## Contents

**Preface**  
page vii

**Acknowledgments**  
xiii

1 an adventure in ambiguity with *one fish two fish*  
1.1 How an 8-word title can have many interpretations  
1.2 Syntax and punctuation  
Coda  
2  
2.1 Syntactic structure in coordinate constructions  
2.2 Ambiguities with multiple coordination  
Coda  
3 Introduction to Language and Linguistics  
3.1 Ambiguity in the interpretation of conjuncts  
3.2 What a language is: the lexicon  
3.2.1 The mental lexicon  
3.2.2 Some structure in the mental lexicon  
3.3 What a language is: the computational procedure  
3.4 What is language?  
3.5 What is linguistics?  
3.5.1 A puzzle in linguistics: the syntactic structure of coordination  
3.6 On the use and misuse of *and*  
Coda  
4 a review of a book by two philosophers  
4.1 The syntactic structure of complex noun phrases  
4.1.1 The syntax of prepositional phrase modifiers  
4.1.2 From prepositional phrase to clausal modifiers  
4.2 The syntactic analysis of (relative) clauses  
4.2.1 Syntactic variation in relative clauses  
4.3 Infinitival clauses  
4.3.1 Ending a relative clause with a preposition  
4.4 Mental grammar vs. prescriptive rules  
4.4.1 The stranded preposition mistake  
4.4.2 The split infinitive mistake  
4.4.3 *that* vs. *which*: restrictive vs. nonrestrictive relative clauses  
Coda  

© in this web service Cambridge University Press  
www.cambridge.org
## Table of Contents

### 5 Bob is certain to succeed.
- 5.1 The structure and interpretation of infinitival clauses: displacement 94
- 5.2 The displacement of clauses 98
- 5.3 Displacement and passive voice 102
- 5.4 Displacement inside noun phrases 104
- 5.5 On the utility of displacement 110
  - 5.5.1 Criticism of the passive voice: a brief history 111
  - 5.5.2 The role of displacement in discourse 125
- 5.6 The structure of paragraphs 128
  - 5.6.1 Making paragraphs worse 131
  - Coda 134

### 6 It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.
- 6.1 The artistry of sentence structure: an interlude with Jane Austen 139

### 7 Does every politician who cheats instinctively lie?
- 7.1 Adverb interpretation (again): hierarchical structure vs. linear order 148
- 7.2 Displacement in questions 153
- 7.3 The syntactic structure of questions 156
- 7.4 wh-displacement in other constructions 161
  - Coda 170

### 8 Inferior defenses could then, as now, be tackled, as Vernon did at Porto Bello, Exmouth at Algiers, & Seymour at Alexandria.
- 8.1 Fowler’s analysis 174
- 8.2 A syntactic analysis of ellipsis
  - 8.2.1 as Vernon did at Porto Bello 178
  - 8.2.2 Exmouth at Algiers, & Seymour at Alexandria 183
  - Coda 189
- Concluding comment 191

### Glossary
- 192

### References
- 197

### Index
- 200