An Introduction to English Sentence Structure

This outstanding resource for students offers a step-by-step, practical introduction to English syntax and syntactic principles, as developed by Chomsky over the past 15 years. Assuming little or no prior background in syntax, Andrew Radford outlines the core concepts and how they can be used to describe various aspects of English sentence structure. This is an abridged version of Radford's major new textbook *Analysing English Sentences* (also published by Cambridge University Press), and will be welcomed as a handy introduction to current syntactic theory.

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# Contents

*Preface*  
page viii

## 1 Grammar

1.1 Overview 1  
1.2 Traditional grammar: Categories and functions 1  
1.3 Universal Grammar 11  
1.4 The Language Faculty 15  
1.5 Principles of Universal Grammar 19  
1.6 Parameters 22  
1.7 Parameter-setting 26  
1.8 Summary 30  
1.9 Bibliographical background  
  Workbook section 32  

## 2 Structure

2.1 Overview 39  
2.2 Phrases 39  
2.3 Clauses 44  
2.4 Clauses containing complementisers 49  
2.5 Testing structure 51  
2.6 Structural relations and the syntax of polarity items 58  
2.7 The c-command condition on binding 62  
2.8 Bare phrase structure 64  
2.9 Summary 66  
2.10 Bibliographical background  
  Workbook section 69  

## 3 Null constituents

3.1 Overview 81  
3.2 Null subjects 81  
3.3 Null auxiliaries 86  
3.4 Null T in finite clauses 89  
3.5 Null T in infinitive clauses 94  
3.6 Null C in finite clauses 96  
3.7 Null C in infinitive clauses 101  
3.8 Defective clauses 105  
3.9 Null determiners and quantifiers 108  
3.10 Summary 111
### CONTENTS

3.11 Bibliographical background 113
   Workbook section 114

4 Head movement 120
   4.1 Overview 120
   4.2 T-to-C movement 120
   4.3 Movement as copying and deletion 123
   4.4 V-to-T movement 128
   4.5 Head movement 132
   4.6 Auxiliary Raising 134
   4.7 Another look at negation 137
   4.8 DO-support 140
   4.9 Summary 144
   4.10 Bibliographical background 146
     Workbook section 147

5 Wh-movement 152
   5.1 Overview 152
   5.2 Wh-questions 152
   5.3 Wh-movement as copying and deletion 155
   5.4 Driving wh-movement and auxiliary inversion 161
   5.5 Pied-piping of material in the domain of a wh-word 165
   5.6 Pied-piping of a superordinate preposition 171
   5.7 Long-distance wh-movement 174
   5.8 Multiple wh-questions 182
   5.9 Summary 185
   5.10 Bibliographical background 188
     Workbook section 189

6 A-movement 196
   6.1 Overview 196
   6.2 Subjects in Belfast English 196
   6.3 Idioms 199
   6.4 Argument structure and theta-roles 201
   6.5 Unaccusative predicates 205
   6.6 Passive predicates 211
   6.7 Long-distance passivisation 215
   6.8 Raising 219
   6.9 Comparing raising and control predicates 221
   6.10 Summary 227
   6.11 Bibliographical background 229
      Workbook section 230

7 Agreement, case and A-movement 237
   7.1 Overview 237
   7.2 Agreement 237
   7.3 Feature Valuation 240
   7.4 Uninterpretable features and Feature Deletion 242
7.5 Expletive *it* subjects 246
7.6 Expletive *there* subjects 251
7.7 Agreement and A-movement 258
7.8 EPP and agreement in control infinitives 261
7.9 EPP and person agreement in defective clauses 262
7.10 Defective clauses with expletive subjects 267
7.11 Summary 272
7.12 Bibliographical background 274
   Workbook section 275

8 Split projections 279
  8.1 Overview 279
  8.2 Split CP: Force, Topic and Focus projections 279
  8.3 Split TP: Aspect and Mood projections 287
  8.4 Split VP: Transitive ergative structures 292
  8.5 Split VP: Other transitive structures 298
  8.6 Split VP: Unaccusative structures 304
  8.7 Split VP: Passive and raising structures 310
  8.8 Summary 313
  8.9 Bibliographical background 316
     Workbook section 317

9 Phases 323
  9.1 Overview 323
  9.2 Phases 323
  9.3 Intransitive and defective clauses 327
  9.4 Phases and A-bar movement 330
  9.5 A-bar movement in transitive clauses 334
  9.6 Uninterpretable features and feature inheritance 340
  9.7 Independent probes 346
  9.8 Subject questions 355
  9.9 More on subextraction 359
  9.10 Summary 362
  9.11 Bibliographical background 363
     Workbook section 364

