

Minimalist Syntax

Exploring the Structure of English

Andrew Radford's latest textbook, *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English*, provides a clear and accessible introduction to current work in syntactic theory, drawing on the key concepts of Chomsky's Minimalist Program. Assuming little or no prior knowledge of syntactic theory, Radford takes students through a diverse range of topics in English syntax – such as categories and features, merger, null constituents, movement, case, split projections and phases – and shows how the 'computational component' works within the minimalist framework. Beginning at an elementary level, the book introduces grammatical concepts and sets out the theoretical foundations of Principles and Parameters and Universal Grammar, before progressing in stages towards more complex phenomena. Each chapter contains a workbook section, in which students are encouraged to make their own analyses of English phrases and sentences through exercises, model answers and 'helpful hints'. There is also an extensive glossary of terms.

Although designed primarily for courses on syntactic theory or English syntax, this book also provides an up-to-date, clear and straightforward introduction to the field.

ANDREW RADFORD is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Essex. He has published six books on syntax with Cambridge University Press: *Italian Syntax* (1977); *Transformational Syntax* (1981); *Transformational Grammar* (1988); *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English* (1997); *Syntax: a Minimalist Introduction* (1997) and *Linguistics: an Introduction* (co-authored with a group of his Essex colleagues, 1999). He has also published a book on *Syntactic Theory and the Acquisition of English Syntax* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990) and numerous articles on syntax and the acquisition of syntax.

Cambridge University Press

052183497X - Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English - Andrew Radford

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE TEXTBOOKS IN LINGUISTICS

General editors: S. R. ANDERSON, J. BRESNAN, B. COMRIE, W. DRESSLER,
C. EWEN, R. HUDDLESTON, R. LASS, D. LIGHTFOOT, J. LYONS,
P. H. MATTHEWS, R. POSNER, S. ROMAINÉ, N. V. SMITH, N. VINCENT

Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English

In this series:

- P. H. MATTHEWS *Morphology* Second edition
 B. COMRIE *Aspect*
 R. M. KEMPSON *Semantic Theory*
 T. BYNON *Historical Linguistics*
 J. ALLWOOD, L.-G. ANDERSON and Ö. DAHL *Logic in Linguistics*
 D. B. FRY *The Physics of Speech*
 R. A. HUDSON *Sociolinguistics* Second edition
 A. J. ELLIOT *Child Language*
 P. H. MATTHEWS *Syntax*
 A. RADFORD *Transformational Syntax*
 L. BAUER *English Word-Formation*
 S. C. LEVINSON *Pragmatics*
 G. BROWN and G. YULE *Discourse Analysis*
 R. HUDDLESTON *Introduction to the Grammar of English*
 R. LASS *Phonology*
 A. COMRIE *Tense*
 W. KLEIN *Second Language Acquisition*
 A. J. WOODS, P. FLETCHER and A. HUGHES *Statistics in Language Studies*
 D. A. CRUSE *Lexical Semantics*
 A. RADFORD *Transformational Grammar*
 M. GARMAN *Psycholinguistics*
 G. G. CORBETT *Gender*
 H. J. GIEGERICH *English Phonology*
 R. CANN *Formal Semantics*
 J. LAVER *Principles of Phonetics*
 F. R. PALMER *Grammatical Roles and Relations*
 M. A. JONES *Foundations of French Syntax*
 A. RADFORD *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: a Minimalist Approach*
 R. D. VAN VALIN, JR, and R. J. LAPOLLA *Syntax: Structure, Meaning and Function*
 A. DURANTI *Linguistic Anthropology*
 A. CRUTTENDEN *Intonation* Second edition
 J. K. CHAMBERS and P. TRUDGILL *Dialectology* Second edition
 C. LYONS *Definiteness*
 R. KAGER *Optimality Theory*
 J. A. HOLM *An Introduction to Pidgins and Creoles*
 C. G. CORBETT *Number*
 C. J. EWEN and H. VAN DER HULST *The Phonological Structure of Words*
 F. R. PALMER *Mood and Modality* Second edition
 B. J. BLAKE *Case* Second edition
 E. GUSSMAN *Phonology: Analysis and Theory*
 M. YIP *Tone*
 W. CROFT *Typology and Universals* Second edition
 F. COULMAS *Writing Systems: an Introduction to their Linguistic Analysis*
 P. J. HOPPER and E. C. TRAUOGOTT *Grammaticalization* Second edition
 L. WHITE *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*
 I. PLAG *Word-Formation in English*
 W. CROFT and A. CRUSE *Cognitive Linguistics*
 A. SIEWIERSKA *Person*
 D. BÜRING *Binding Theory*
 A. RADFORD *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English*

Cambridge University Press

052183497X - Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English - Andrew Radford

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Minimalist Syntax

Exploring the Structure of English

ANDREW RADFORD

University of Essex



Cambridge University Press
 052183497X - Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English - Andrew Radford
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Andrew Radford 2004

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2004

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typefaces Times 10.5/13 pt. and Formata *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Radford, Andrew.

