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**ultimate constituent (UC)** A term used in STRUCTURALIST GRAMMATICAL analysis to refer to the irreducible ELEMENTS which are the result of an IMMEDIATE-CONSTITUENT analysis. For example, in the SENTENCE *The girls stopped the bus*, the ultimate constituents would be *the+girl+s+stop+ed+the+bus*.

**ultrafilter (n.)** A term used in abstract algebra, and adapted in GENERALIZED QUANTIFIER THEORY for the set of sets containing some particular individual. Such sets serve in this theory as the DENOTATIONS of PROPER NAMES and similar EXPRESSIONS.

**umlaut (n.)** In HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS and PHILOLOGY, a term describing a SOUND CHANGE in which a sound is influenced by the VOWEL in the following SYLLABLE. An example is Germanic \**gosi*, where the final vowel caused a change of /o:/ to /i:/, resulting in modern English *geese*.

**unaccented (adj.)** see ACCENT (2)

**unacceptable (adj.)** see ACCEPTABILITY

**unaccusative (adj./n.)** A term used, especially in RELATIONAL GRAMMAR, for INTRANSITIVE VERBS whose SUBJECTS originate as OBJECTS. *Break* in *The vase broke* is such a verb, *the vase* being understood in the same way as it is in *John broke the vase*, where it is an object. Unaccusative verbs are also known as ERGATIVE verbs.

**unanalysable (adj.)** see ANALYSABLE

**unary (adj.)** A term used in some approaches to PHONOLOGY (e.g. DEPENDENCY PHONOLOGY, PARTICLE PHONOLOGY), characterizing the view that SEGMENTS can be represented as single elements (e.g. [round], [front]), as opposed to BINARY oppositions. The term is given special status in **unary component theory**.

**unassociated (adj.)** see ASSOCIATION LINE

**unbounded dependency** A term used in some theories of GRAMMAR (such as GENERALIZED PHRASE-STRUCTURE GRAMMAR) to refer to a CONSTRUCTION in which a SYNTACTIC RELATION holds between two CONSTITUENTS such that there is no restriction on the structural distance between them (e.g. a restriction which would require that both be constituents of the same CLAUSE); also called a **long-distance clause**. In English, CLEFT sentences, TOPICALIZATION, *WH*-QUESTIONS and RELATIVE clauses have been proposed as examples of constructions which involve this kind of DEPENDENCY; for instance, a *wh*-constituent may occur at the beginning of a MAIN clause, while the construction with which it is connected may be one, two or more clauses away, as in *What has John done?/What do they think John has done?/What do they think we have said John has done?*, etc. In GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY, unbounded dependencies are analysed in terms of MOVEMENT. In GPSG, use is made of the feature SLASH. The term is increasingly used outside the generative context.

**unchecked** (*adj.*) see CHECKED (1)

**uncontrolled PRO** see CONTROL

**uncountable** (*adj.*) see COUNTABLE

**underextension** (*n.*) A term used in LANGUAGE ACQUISITION studies to refer to one type of relationship between adult and child MEANING, as expressed in LEXICAL ITEMS. In underextension the child's lexical item has a narrower range of APPLICATION than the equivalent term in adult language, e.g. when *cat* is used to refer to only one specific cat.

**underlying** (*adj.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS to refer to an abstract level of REPRESENTATION of a SENTENCE postulated in order to explain the patterns encountered in the empirical DATA of a LANGUAGE. The notion of **underlying representation** (UR) or **underlying forms** is central to GENERATIVE GRAMMAR, where a stage of **underlying structure** is recognized in the DERIVATION of sentences. In early TRANSFORMATIONAL grammar, the **underlying phrase-marker** refers to the STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION of a sentence which is the result of the PHRASE-STRUCTURE rules; this **underlying string** then acts as the input to the transformational rules, which thereby produce 'derived' phrase-markers. Later, the term DEEP STRUCTURE came to be used as a specific conception of underlying structure, in the context of *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, from which SURFACE STRUCTURES are transformationally derived. In GOVERNMENT-BINDING theory, the term D-STRUCTURE is used. The extent to which the various underlying representations of sentences have psychological reality has been and remains controversial.

**underspecification** (*n.*) (1) In recent FEATURE theories of PHONOLOGY, a term characterizing various approaches which see it as desirable that information should be omitted from underlying phonological REPRESENTATIONS. The representations should be minimally specified, or **underspecified**. There is a departure from the concept of 'full' specification present in early GENERATIVE phonology: the view that the output of the phonological COMPONENT must contain fully specified

BINARY feature matrices. Underspecification theory is concerned with the extent to which feature distinctions should appear in a phonological representation, not as a binary choice of [+feature] *v.* [-feature], but as a choice between [+feature] and no MARKING at all. It therefore looks in particular at which feature values are predictable and may thus be left unspecified in a representation without harming the surface form.

