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Analyzing Grammar

Analyzing Grammar is a clear introductory textbook on grammatical analysis, designed for students beginning to study the discipline. Covering both syntax (the structure of phrases and sentences) and morphology (the structure of words), it equips them with the tools and methods needed to analyze grammatical patterns in any language. Students are shown how to use standard notational devices such as Phrase Structure trees and word-formation rules, as well as prose descriptions, and are encouraged to practice using these tools through a diverse range of problem sets and exercises. Emphasis is placed on comparing the different grammatical systems of the world's languages. Topics covered include word order, constituency, case, agreement, tense, gender, pronoun systems, inflection, derivation, argument structure, and Grammatical Relations, and a useful glossary provides a clear explanation of each term.

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For Sarah, Ruth, and Katie

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Preface and acknowledgments

This book provides a general introduction to morphology (the structure of words) and syntax (the structure of phrases and sentences). By "general" I mean that it is not specifically a book about the grammar of English, or of any other particular language. Rather, it provides a foundation for analyzing and describing the grammatical structure of any human language. Of course, because the book is written in English it uses English examples to illustrate a number of points, especially in the area of syntax; but examples from many other languages are discussed as well.

The book is written for beginners, assuming only some prior knowledge of the most basic vocabulary for talking about language. It is intended to be usable as a first step in preparing students to carry out fieldwork on underdescribed languages. For this reason some topics are included which are not normally addressed in an introductory course, including the typology of case and agreement systems, gender systems, pronoun systems, and a brief introduction to the semantics of tense, aspect, and modality. This is not a book about linguistic field methods, but issues of methodology are addressed in various places. The overall goal is to help students write good descriptive grammars. Some basic formal notations are introduced, but equal emphasis is given to prose description of linguistic structures.

In this book I am chiefly concerned with structural issues, but I do not attempt to teach a specific theory of grammatical structure. My basic assumptions about how human grammars work are those of Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG; see Bresnan 2001 and references cited there), but I have adopted a fairly generic approach which will hopefully be usable by teachers from a wide variety of theoretical backgrounds. For the sake of simplicity, I have adopted some analyses which are different from the standard LFG approach, e.g. the treatment of "pro-drop" in chapter 5. The main features of the book which are distinctive to LFG are the well-formedness conditions outlined in chapter 5 and the inventory of Grammatical Relations (including OBL_θ and XCOMP).

It is somewhat unusual for a single textbook to deal with both morphology and syntax. In adopting this broad approach, the present work follows and builds on a tradition of grammar teaching at various training schools of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Earlier work in this tradition includes Pike and Pike (1982); Elson and Pickett (1988); Thomas et al. (1988);

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Healey (1990a); Bickford (1998); and Payne (2002, MS). Bickford's book, in particular, has had a major influence on this one in terms of scope and organization, and in a number of specific details cited in the text.

Teaching morphology is much easier if the students have some basic background in phonology. For this reason, most of the chapters dealing with morphology are clustered at the end of the book (chapters 13–17), for the benefit of students who are concurrently taking a first course in phonology. In situations where this is not a factor, those chapters could be taught earlier, though some of the exercises assume material taught in previous chapters. Chapters 3–5 are a tightly knit unit and should be taught in that order; with the other chapters, the ordering is probably less crucial. Chapters 9 (Tense, Aspect, and Modality systems) and 17 (clitics) are relatively independent of the rest of the book, and could probably be taught wherever the instructor wants to fit them in.

The contents of this book can be presented in a standard semester-length course. However, this material is intended to be reinforced by having students work through large numbers of data analysis exercises. Many teachers have found the exercises to be the most important part of the course. In addition, it is very helpful to assign a longer exercise as a final project, to give students some practice at writing up and integrating their analyses of various aspects of the grammar of a single language. (A sample of such an exercise, using Swahili data, is included as an appendix at the end of the book.) For most beginning students, extra tutorial hours or "lab sessions" will be needed to complete all of these components in one semester.

Some data exercises are included at the end of each chapter, except chapter 1. Those labelled "Practice exercises" are suitable for classroom discussion; the others can be used for either homework or tutorial sessions. Model answers for some of these exercises are available from the author. For most chapters, additional exercises are suggested from two source books: Merrifield et al. (1987) and Healey (1990b). Of course, similar exercises are available from many other sources as well, and instructors should feel free to mix and match as desired. The discussion in the text does not generally depend on the students having worked any specific exercise, except for exercise 3A(ii) at the end of chapter 3, which is referred to several times.