Minimalist syntax: exploring the structure of English / Andrew Radford.

p. cm. – (Cambridge textbooks in linguistics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 83497 X (hardback) – ISBN 0 521 54274 X (paperback)

1. English language – Syntax. 2. Grammar, Comparative and general – Syntax. I. Title.

II. Series.

PE1361.R335 2004

425 – dc22 2003055385

ISBN 0 521 83497 X hardback

ISBN 0 521 54274 X paperback

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
1 Grammar	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Traditional grammar	1
1.3 Universal Grammar	6
1.4 The Language Faculty	10
1.5 Principles of Universal Grammar	13
1.6 Parameters	16
1.7 Parameter-setting	21
1.8 Evidence used to set parameters	23
1.9 Summary	25
Workbook section	26
2 Words	33
2.1 Overview	33
2.2 Grammatical categories	33
2.3 Categorising words	38
2.4 Functional categories	40
2.5 Determiners and quantifiers	41
2.6 Pronouns	44
2.7 Auxiliaries	47
2.8 Infinitival <i>to</i>	49
2.9 Complementisers	52
2.10 Labelled bracketing	57
2.11 Grammatical features	58
2.12 Summary	60
Workbook section	62
3 Structure	66
3.1 Overview	66
3.2 Phrases	66
3.3 Clauses	71
3.4 Specifiers	76
3.5 Intermediate and maximal projections	80
3.6 Testing structure	84
3.7 Syntactic relations	90
3.8 Bare phrase structure	94

viii	Contents	
	3.9 Summary	96
	Workbook section	98
	4 Null constituents	106
	4.1 Overview	106
	4.2 Null subjects	106
	4.3 Null auxiliaries	111
	4.4 Null T in auxiliaryless finite clauses	115
	4.5 Null T in bare infinitive clauses	121
	4.6 Null C in finite clauses	124
	4.7 Null C in non-finite clauses	128
	4.8 Defective clauses	131
	4.9 Case properties of subjects	134
	4.10 Null determiners	140
	4.11 Summary	145
	Workbook section	146
	5 Head movement	151
	5.1 Overview	151
	5.2 T-to-C movement	151
	5.3 Movement as copying and deletion	154
	5.4 V-to-T movement	158
	5.5 Head movement	162
	5.6 Auxiliary raising	166
	5.7 Another look at negation	170
	5.8 DO-support	173
	5.9 Head movement in nominals	178
	5.10 Summary	181
	Workbook section	183
	6 Wh-movement	188
	6.1 Overview	188
	6.2 Wh-questions	188
	6.3 Wh-movement as a copying operation	190
	6.4 Wh-movement, EPP and the Attract Closest Principle	197
	6.5 Explaining what moves where	202
	6.6 Wh-subject questions	206
	6.7 Pied-piping	211
	6.8 Yes–no questions	220
	6.9 Wh-exclamatives	222
	6.10 Relative clauses	223
	6.11 <i>That</i> -relatives	228
	6.12 Summary	234
	Workbook section	236
	7 A-movement	241
	7.1 Overview	241
	7.2 Subjects in Belfast English	241

	Contents	ix
7.3	Quotatives and idioms	244
7.4	Argument structure	248
7.5	Thematic roles	250
7.6	Unaccusative predicates	254
7.7	Passive predicates	260
7.8	Long-distance passivisation	264
7.9	Raising	266
7.10	Comparing raising and control predicates	268
7.11	Summary	274
	Workbook section	276
8	Agreement, case and movement	281
8.1	Overview	281
8.2	Agreement	281
8.3	Feature valuation	284
8.4	Uninterpretable features and feature-deletion	287
8.5	Expletive <i>it</i> subjects	291
8.6	Expletive <i>there</i> subjects	298
8.7	Agreement and A-movement	307
8.8	EPP in control infinitives	309
8.9	EPP in other infinitives	313
8.10	Summary	322
	Workbook section	323
9	Split projections	327
9.1	Overview	327
9.2	Split CP: Force, Topic and Focus projections	327
9.3	Split CP: Finiteness projection	332
9.4	Split VPs: VP shells in ergative structures	336
9.5	VP shells in resultative, double-object and object-control structures	344
9.6	VP shells in transitive, unergative, unaccusative, raising and locative inversion structures	348
9.7	Transitive light verbs and accusative case assignment	356
9.8	Evidence for a further projection in transitive verb phrases	362
9.9	Extending the shell analysis to nominals	367
9.10	Summary	372
	Workbook section	374
10	Phases	381
10.1	Overview	381
10.2	Phases	381
10.3	Intransitive and defective clauses	385
10.4	Wh-movement through spec-CP	388
10.5	Wh-movement through spec-vP in transitive clauses	391
10.6	Evidence for successive-cyclic wh-movement through spec-CP	394

x	Contents	
	10.7 Evidence for wh-movement through spec-vP in transitive clauses	401
	10.8 The role of phases in lexical selection	407
	10.9 Questions about phases	409
	10.10 The nature of A-bar movement	419
	10.11 Summary	426
	Workbook section	427
	<i>Glossary</i>	432
	<i>References</i>	485
	<i>Index</i>	498