The approach is chiefly associated with LEXICAL PHONOLOGY, but there are several underspecification models, which vary over their conceptions of minimality. In **restricted** or **contrastive underspecification**, only REDUNDANT features are lexically unspecified (e.g. in English, VOICING would be specified for OBSTRUENTS, where it is CONTRASTIVE, but not for SONORANTS, where it is redundant). The approach limits the degree of underspecification in lexical forms by omitting only those feature values which are predictable on the basis of universal co-occurrence conditions. No other features may be underspecified. This contrasts with **radical underspecification (RU)**, which allows only one value to be specified in any given context in a representation. Moreover, such specifications are needed only when a rule would otherwise assign the wrong value to a feature. This approach omits from underlying representations not only the feature values which are predictable from co-occurrence conditions but also those which are predictable from context-free markedness statements. Default rules assign unmarked values. Other positions in underspecification theory are also possible, e.g. that the unmarked value is never introduced, so that all features are effectively single-valued (privative).

(2) The term is also used in relation to other LEVELS of language for any model which does not require the specification of all the factors potentially involved in an analysis. In SEMANTICS, for example, there are approaches to FORMALIZATION which do not completely specify all features of logical structure (e.g. in representing SCOPE ambiguities).

**unfooted** (*adj.*) see FOOT

**ungoverned** (*adj.*) see GOVERN (2)

**ungradable** (*adj.*) see GRADABILITY

**ungraded antonyms** see ANTONYMY

**ungrammatical** (*adj.*) see GRAMMATICALITY

**unification** (*n.*) A term used for the central operation within a number of recent GRAMMATICAL theories, which have been termed ‘unification-based approaches to grammar’. Unification is the merging of two DESCRIPTIONS to form a more specific description which is consistent with both. For example, a NOUN in description D1 might be specified for COUNTABILITY but not for CASE, whereas in D2 the same noun might be specified for case but not countability. The two descriptions could then be unified, and any operations which could be carried out on either of the original descriptions could then be performed on the unified description. The approach has advantages for grammatical analysis, in that it allows a grammar to specify CONSTRAINTS on the language without having to

state the order in which the constraints are applied: regardless of the number of unifications it takes to fully specify a category, these unifications can be applied in any order. The approach thus has advantages for computational PARSING, in that it allows a parser to work with partial descriptions, gradually accumulating information about a grammatical category as it deals with different entries in the lexicon.

**unified features** A term used to characterize models of NON-LINEAR PHONOLOGY which integrate CONSONANTAL and VOWEL PLACE features in a single framework. In this approach, for example, LABIAL and CORONAL articulations are brought together into a single coronal TIER. However, consonants and vowels retain their identity, in that place features of consonants are immediately DOMINATED by the consonantal place NODE, and vowels by the vocalic place node. Thus the relation of [labial] in a consonant to C-place defines a different PLANE from that of [labial] in a vowel to V-place.

**uniformitarian principle** The application in HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS and SOCIO-LINGUISTICS of a notion used in history and geology, as a guideline for RECONSTRUCTING LANGUAGE in its social context. The principle advocates that the linguistic forces which cause VARIATION today are similar to those which have operated in the past; it is therefore permissible to apply reasoning based on modern observations to the analysis of earlier states of a language.

**unilateral** (*adj.*) see BILATERAL 2, LATERAL

**uninterruptability** (*n.*) see COHESION, INTERRUPTABILITY

**uniplex network** see NETWORK

**unit** (*n.*) In a general, pre-theoretical sense, this term is often used in LINGUISTICS and PHONETICS to refer to any entity which constitutes the focus of an enquiry. In HALLIDAYAN linguistics, however, the term has a special status, referring to one of the four main CATEGORIES recognized by that theory (the others being STRUCTURE, CLASS and SYSTEM). The unit is the stretch of LANGUAGE that carries grammatical patterns, and within which grammatical choices are made. For example, the unit SENTENCE consists of one or more instances of the unit CLAUSE, and so on (see RANK). In some grammatical descriptions, the term **unit noun** is preferred to COUNTABLE NOUN. See COGNITIVE GRAMMAR.

**unit noun** see UNIT

**universal** (*adj./n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS, and especially in GENERATIVE GRAMMAR, referring to a property claimed to be common for all LANGUAGES, to demonstrate the validity of which is a main goal of linguistic theory. **Universal grammar** (UG) is the term used to identify the main aim of those who hold that the ultimate purpose of linguistics is to specify precisely the possible form of a human grammar – and especially the restrictions on the form such grammars can take. In their broadest sense, then, **language universals** are equivalent to the general design features of human language identified by some linguists under

such headings as DUALITY, CREATIVITY, REFLEXIVENESS and DISPLACEMENT. In this sense, universals provide a theory of the human language faculty – those properties of language which are biologically necessary – which is thought to be an important step in the task of understanding human intellectual capacities.

