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Syntactic chains

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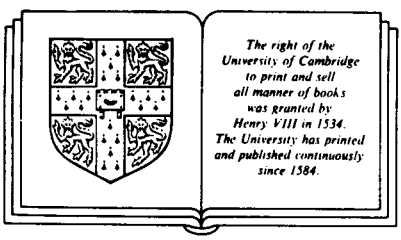

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This book is dedicated to
Etta Weissberger
and
to my parents

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Preface

Twenty years ago, perhaps even fifteen years ago, one might arguably have claimed that a new study in generative grammar could be read and understood by an intelligent layman with no more than a rudimentary background in linguistics. Though some may lament those days, it is now the case that theoretically oriented work in generative grammar reflects the recent history of the field in a much more integral way, both with regard to the sense in which most new proposals extend or react to others already in the literature, and with respect to the increasing explanatory force of the deep principles which have been evoked to motivate a wide range of the syntactic analyses developed over the last twenty-five years. These changes, while they reflect an impressive amount of progress, have inevitably led to a greater degree of complexity in current linguistic argumentation, and some interested scholars may very well feel a certain bewilderment with regard to debates that even five or six years ago seemed more familiar.

The central proposal of this study involves the basic relations in terms of which many central grammatical principles, some of them proposed quite recently, are expressed. Consequently, the complexity of argumentation I have just alluded to will be immediately apparent, and those not familiar with recent developments in generative grammar may find themselves on not so familiar ground. With these considerations in mind, I have provided some general theoretical background to the central principles involved to make this book as accessible as possible. What is helpful to some may, however, be too familiar to others, and so most discussion of the general theoretical framework is confined to the first chapter. The second chapter, though it begins in the same introductory vein, gradually comes to focus on the central issues I address. Scholars familiar with recent work may choose to skim Chapter 1 and go on to Chapter 2.

As evidence that the field is moving quickly, I have included an Epilog (Chapter 8) which reassesses some of the proposals made in the body of this work in light of some developments that have come about since the first

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version of this manuscript was circulated, although many of these issues are also lightly addressed in notes throughout the text.

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