Preface

Aims

This book has two main aims, reflected in its title and subtitle. The first is to provide an intensive introduction to recent work in syntactic theory (more particularly to how the *computational 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. The book can be seen as a successor to (or updated version of) my (1997a) book *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English*. There is quite a lot of duplication of material between the earlier book and this one (particularly in the first few chapters), though the present book also contains substantial new material (e.g. on agreement, case, split projections and phases), and the analysis of many phenomena presented in this book differs from that in its predecessor (agreement being handled in terms of a *feature-matching* rather than a *feature-checking* framework, for example).

Key features

The book is intended to be suitable both for people with only minimal grammatical knowledge, and for people 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 hence does not presuppose knowledge of earlier or alternative models of grammar. It is written in an approachable style, avoiding unnecessary complexity. I've taught earlier versions of the book to more than 200 students over the past three years, and greatly benefited from their mutterings and mystification, as well as their assignments (which told me a lot about what they didn't understand, and about what I needed to explain more carefully). I've worked through (and refined) the exercise material with the students, and the *helpful hints* which the exercises contain have been developed in order to try and eliminate some of the commonest errors students make. The book is intensive and progressive in nature, which means that it starts at an elementary level but gets progressively harder as you get further into it. A group of students I taught

an earlier version of the book to give the following mean degree-of-difficulty score to each chapter on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *very easy* to 5 = *very hard*: chapter 1 = 1.6; chapter 2 = 1.8; chapter 3 = 2.2; chapter 4 = 2.7; chapter 5 = 2.9; chapter 6 = 3.2; chapter 7 = 3.4; chapter 8 = 3.7; chapter 9 = 4.2; chapter 10 = 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.

Organisation

Each of the ten chapters in the book contains a detailed text discussion of a particular topic (divided into sections to facilitate reading), together with an integral *workbook section* at the end of the chapter, containing exercise material (to be done as classwork or homework) with *model answers* and *helpful hints* provided. Although the book contains numerous references to (often highly technical) primary research works, the exercises are designed in such a way that they can be tackled on the basis of the coursebook material alone. The book also includes an extensive *glossary* which 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 in the main text (*italics* being used for highlighting particular expressions – e.g. a key word appearing in an example sentence). The glossary contains entries for key technical terms in syntax which are used in a number of different places in the text (though not for terms which appear in only one part of the main text, and which are glossed in the text where they appear). The glossary also includes an integrated list of *abbreviations*.

Companion volume

This book is being published in parallel with an abridged version entitled *English Syntax: an Introduction*. In this longer version of the text, the main text (particularly in the later chapters) is generally 30–50 per cent longer than the main text in the abridged version. This longer version is aimed primarily at students with (near-) native command of English who are taking syntax as a major rather than a minor course. The two books have an essentially parallel organisation into chapters and sections (though additional sections and technical discussion have been added in this longer version), and contain much the same exercise material (though with exercise material based on additional sections

of text included in the longer version). 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,b) 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 by an annoyingly large number of non-correspondences' (Ten Hacken 2001, p. 2). Accordingly, I have tried to maximise correspondence between the 'long' and 'short' versions of these two new books.

Acknowledgments

Particular thanks are due to three brave Musketeers (Hajime Hattori, Cris Lozano and Peter Evans) for shooting down some of the more inane parts of an earlier draft of the book when they had it inflicted on them as students. I'd also like to thank Cambridge University Press's series editor (Neil Smith) for patiently wading through and commenting on two drafts of the longer version and one of the shorter one, and managing to make his comments challenging and good-humoured at the same time. Thanks also go to Bob Borsley and Martin Atkinson for helpful thoughts on particular issues. And above all to my wife Khadija, for putting up with extended periods of authorial autism during the gestation period for the book.

Dedication

This book (like my 1981 *Transformational Syntax* book) is dedicated to Joe Cremona, who sadly died shortly before it went to press. Joe was my tutor at Cambridge for three of my undergraduate courses (History of Italian, History of Romanian, Vulgar Latin and Romance Philology). As I wrote in the preface to my 1981 book, Joe 'did more than anyone to awaken my interest in language, and to persuade me that just maybe linguistic theory wasn't quite as pointless as it seemed at the time' (when linguistics seemed to most students to be designed solely to inflict taxonomic torture on them). Thanks for everything, Joe – you will be sorely missed by the many people you helped go on to successful academic careers.