In the early generative literature, two main types of universal are recognized. **Formal universals** are the necessary conditions which have to be imposed on the construction of grammars in order for them to be able to operate. They include such notions as the number of COMPONENTS, types of RULES, ORDERING conventions (e.g. CYCLES), types of TRANSFORMATIONS, and so on. **Substantive universals**, on the other hand, are the PRIMITIVE elements in a grammar, required for the analysis of linguistic data, e.g. NP, VP, [+grave], [+abstract]. Depending on the COMPONENT of the grammar in which they occur, universals are referred to as ‘PHONOLOGICAL universals’, ‘semantic universals’ (cf. ‘universal SEMANTICS’), ‘SYNTACTIC universals’, etc. Some of these categories may actually be found in every language, but it is not crucial to the notion of substantive universal that they should be. All that is required is that they be constructs which need to be defined by linguistic theory to enable cross-language generalizations to be made, i.e. they are not terms established for the analysis of just one language, but are capable of general application. The **universal base** hypothesis in generative linguistics states that all languages can be generated by using the same set of basic rules – though whether these are seen as rules of the BASE syntactic component or as a set of semantic FORMATION RULES depends on the theory employed (see STANDARD THEORY and GENERATIVE SEMANTICS).

Other types of linguistic universal have been suggested. Quantitative studies have introduced the notion of **statistical universals**, i.e. constants of a statistical kind, such as a ratio of use between different structures. **Implicational universals** are generalized statements of the form ‘if X, then Y’, e.g. if a language has a WORD-ORDER of a certain type, it will also have a VERB structure of a certain type. **Absolute universals** are properties which all languages share; there are no exceptions. **Relative universals** are general tendencies in language; there may be principled exceptions.

**universal grammar** see UNIVERSAL

**universal grinder** see GRINDING

**universal locality condition** see LOCALITY

**universal quantifier** see QUANTIFIER

**universe of discourse** see DISCOURSE

**univocality** (*n.*) see POLYSEMY

**unmarked** (*adj.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS in various senses, to refer to a property of language which is more neutral, common, expected or general than a corresponding property, which is said to be MARKED. Unmarked values in some approaches are also often called ‘default’ values, and can be handled by conditions that a category must meet if it can, but need not meet if it cannot, e.g. the default

value for CASE might be ACCUSATIVE. The current use of the term in CORE grammar should be noted, as should its use in recent PHONOLOGICAL theory (e.g. UNDERSPECIFICATION theory).

**unproductive** (*adj.*) see PRODUCTIVITY

**unrounded** (*adj.*) see ROUNDING

**unstressed** (*adj.*) see STRESS

**unsyllabified** (*adj.*) see STRAY

**untensed** (*adj.*) see TENSED

**unvoiced** (*adj.*) see VOICE (1)

**update semantics** see DYNAMIC (5)

**upward entailing** see ENTAILMENT

**urban dialectology** see DIALECT

**usage** (*n.*) The collective term for the speech and writing habits of a community, especially as they are presented DESCRIPTIVELY with information about preferences for alternative linguistic FORMS. LINGUISTS emphasize the importance of describing the facts of usage as a control on the claims made by GRAMMARS, and contrast this emphasis with the PRESCRIPTIVE attitudes of TRADITIONAL grammar, whose RULES often bore no relationship to what people actually did with their language. The many 'LEVELS of usage' which descriptive investigations encounter can be formally taken into account in several ways, such as by adding **usage labels** (as in dictionary entries, e.g. 'slang', 'nautical'), or by the use of statistical statements about preferences, or (in GENERATIVE contexts) by the notion of VARIABLE rules.

**utterance** (*n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS and PHONETICS to refer to a stretch of speech about which no assumptions have been made in terms of linguistic theory (as opposed to the notion of SENTENCE, which receives its definition from a theory of GRAMMAR). In principle, it is a physically definable, behavioural unit, capable of definition in everyday terms. One commonly used definition refers to a 'stretch of speech preceded and followed by silence or a change of speaker'. But it has proved very difficult to construct a satisfactory definition. The definition just given, for instance, applies equally to a one-word response and a sermon, and attempts have been made to produce a more restricted definition, using such features as PAUSE, RHYTHM, breath patterns, PITCH movement, etc. The analogous term in the study of writing is TEXT. See also CONTEXT.

**uvular** (*adj.*) A term used in the PHONETIC classification of CONSONANT sounds on the basis of their PLACE OF ARTICULATION: it refers to a sound made by the BACK of the tongue against the **uvula**, the fleshy appendage which hangs at the

back of the soft PALATE. The *r* of STANDARD French is uvular, and this quality may be heard in some regional DIALECTS of English, especially in the north-east of England. It is transcribed as [R]. Uvular PLOSIVE consonants are found in Arabic, for example, and are transcribed [q] and [G] for the VOICEless and voiced types respectively. **Uvularization** is a general term referring to any SECONDARY ARTICULATION involving a movement of the back part of the tongue towards the uvula; such sounds are said to be **uvularized**. See also -ISE/-IZE.