

## Clause Structure

Clause Structure is the most widely studied phenomenon within syntactic theory, because it refers to how words and phrases are embedded within a sentence, their relationships to each other within a sentence, and, ultimately, how sentences are layered and represented in the human brain. This volume presents a clear and up-to-date overview of the Minimalist Program, synthesizes the most important research findings, and explores the major shifts in generative syntax. As an accessible topic book, it includes chapters on framework, the clause in general, and the semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic layers. Designed for graduate students and researchers interested in syntactic theory, this book includes a range of examples taken from acquisition, typology, and language change, alongside discussion questions, helpful suggestions for further reading, and a useful glossary.

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# Clause Structure

ELLY VAN GELDEREN



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
 978-1-107-01774-0 — Clause Structure  
 Elly van Gelderen  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107017740](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107017740)

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First published 2013  
 Reprinted 2013

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

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data*  
 Gelderen, Elly van.

Clause structure / Elly van Gelderen.  
 pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.  
 ISBN 978-1-107-01774-0

1. Grammar, Comparative and general – Clauses. 2. Grammar, Comparative and general – Syntax. 3. Principles and parameters (Linguistics) I. Title.

P297.G44 2013

415–dc23 2013013922

ISBN 978-1-107-01774-0 Hardback  
 ISBN 978-1-107-65981-0 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at [www.cambridge.org/9781107017740](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107017740)

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## Preface

This book has as its basis the question of how a syntactic derivation is built: top-to-bottom, i.e. representational, or bottom-to-top, i.e. projectionist. Representative sides of this debate are the Cartographic approach, as in Cinque (1999), and the bare phrase structure approach, as in Chomsky (1995). In much literature, these two approaches are assumed to be compatible, but this compatibility is not spelled out. The book is organized Cartographically, i.e. the three layers are examined in great detail, but the underlying message is general cognitive factors should be responsible for the ordering of the phrases in the layers.

Another issue that has caused a lot of debate is whether the argument structure is projected from the verb and then mapped to the syntax, as in e.g. Reinhart (2002), or imposed by the environment of a vP-shell, as in e.g. Borer (2005a, b). In either approach, the issue of how to order the arguments is again crucial: the Thematic Hierarchy and the Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH) take care of this in the projectionist approach; the ordering is Cartographic in the constructionist approach.

Features are central in the Minimalist Program. How are they acquired, are they bundled, and do they project? I discuss various aspects of features and hope that I contribute to a clearer analysis of the TMA features connected with affix-hop. I argue that, unlike in the case of phi-features in English, tense, mood, and aspect features are interpretable on the verb once verb is joined with a certain suffix. It is thus the *-ing* that has interpretable aspect, the infinitive that has irrealis, and the *-ed* that has anterior or passive meaning. This provides a more consistent picture of how interpretable and uninterpretable features are used in connection with C, T, ASP, and M.

I have added facts from the history of generative linguistics in many of my discussions. I think it is important to see that some problems remain problems, e.g. the ditransitive construction, affix-hop, and the representation of the imperative, and also to be able to read older work. Chapter 1 discusses a lot of this history. It explains the underlying philosophy of Generative Grammar, namely to not only be descriptively adequate but to be explanatorily adequate. In recent

years, the emphasis has shifted to asking the “why” question, i.e. beyond explanatory adequacy or why the rules are the way they are.

From teaching “baby” syntax, I know that sometimes basic terms such as complement, adverbial, and modifier are not always concrete for students. They have heard the terms but don’t know how to use them. The distinction between function in the sentence and name of the phrase is also something that needs consolidating. That’s why I have added Chapter 2 as a review of more traditional terminology and how concepts from traditional grammar are relevant to Generative Grammar. I have also added an analysis of relative clauses since it enables me to touch on a number of issues, such as islands and the Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA). Sometimes, I discuss the same topic in two separate chapters but from a slightly different perspective. The grammatical subject is such a topic. It is relevant to defining the clause (Chapter 2), the semantic roles (Chapter 3), and case and agreement (Chapter 4). This leads to some repetition but also to consolidation (I hope).

For practical reasons, the book will focus on the clause in the English language. Where relevant (e.g. to explain AGRs and AGRO and the various topic positions), I add data from other languages, but this cannot be comprehensive. Chapters 2 to 6 have short sections that discuss a few areas where languages vary. Each chapter is also followed by a set of keywords, discussion points, and suggestions for further reading. Please note that important topics new to the discussion of a chapter are in **bold** type. Since this is more of a textbook than a monograph, I use the pronoun “we” to include the reader in the activities and sometimes “I” when it is more something I personally suggest. I have tried to indicate the major innovators, e.g. the various scholars that came up with the split VP, TP, and CP, but there is so much common knowledge that it is often hard to track the first person to argue a particular point or term. My main contribution is to focus on the various layers and, within the three main layers, to focus on the features and their acquisition, and on asking how we get the ordering that we do.

I occasionally make use of authentic corpus examples for a variety of reasons: (a) It makes the examples more interesting for the reader, and, (b), where variation among native speakers occurs, it provides evidence that at least some speakers use the construction. The main corpora used are Mark Davies’ *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC). I also use the *World Atlas of Linguistic Structure* (WALS) database, mainly to provide cross-linguistic

*Preface*

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comparisons. The corpora and WALS are easy to use in case students want to check a construction, so I need not provide a guide to them.

