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Life of Phi: Phi-features in West Germanic and the syntax-morphology interface

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Phi-features in West Germanic and the syntax-morphology interface

This thesis investigates aspects of phi-features in non-standard and minority West Germanic languages. Phi-features play a role in several parts of the grammar, and the West Germanic languages display a wealth of variation related to phi-features. Investigating phi-features in West Germanic therefore gives us a unique view on the relationship between the different components of the grammar, in particular syntax and morphology.

Based on new empirical data and generalisations, this thesis presents a novel analysis of three empirical phenomena. First, it analyses position dependent agreement in Dutch dialects as the result of a phi-defective agreement head. Second, it argues that complementiser agreement in Frisian and Limburgian is clitic doubling. Finally, it shows that word order variation in Dutch and German imperatives is the result of morphological variation of verb stems. The analyses provide insight into the representation of phi-features in syntax and morphology, the syntactic and morphological requirements on clitic doubling, and the syntactic consequences of the distribution of phi-features on lexical items.

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