(A new edition of the Merrifield volume was published in 2003; it contains the same exercises as the 1987 edition with some orthographic changes. A few of the data sets have been re-numbered, but there is a table at the beginning of the 2003 edition listing the changes in numbering. Numbers cited in the present book refer to the 1987 edition.)

So many people have helped me with this project that I cannot list all of their names. Special thanks must go to Joan Bresnan, René van den Berg, Dick Watson, Bill Merrifield, John Roberts, and Marlin Leaders for their contributions. To all of the others, I offer my thanks with apologies for not naming them individually. Thanks also to my students in Singapore,

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Darwin, and Dallas who have pushed me to clarify many issues with their insightful questions and suggestions, and to my long-suffering family for their encouragement and support.

The copyright for data exercises that I have cited from Merrifield et al. (1987); Roberts (1999); Healey (1990b); and Bendor-Samuel and Levinsohn (1986) is held by SIL International; these exercises are used here by permission, with thanks.

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Abbreviations

–	affix boundary
=	clitic boundary
[ ]	constituent boundaries
*	ungrammatical
#	semantically ill-formed or inappropriate in context
?	marginal or questionable
%	acceptable to some speakers
(X)	optional constituent
*(X)	obligatory constituent
Ø	null (silent) morpheme
1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
A	transitive agent; Actor
A(DJ)	adjective
ABIL	abilitative mood
ABL	ablative case
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ACT	active voice
ADV	adverb
ADVBL	adverbializer
ADVRS	adversative
AGR	agreement
agt	agent
AP	Adjective Phrase
APPL(IC)	applicative
ASP	aspect
ASSOC	associative
AUX	auxiliary
BEN	benefactive
C	consonant
CAT	syntactic category
CAUS	causative
CLASS	classifier

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COMIT	comitative (accompaniment)
COMP	complementizer
CONCESS	concessive
CONJ	conjunction
CONT	continuous
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DEB	debitive (must/ought)
DESID	desiderative
DET	determiner
DIR	directional
DIRECT	direct knowledge (eye-witness)
DU(AL)	dual
DUB	dubitative
DV	dative voice (Tagalog)
ERG	ergative
EVID	evidential
EX(CL)	exclusive
EXIST	existential
F(EM)	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future tense
GEN	genitive
GR	Grammatical Relation
HIST.PAST	historic past
HORT	hortative
IMPER	imperative
IMPERF	imperfective
IN(CL)	inclusive
INAN	inanimate
INDIRECT	indirect knowledge (hearsay)
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
INTERROG	interrogative
IO	indirect object
IRR	irrealis
IV	instrumental voice (Tagalog)
LNK	linker
LOC	locative
M(ASC)	masculine
N	Noun
N′ / N̄	N-bar (see Glossary)
NEG	negative
N(EUT)	neuter

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NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NONPAST	nonpast tense
NP	Noun Phrase
OBJ	primary object
O(BJ).AGR	object agreement
OBJ_2	secondary object
OBL	oblique argument
OPT	optative
OV	objective voice (Tagalog)
P	(1) preposition; (2) transitive patient
PASS	passive
PAST	past tense
pat	patient
PERF	perfect
PERM	permissive
PERS	personal name
PFV	perfective
pl / PL / p	plural
POSS	possessor
PP	Prepositional Phrase
PRE	prefix
PRED	predicate
PRES	present tense
pro/PRO	pronoun (possibly null)
PROG	progressive
PRT	particle
PS	Phrase Structure
Q(UES)	question
QUOT	quote marker
REC(IP)	recipient
REC.PAST	recent past tense
RECIP	reciprocal
REDUP	reduplication
REL	relativizer
REPORT	reportative
S	(1) sentence or clause; (2) intransitive subject
S′ / $\bar{S}$	S-bar (see Glossary)
SBJNCT	subjunctive
sg /SG / s	singular
STAT	stative
S(UBJ)	subject
S(UBJ).AGR	subject agreement
SUBORD	subordinate

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TAM	Tense-Aspect-Modality
th	theme
TNS	tense
TODAY	today past
V	(1) verb; (2) vowel
VP	Verb Phrase
WFR	Word Formation Rule
WH	Wh- question marker
X*	a sequence of zero or more Xs (X is any unit)
XCOMP	predicate complement
XP	phrase of any category
YNQ	Yes–No question

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