The audiences for this book that I have in mind are advanced students (taking a second or third generative syntax class) and colleagues. I have tried to make the issues accessible for anyone with a basic knowledge of generative/Minimalist syntax. I therefore assume a familiarity with generative syntax and Minimalism which Radford (2009), Carnie (2007), Adger (2007), or other syntax textbooks supply. I also assume basic linguistic concepts and will consider as grammatical prescriptively incorrect English, e.g. split infinitives, stranded prepositions, and object *who*, without further comment.

Thanks very much to Werner Abraham, for emphasizing the syntactic importance of information structure so many years ago, to Terje Lohndal for many suggestions, references, and for using several chapters in a seminar, to Hui-Ling Yang and Mohammed Al-Rashed for numerous references and data, to the ASU Syntax Reading group for suggestions and support for a number of years, namely Mohammed Al-Rashed, Mariana Bahtchevanova, James Berry, Carrie Gillon, Daniela Kostadinovska, William Kruger, Robert LaBarge, Claire Renaud, Uthairat Rogers, Olena Tsurska, Anne Walton-Ramírez, Jing Xia, Hui-Ling Yang, and Yidan Xu. I tried out this book in an advanced syntax class (with Naomi, Anne, Daniela, Lin, Qin, Sadique, Robert, Eleonore, Dawn, Carolyn, Tatiana, Amanda, Annette, Youmie, and Bethany) and am grateful to the students in that class. Thanks also to two anonymous referees, Johanna Wood, Marijana Marelj, Jay Myers, David Medeiros, Christina Sarigiannidou, Chris Jackson, Gnanadevi Rajasundaram, and Helen Barton, whose visit in 2009 prompted this book. Jan Koster was the first (as far as I know) to point out clearly that there is a real mismatch between Cartography on the one hand and Merge-only Minimalism on the other, so many thanks to Jan.

## Abbreviations

A	Agent; also used to abbreviate “Answer”
ABS	Absolutive
ACC	Accusative
Adv	Adverb or adverbial, depending on the name or the function
AGR	Agreement
AGRo	Agreement with the object
AGRoP	Agreement with the object Phrase
AGRs	Agreement with the subject
AGRsP	Agreement with the subject Phrase
ASP	Aspect Phrase
AUX	Auxiliary
BNC	<i>British National Corpus</i> , with references cited using the BNC codes
BP	before present
c	Causer, used for theta-role features
C	Complementizer
C-I	Conceptual-Intentional
CL	Classifier in gloss
COCA	<i>Corpus of Contemporary American English</i> ( <a href="http://corpus2.byu.edu/coca">http://corpus2.byu.edu/coca</a> )
CP	Complementizer Phrase
CSE	<i>Corpus of Spoken, Professional American-English</i> ( <a href="http://www.athel.com/cspatg.html">www.athel.com/cspatg.html</a> )
D	Determiner
DEF	Definite
DP	Determiner Phrase
dur	durative features
EA	External Argument
ECM	Exceptional Case Marking
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
ERG	Ergative
Exp	Expletive

*List of Abbreviations*

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F	Generic Functional Category; future in gloss; feminine in gloss, e.g. FP feminine plural
Fin	Fin(ite) Phrase
FOC	Focus
fut	interpretable future features
FUT	future in gloss
G	Goal (theta-role)
GEN	Genitive
H	Head
HT	Hanging Topic
I	Inflection
i-	interpretable feature, e.g. [i-fut] is interpretable future, [i-past] is interpretable past, and [i-pres] is interpretable present
IMPF	Imperfective in gloss
ind	indicative
INFL	Inflection
Int	Interrogative
IP	Inflection Phrase
irr	irrealis
LCA	Linear Correspondence Axiom
LDT	Left Dislocated Topic
LF	Logical Form
m	mental, used for theta-role features
M	Mood
MP	Mood Phrase
Neg	Negation
NMZ	Nominalizer in gloss
NOM	Nominative
NPI	Negative Polarity Item
Num	Used as a functional category for Number
obj	an uninterpretable feature, indicating the case relationship between a transitive verb and its object
OBL	Oblique
OCC	Occurrence, alternative term for EPP
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
P	Preposition; plural in gloss
PART	Particle
pf	perfective
PF	Phonetic Form

PHON	Interface from the Narrow Syntax to the Sensorimotor system
PRO	empty subject argument of a non-finite verb
pro	empty subject argument of a finite verb
Ps	Used as a functional category for Person and as a feature
PST	Past in gloss
Q	Question particle in the gloss; and used to abbreviate “Question”
RelT	Relative tense; used for the perfect in English
S	Sentence (now TP); singular in gloss
SEM	interface from the Narrow Syntax to the Conceptual-Intentional system
S-M	Sensorimotor
Spec	Specifier
STAT	Stative
SUBJ	subjunctive
SV	Subject Verb order
SVO	Subject Verb Object
T	Tense
Th	Theme
TMA	Tense, Mood, Aspect Marking in the clause
Top	Topic
TP	Tense Phrase
u-	uninterpretable features, e.g. [u-T] is uninterpretable tense in T; also used on nouns for case checking
UTAH	Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis
v	light verb
V2	Verb-second
VP	Verb Phrase
vP	small VP
VPISH	VP Internal Subject Hypothesis
VS	Verb Subject order
WALS	<i>World Atlas of Language Structures</i> (wals.info)
*	ungrammatical, or repeatable more than once
#	pragmatically ill-formed when in front of a sentence; also the number feature
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person