	0	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
_	υ	-	+	+	0	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
	ţ	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
dental	d	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
den	θ	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
	ð	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0

Interpreting Feature Bundles

Feature matrices are interpreted as the **conjunction** of properties.

 $/n/ = \left[\begin{array}{c} +alveolar \\ +voice \\ +sonorant \\ +continuant \\ +nasal \end{array} \right]$

Disjunction was allowed for triggering environments in SPE (Chomsky and Halle, 1968) using {}.

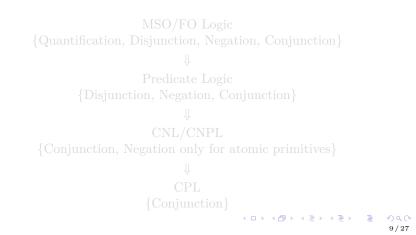
Note!

Arbitrary levels of disjunction allow any subset of segments to be natural classes.

Logical Languages

What does our logic need?

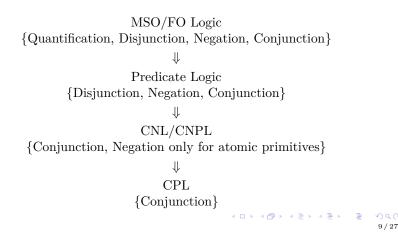
The strategy should be start with the simplest logic and only go to higher levels only if necessary.



Logical Languages

What does our logic need?

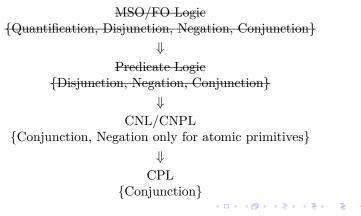
The strategy should be start with the simplest logic and only go to higher levels only if necessary.



Logical Languages

What does our logic need?

The strategy should be start with the simplest logic and only go to higher levels only if necessary.



Conjunction of Positive Literals

- ▶ Base case: For all atoms P, "P" is a sentence.
- ▶ Inductive case: For all sentences $A, B, "A \land B"$ is a sentence.

	Priv	vative	F	ull	Contrastive		
	son	voice	son	voice	son	voice	
Ν	+	+	+	+	+	0	
D	0	+	-	+	-	+	
Т	0	0	-	-	-	-	

Note: this is a slightly altered version of Table 3 in Mayer and Daland (2020).

Given $\Sigma = \{ \texttt{voice}, \texttt{sonorant} \}$, CPL cannot pick out the natural class of voiceless stops required for the constraint *NT. It defaults to the privative feature system.

- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{ sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$

	Privative						
	son	voice					
Ν	+	+					
D	0	+					
T	0	0					

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There are two ways that we can add a "minus" feature value to the logic.

Option 1: Add negation to the logic (CNPL)
Only to base case...adding to inductive case gets us predicate logic.
Option 2: Use bivalent primitives (remain in CPL).
E.g., voice and non-voice are both atomic elements.

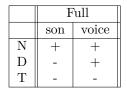
Conjunction of Negative and Positive Literals

- ▶ Base case: For all atoms P, "P" and " $\neg P$ " are sentences.
- ▶ Inductive case: For all sentences $A, B, "A \land B"$ is a sentence.

CNPL and *NT

Given $\Sigma = \{ \text{voice, sonorant} \}$, CNPL can pick out the natural class of voiceless stops required for the constraint *NT.

- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) = \{T\}$
- sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $voice(x) \land sonorant(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ $voice(x) \land \neg sonorant(x) = \{D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{ T \}$
- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg\texttt{voice}(x) = \{\}$
- $\operatorname{sonorant}(x) \land \neg \operatorname{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$



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CNPL and *NT

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- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \quad \neg \texttt{voice}(x) = \{T\}$
- ▶ sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ \neg sonorant $(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{ voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ $voice(x) \land \neg sonorant(x) = \{D\}$
- $\neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$
- $\blacktriangleright | \neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{T\} |$
- $\blacktriangleright \text{ voice}(x) \land \neg \text{voice}(x) = \{\}$
- ▶ $sonorant(x) \land \neg sonorant(x) = \{\}$

	Full						
	son	voice					
Ν	+	+					
D	-	+					
T	-	-					

CNPL and Underspecification

Given $\Sigma = \{ voice, sonorant \}$, and contrastive underspecification for voice, CNPL predicts voiceless stops and nasals to form a natural class.

- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) = \{D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, T\}$
- sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ \neg sonorant $(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $voice(x) \land sonorant(x) = \{\}$
- ▶ $voice(x) \land \neg sonorant(x) = \{D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{ T \}$
- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg\texttt{voice}(x) = \{\}$
- $\operatorname{sonorant}(x) \land \neg \operatorname{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$

	Contrastive					
	son	voice				
Ν	+	0				
D	-	+				
Т	-	-				

CNPL and Underspecification

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$$\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) = \{D\}$$

$$\neg \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, T\}$$

•
$$\texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$$

•
$$\neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{D, T\}$$

•
$$voice(x) \land sonorant(x) = \{$$

•
$$voice(x) \land \neg sonorant(x) = \{D\}$$

•
$$\neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$$

•
$$\neg \texttt{voice}(x) \land \neg \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{T\}$$

•
$$voice(x) \land \neg voice(x) = \{\}$$

• $\texttt{sonorant}(x) \land \neg\texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$

	Contrastive					
	son	voice				
N	+	0				
D	-	+				
T	-	-				

Recall that features like [Labial], [Coronal] and [Dorsal] are argued to be equipollent.