Glossary and list of abbreviations 370
References 410
Index 435
Aims

This book supercedes my *English Syntax* book, published in 2004. Although there is much in common between the two books, it should be noted that this book contains new material and new analyses (particularly in later chapters). It has two main aims. The first is to provide an intensive introduction to recent work in syntactic theory (more particularly to how the *syntactic component* operates within the model of grammar assumed in recent work within the framework of Chomsky’s *Minimalist Program*). The second is to provide a description of a range of phenomena in English syntax, making use of Minimalist concepts and assumptions wherever possible.

Key features

The book is intended to be suitable both for people with only minimal grammatical knowledge, and for those who have already done quite a bit of syntax but want to know something (more) about Minimalism. It is not historicist or comparative in orientation, and does not presuppose knowledge of earlier or alternative models of grammar. It is written in an approachable style, avoiding unnecessary complexity and unexplained jargon. Each chapter contains:

- a core text (divided up into eight sections or so) focusing on a specific topic
- a summary recapitulating the main points in the chapter
- a list of key concepts/principles introduced in the chapter
- a bibliographical section providing extensive references to original source material
- a workbook section containing two different kinds of exercise
- a set of *model answers* accompanying the exercises, together with extensive *helpful hints* designed to eliminate common errors students make and to help students whose native language is not English
- an extensive glossary and integral list of abbreviations

The bibliographical background section often contains references to primary research works which are highly technical in nature, and so it would not be
appropriate for students to tackle them until they have read the whole book: they are intended to provide a useful source of bibliographical information for extended essays or research projects in particular areas, rather than being essential back-up reading: indeed, the exercises in the book are designed in such a way that they can be tackled on the basis of the coursebook material alone. The glossary at the end of the book provides simple illustrations of how key technical terms are used (both theory-specific terms like EPP and traditional terms like subject): technical terms are written in bold print when they are mentioned for the first time in the main text (italics being used for highlighting particular expressions – e.g. a key word appearing in an example sentence). The glossary also contains an integrated list of abbreviations.

The book is intensive and progressive in nature, which means that it starts at an elementary level but gets progressively harder as you delve further into the book. A group of students I taught an earlier version of the book to gave the following degree-of-difficulty score to each chapter on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = very easy to 5 = very hard: ch.1 = 1.7; ch.2 = 2.2; ch.3 = 2.7; ch.4 = 2.9; ch.5 = 3.2; ch.6 = 3.4; ch.7 = 3.7; ch.8 = 4.2; ch.9 = 4.4.

Successive chapters become cumulatively more complex, in that each chapter presupposes material covered in previous chapters as well as introducing new material: hence it is helpful to go back and read material from earlier chapters every so often. In some cases, analyses presented in earlier chapters are subsequently refined or revised in the light of new assumptions made in later chapters.

**Teaching materials**

For teachers adopting the book, I have developed a series of web materials (in the form of Powerpoint transparencies) designed to provide two hours’ worth of teaching material for each chapter. The relevant materials present detailed step-by-step analyses of those exercise examples which have the symbol (w) after them in the coursebook. They can be accessed at www.cambridge.org/radford

**Companion volume**

This book is being produced in parallel with a longer version entitled *Analysing English Sentences: A Minimalist Approach*. In this shorter version, the main text (particularly in the later chapters) is generally about a third shorter than the main text in the longer version (with the exception of chapters 1 and 6). This shorter version is aimed primarily at students whose native language is not English, and who are taking (English) syntax as a minor rather than a major course. The two books have an essentially parallel organisation into chapters and sections (though additional sections, technical discussion and bibliographical references are included in the longer version), and contain much the same exercise material.
In keeping the two books parallel in structure and organisation as far as possible, I am mindful of the comment made in a review of two earlier books which I produced in parallel longer and shorter versions (Radford 1997a and Radford 1997b) that some readers may wish to read the short version of a given chapter first, and then look at the longer version afterwards, and that this is ‘not facilitated’ if there is ‘an annoyingly large number of non-correspondences’ between the two (Ten Hacken 2001, p. 2). Accordingly, I have tried to maximise correspondence between the ‘long’ and ‘short’ versions of these two new books.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my long-suffering wife Khadija (who has had to put up with extended periods of authorial autism) and to her family, who have always spoiled me shamefully (and done their best to indulge my every whim) whenever we visit Morocco.