The Syntax of Welsh

Welsh, like the other Celtic languages, is best-known amongst linguists for its verb-initial word order and use of initial consonantal mutations. However it has many more characteristics which are of interest to syntacticians. This book provides a concise, yet comprehensive and accessible overview of the major syntactic phenomena of Welsh. The authors cover a broad variety of topics, including finite and infinitival clauses, noun phrases, agreement and tense, word order, clause structure, dialect variation, and the historical background of the language. Contemporary colloquial Welsh serves as the main source of data and, where appropriate, is complemented by data from contemporary literary forms of the language. Data from Middle and Early Modern Welsh are also discussed. In each chapter, the authors first present a theory-neutral description of the data and then go on to examine theoretical analyses within Principles & Parameters theory and Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar. The results shed new light not only on the syntax of Welsh but also on the merits of the respective theoretical frameworks. An engaging guide to everything that is interesting about Welsh syntax, this book will be welcomed by theoretical syntacticians, typologists, historical linguists and Celticists alike.

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Responding to the increasing interest in comparative syntax, the goal of the Cambridge Syntax Guides is to make available to all linguists major findings, both descriptive and theoretical, which have emerged from the study of particular languages. The series is not committed to working in any particular framework, but rather seeks to make language-specific research available to theoreticians and practitioners of all persuasions.

Written by leading figures in the field, these guides will each include an overview of the grammatical structures of the language concerned. For the descriptivist, the books will provide an accessible introduction to the methods and results of the theoretical literature; for the theoretician, they will show how constructions that have achieved theoretical notoriety fit into the structure of the language as a whole; for everyone, they will promote cross-theoretical and cross-linguistic comparison with respect to a well-defined body of data.

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P. Rowlett: The Syntax of French
The Syntax of Welsh

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Er cof am Lewis Davies
1924–2006
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Preface

Welsh has received a fraction of the attention from linguists that has been lavished on English and some other languages. However, it has been the object of generative research since the 1970s, and there is now a large and diverse body of generative research on Welsh syntax, assuming a number of different theoretical frameworks, and dealing with both synchronic and diachronic matters. In this book we outline what modern syntactic theory has said or can say about Welsh syntax and consider the kinds of issues which data from Welsh raise for syntactic theory. The book is not a reference grammar and we make no attempt to provide a completely comprehensive coverage of Welsh syntax. However, we consider a wide range of topics, and hope that we have dealt with most issues that syntacticians are likely to be interested in.

We draw extensively on the published literature, but we also go beyond it in various ways, offering both updated proposals and new analyses. Our work owes a great intellectual debt in particular to one of the pioneering works on Welsh syntax, Jones & Thomas (1977). Thirty years ago, that book tackled many of the important syntactic issues of the day from a generative standpoint. Since this is also one of our main aims, we feel that the current work has something in common with that earlier work; it may also in some sense stand as a replacement for it, since Jones & Thomas (1977) is now unfortunately out of print.

We hope that the book will be accessible in large part both to specialists in syntactic theory who are not familiar with Welsh (or any other Celtic language) and to specialists in Welsh who are not familiar with syntactic theory. Much of the book is concerned to provide a relatively theory-neutral description of Welsh syntax, but we also present more theoretically oriented treatments drawing on Principles and Parameters theory (P&P) and Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG). The three authors differ in their theoretical preferences, and we do not assume that any one framework has a monopoly of wisdom. We have tried to steer a neutral path when no particular theoretical issues are at stake. For instance, we typically refer to ‘noun phrase’ rather than NP or DP.
We have not attempted to produce a broadly uniform set of chapters. Different issues arise in different areas, and different areas have seen different amounts and different kinds of theoretical work. Every chapter has had extensive input from all three authors. However, with the exception of chapter 1 (‘Introduction’), all the chapters had one primary author as follows: Borsley was primarily responsible for chapter 2 (‘Simple finite clauses’), chapter 6 (‘More on agreement’) and chapter 8 (‘More on verbal syntax’), Tallerman for chapter 3 (‘Infinitival clauses’), chapter 7 (‘Syntax and mutation’) and chapter 10 (‘Welsh as a VSO language’), and Willis for chapter 4 (‘Wh-constructions’), chapter 5 (‘Noun phrases’) and chapter 9 (‘Historical syntax’).