- ▶ In CNPL, if Coronal $\in \Sigma$ then ¬Coronal must exist as a possible natural class.
- ▶ As Yip (1989) argues, this natural class is not found in natural language.
- ▶ This example should make it clear that CNPL effectively makes all features binary.

- CPL with privative primitives cannot directly reference "minus" features such as voicelessness.
- ▶ CNPL can reference "minus" features.
- ▶ CNPL does not treat underspecification properly.
- ▶ CNPL turns every feature into a binary feature.
- ▶ Let's now turn our attention to CPL with bivalent primitives.

- Bivalent primitives encode the traditional idea of binary features without using logical negation.
- ▶ I will use the prefix non- to indicate the negative value of a feature.
- ▶ E.g. voice and non-voice.

CPL with Bivalent Primitives and *NT

Given $\Sigma = \{$ voice, non-voice, sonorant, non-sonorant $\}$, CPL can pick out the natural class of voiceless stops required for the constraint *NT.

- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) = \{N, D\}$
- ▶ non-voice $(x) = \{T\}$
- sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ non-sonorant $(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $voice(x) \land sonorant(x) = \{N\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{non-sonorant}(x) = \{D\}$
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ sonorant(x) = {}
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ non-sonorant(x) = { T }
- ▶ $voice(x) \land non-voice(x) = \{\}$

▶ $sonorant(x) \land non-sonorant(x) = \{\}$

	Full						
	son	voice					
N	+	+					
D	-	+					
T	-	-					

CPL with Bivalent Primitives and *NT

Given $\Sigma = \{ \text{voice, non-voice, sonorant, non-sonorant} \}$, CPL can pick out the natural class of voiceless stops required for the constraint *NT.

- ▶ $voice(x) = \{N, D\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \quad \texttt{non-voice}(x) = \{T\}$
- ▶ sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ non-sonorant $(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{ voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- $voice(x) \land non-sonorant(x) = \{D\}$
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ sonorant(x) = {}
- $\blacktriangleright \quad \texttt{non-voice}(x) \land \texttt{non-sonorant}(x) = \{T\} \$
- $voice(x) \land non-voice(x) = \{\}$

▶ $sonorant(x) \land non-sonorant(x) = \{\}$

	Full						
	son	voice					
Ν	+	+					
D	-	+					
T	-	-					

CPL with Bivalent Primitives and Underspecification

Given $\Sigma = \{$ voice, non-voice, sonorant, non-sonorant $\}$, and contrastive underspecification for voice, CPL does not create any undesirable natural classes.

- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) = \{D\}$
- ▶ non-voice $(x) = \{T\}$
- ▶ sonorant $(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ non-sonorant $(x) = \{D, T\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{\}$
- ▶ $voice(x) \land non-sonorant(x) = \{D\}$
- ▶ non-voice $(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ non-sonorant(x) = { T }
- $voice(x) \land non-voice(x) = \{\}$
- $\texttt{sonorant}(x) \land \texttt{non-sonorant}(x) = \{\}$

	Contrastive					
	son	voice				
Ν	+	0				
D	-	+				
Т	-	-				

CPL with Bivalent Primitives and Underspecification

Given $\Sigma = \{$ voice, non-voice, sonorant, non-sonorant $\}$, and privative underspecification, CPL creates the same natural classes as CPL with monovalent primitives.

- $\blacktriangleright \ \texttt{voice}(x) = \{D, N\}$
- ▶ non-voice $(x) = \{\}$
- ▶ $\mathtt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- ▶ non-sonorant $(x) = \{\}$
- $\blacktriangleright \texttt{ voice}(x) \land \texttt{sonorant}(x) = \{N\}$
- $voice(x) \land non-sonorant(x) = \{\}$
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ sonorant(x) = {}
- ▶ non-voice(x) ∧ non-sonorant(x) = {}
- $voice(x) \land non-voice(x) = \{\}$

• $\texttt{sonorant}(x) \land \texttt{non-sonorant}(x) = \{\}$

	Priv	Privative					
	son	voice					
Ν	+	+					
D	0	+					
Т	0	0					

Let's return to the equipollent features [Labial], [Coronal] and [Dorsal].

- ▶ In CPL, $\texttt{Coronal} \in \Sigma \nrightarrow \texttt{non-Coronal} \in \Sigma$.
- ▶ CPL therefore correctly encodes the idea of equipollency.
- ▶ With CPL, binarity does not emerge from the logical language the same way it does in CNPL.

Summary of CPL with Bivalent Primitives

- ▶ It can account for "minus" feature natural classes.
- ▶ It can account for underspecification without creating unwanted natural classes.
- It allows for flexibility in the type of oppositions that can be encoded (binary, privative, equipollent).

Potential Problems Involving CPL with Bivalent Primitives

- ▶ In CNPL it is impossible for an element to be both voice and \neg voice.
- ▶ What does it mean for an element to be both voice and non-voice?
 - ▶ Do we need to specify that we don't want this through axioms?
- ▶ If features = instructions for phonetic implementation then this might not be a problem.
 - Evidence might come in the form of gesture blending (Zsiga et al., 1995; Honorof, 2000).
 - Mid vowels could be high and non-high where the blended form would be in between the two.

▶ There are two ways to handle minus features.

- Enrich the logic: CNPL.
- ▶ Enrich the representations: bivalent primitives.
- ▶ Both options come with consequences.
 - ▶ CNPL turns every feature into a binary opposition.
 - Bivalent primitives allow elements to have both positive and negative values for a feature.

▶ If we want to have non-binary phonological features, then CPL with bivalent primitives appears to be the way to go.

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