Principles of projection

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Most approaches to labelling assume that Merge does not yield a label itself, and that therefore an additional labeling algorithm needs to determine what the label of a merger is. In this talk, I present a view on merge and labelling, where the label is immediately generated. Instead of focusing on the question why some feature present on a daughter should project, I argue that the real question at stake is why not every feature projects upon Merge. Starting with the assumption that the distribution of every syntactic element is fully determined by the unordered set of its independent (previously known as 'interpretable') and dependent (previously known as 'uninterpretable') formal features, the central claim of my talk is that upon merger every feature on both of the merged elements percolates, unless an independent feature [F] and a dependent feature [uF] stand in a sisterhood relation. Then, neither of these two features percolate. This provides a proper labeling mechanism that can also account for the labeling of adjunction. The proposal further reinstalls c-selection and explains the effects traditionally attributed to abstract case in terms of DP-selection. It also reduces the set of categorial features to a few primitive independent features ([D], [T], [Pred]). In the final part of this paper, it is discussed how this proposal relates to, or even derives, syntactic operations, such as Agree, movement or valuation.