Various people have helped the authors during the preparation of this work. We would like to extend our gratitude to Ian Roberts and Louisa Sadler for their careful reading of the draft manuscript and for their thought-provoking comments. Much of the material presented here was tested on Maggie Tallerman’s Cross-Linguistic Syntax class at Durham in 2005; we are grateful for helpful comments from class members. We are also extremely grateful for the assistance we have received from the following data consultants: Emyr Davies, Lewis Davies, Bob Morris Jones and Heather Williams. Dr Lewis Davies spent most of his working life teaching and researching in Biological Sciences at the University of Durham; he was an eminent entomologist with a keen interest in all the natural sciences, amongst which he was happy to include linguistics. Sadly, Lewis died while this book was in its final stages of preparation. His loss, both as a long-standing friend and as an ardent supporter of everything concerning Welsh language and society, will be greatly felt. This book is dedicated in his memory in recognition of his contribution to the natural sciences and his unstinting help as a data consultant over the course of many years.
# Abbreviations

## List of glosses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>absolute verb form (in Celtic examples); absolutive case (in examples from other languages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFF</td>
<td>(on a pronoun) affixed form; (alone) affirmative particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COND</td>
<td>conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONJ</td>
<td>conjunctive pronoun</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORREL</td>
<td>correlative particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEP</td>
<td>dependent form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUAL</td>
<td>dual number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>equative adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>focus marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>feminine singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>adjective form unmarked for gender or number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENN</td>
<td>genitive–noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPER</td>
<td>imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPERS</td>
<td>impersonal form of verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPF</td>
<td>imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>independent pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>infinitive (verb-noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>interrogative particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>masculine singular</td>
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>neuter singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGEN</td>
<td>noun–genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>nominative case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUM</td>
<td>numerative form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART</td>
<td>participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST</td>
<td>past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASTPART</td>
<td>past participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERF</td>
<td>perfect marker or verb</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLUPERF</td>
<td>pluperfect</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRED</td>
<td>predicate marker</td>
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<td>PRES</td>
<td>present</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRET</td>
<td>preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro</td>
<td>null argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>progressive marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>verbal particle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>question tag particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUOT</td>
<td>quotative particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDUP</td>
<td>reduplicated pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>relative (wh) form of verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRONG</td>
<td>strong (independent) form of pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJ</td>
<td>subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERL</td>
<td>superlative adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>trace (of movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person [object]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S etc.</td>
<td>third-person singular</td>
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## Other abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Adjective Phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asp</td>
<td>Aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AspP</td>
<td>Aspect Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux</td>
<td>auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Branching Direction Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Complementizer Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOM</td>
<td>direct object mutation (except in chapter 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Determiner Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Exceptional Case Marking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIC</td>
<td>Early Immediate Constituents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMW</td>
<td>Early Modern Welsh</td>
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<tr>
<td>FocP</td>
<td>Focus Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ForceP</td>
<td>Force Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPSG</td>
<td>Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Inflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Inflectional Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFG</td>
<td>Lexical Functional Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Middle Breton</td>
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<tr>
<td>ModW</td>
<td>Modern Welsh</td>
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<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>Middle Welsh</td>
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<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Noun Phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>NomP</td>
<td>Nominalizer Phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>OW</td>
<td>Old Welsh</td>
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<tr>
<td>P&amp;P</td>
<td>Principles and Parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PerfP</td>
<td>Perfect Phrase</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Progressive Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QP</td>
<td>Quantifier Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>soft mutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spec</td>
<td>Specifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td>Tense Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>verb-initial</td>
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<td>verb-second</td>
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<tr>
<td>VoiceP</td>
<td>Voice Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vP</td>
<td>light verb Phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Verb Phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
<td>any phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPTH</td>
<td>XP trigger hypothesis</td>
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