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978-0-521-73190-4 - An Introduction to English Sentence Structure

Andrew Radford

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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.

ANDREW RADFORD is Professor & Head of the Department of Language and Linguistics at the University of Essex. His recent publications include *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English* (Cambridge, 2004) and *English Syntax: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2004).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521731904

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First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Radford, Andrew.

An introduction to English sentence structure / Andrew Radford.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-51693-8 – ISBN 978-0-521-73190-4 (pbk.) 1. English language – Sentence – Problems, exercises, etc. 2. English language – Syntax – Problems, exercises, etc. 3. English language – Rhetoric – Problems, exercises, etc. 4. English language – Grammar. I. Title.

PE1441.R36 2009

428.2 – dc22 2008040106

ISBN 978-0-521-51693-8 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-73190-4 paperback

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Preface

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.

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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.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Neil Smith (of University College London) for his forbearance in patiently wading through an earlier draft of the manuscript and pointing out some of the imperfections in it, while managing to make his comments challenging and good-humoured at the same time. Thanks also go to my Essex colleague Bob Borsley for helpful comments, and to Michèle Vincent for preparing the index.

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.