CAMBRIDGE TEXTBOOKS IN LINGUISTICS


INTRODUCTION TO THE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH
INTRODUCTION
TO THE GRAMMAR
OF ENGLISH

RODNEY HUDDLESTON

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
For Cheryll
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PREFACE

This book is written primarily for students of linguistics in universities and other tertiary institutions. It assumes no previous knowledge of linguistics: the first three chapters introduce the theoretical concepts and methodological principles needed to follow the later descriptive chapters. I have likewise made minimal assumptions about the reader’s familiarity with ‘traditional grammar’ – all terms borrowed from the traditional repertoire, such as ‘noun’, ‘transitive verb’, ‘relative clause’, and so on, are fully explained. Although the book covers a fair amount of the grammar, it is not simply a short grammar of English, inasmuch as it devotes a good deal of attention to the problem of justifying the analysis proposed (where, for example, it differs from the traditional analysis) or of choosing between alternative analyses – it is in this sense that it is directed towards the student of linguistics. It does not, however, attempt to formalise the grammar: it is not ‘generative’ – and it is not written within the framework or model of any particular contemporary school of linguistics such as ‘transformational grammar’, ‘systemic grammar’, ‘functional grammar’ or the like. It follows, rather, a ‘structural’ approach, in a very broad understanding of that term, one where the grammatical categories postulated derive from a study of the combinational and contrastive relationships the words and other forms enter into. The aim is to give a reasonably careful and precise account of major areas of English grammar that will provide a foundation for more advanced work in theoretical linguistics.

For practical reasons I have confined my attention to Standard English; there is, of course, a good deal of regional variation within Standard English: I have drawn attention to such variation in a number of places but have not attempted to give a systematic description of it. Also for practical reasons I have been highly selective in the references given at the end of each chapter under the heading ‘Further reading’: I have very often mentioned only relatively recent works, but the reader who follows up these references will of course generally find there details of earlier works on the topics concerned.

I would like to express my gratitude to Frank Palmer, of the Editorial Board, for his support, advice and comments on draft chapters. A number
Preface

of other friends and colleagues were good enough to give their time to read all or part of the book in draft form: my thanks are due to Barry Blake, Bob Cochrane, Peter Collins, Bob Dixon, Dick Hudson, Steve Johnson, Hank Kylstra, David Lee, Jeff Pittam and Neil Smith for their comments on particular chapters, and especially to Peter Matthews, Bernard Comrie, Sidney Greenbaum and Graham Mallinson for numerous constructive suggestions on the whole book at various stages of writing – but they are not of course to blame for the weaknesses that remain. I would also like to thank Deborah McNeill for the marvellous job she made of typing a long and complex manuscript – and for her stoicism in the face of repeated and often massive revision. Finally my greatest debt is to my wife Cherryl; much of the book has been written at weekends: I thank her for putting up with the long period of neglect that this has necessitated, and for her constant support and encouragement.
TABLE OF SYMBOLS AND NOTATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Bold face italics indicate lexemes (see 1.1).

Ordinary italics are used for citing sentences, words and other forms (in orthographic representation).

Underlined italics indicate location of sentence stress in cited examples.

/ / obliques enclose phonological representations of forms.

/ oblique is used to abbreviate examples: He can/will go is an abbreviation of He can go and He will go.

( ) parentheses enclose optional elements: He spent the money (that) you gave him indicates that the that may be present, He spent the money that you gave him, or absent, He spent the money you gave him.

[] square brackets enclose relevant context for an example: [Nobody] I know [thinks that] represents the form I know considered as occurring in the context ‘Nobody _____ thinks that’.

⟨ ⟩ angle brackets enclose letters representing different speakers: ⟨A⟩ What are you doing? – ⟨B⟩ Reading the paper cites an exchange where What are you doing? is uttered by one speaker, Reading the paper by another.

* asterisk indicates that what follows is ungrammatical – at least in the construal under consideration.

? indicates that the grammaticality (or, if followed by *, the ungrammaticality) of what follows is questionable.

† indicates a hypothetical form from which some actual form is transformationally derived (see 1.4).

Subscripts distinguish different words or lexemes (bottle\textsubscript{N} vs bottle\textsubscript{v}); superscript descriptive terms distinguish different uses of a single word or lexeme (what\textsuperscript{interrogative} vs what\textsuperscript{relative}), while superscript numerals distinguish lexical homonyms (bat\textsuperscript{1} vs bat\textsuperscript{2}) – see 3.2.
Symbols and notational conventions

Roman small capitals are used for emphasis.

Roman bold face is used for important technical terms when explained.

‘ ’ single quotation marks are used for quotations and as ‘scare quotes’, e.g. for technical terms not yet explained.

“ ” double quotation marks are used to represent meanings.

{ } braces are used within double quotation marks to indicate semantic constituent structure.

The following abbreviations are used for syntactic classes, functions and other categories:

- **A** adjunct
- **Adj** adjective
- **AdjP** adjective phrase
- **Adv** adverb
- **AdvP** adverb phrase
- **Art** article
- **Aux** auxiliary verb
- **C** complement
- **Comp** complement
- **Detnr** determiner
- **Detve** determinative
- **EVP** extended verb phrase
- **Mod** modal auxiliary
- **MV** main verb
- **N** noun
- **NP** noun phrase
- **O** object
- **O<sub>d</sub>** direct object
- **O<sub>i</sub>** indirect object
- **P** predicative complement
- **PC** predicative complement
- **PC<sub>o</sub>** objective predicative complement
- **PC<sub>i</sub>** subjective predicative complement
- **pers** person
- **pl** plural
- **PossP** possessive phrase
- **Prep** preposition
- **S** subject
- **sg** singular
- **V** verb
- **VP** verb phrase

Phonological symbols:

Consonant phonemes:

- /p/ as in *pie*
- /t/ as in *tie*
- /θ/ as in *thigh*
- /n/ as in *no*
- /d/ as in *die*
- /ð/ as in *th* (thigh)
- /l/ as in *lie*
- /k/ as in *car*
- /s/ as in *see*
- /r/ as in *row*
- /g/ as in *go*
- /z/ as in *zoo*
- /j/ as in *you*
- /ʃ/ as in *chew*
- /ʃ/ as in *shy*
- /w/ as in *we*
- /ʤ/ as in *jaw*
- /ŋ/ as in *high*
- /ʃ/ as in *few*
- /m/ as in *my*
Symbols and notational conventions

Vowel phonemes

/ɪt/ as in peat    /ʌ/ as in put    /æ/ as in paired
/ɪ/     pit    /əʊ/   pole    /ʊ/   poor
/e/   pet    /æt/  pile    /ə/   sofa
/æ/     pat    /əʊ/  pout

' precedes accented syllable in the word, as in 'photo, a'fraid.

↓ indicates intonation with falling terminal, ↑ with rising terminal