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## UNIVERSAL SEMANTIC SYNTAX

Volume 160

Syntactic theory has been dominated in the last decades by theories that disregard semantics in their approach to syntax. Presenting a truly semantic approach to syntax, this book takes as its primary starting point the idea that syntax deals with the relations between meanings expressed by form-meaning elements and that the same types of relations can be found cross-linguistically. The theory provides a way to formalize the syntactic relations between meanings so that each fragment of grammar can be analysed in a clear-cut way. A comprehensive introduction into the theoretical concepts of the theory is provided, with analyses of numerous examples in English and various other languages, European and non-European, to illustrate the concepts. The theory discussed will enable linguists to look for similarities between languages, while at the same time acknowledging important language-specific features.

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*Universal Semantic Syntax*

# UNIVERSAL SEMANTIC SYNTAX

A SEMIOTACTIC APPROACH

Volume 160

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*Leiden University*

HETTY GEERDINK-VERKOREN

*Leiden University*



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Exact definitions for each meaning can only be given after a detailed study of a great number of instances. This aspect of the analysis will never be reducible to the application of rules. Semantic description is not a mechanical affair; the only possible approach is one based on trial and error.

Ebeling (1978: 244)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. L. Ebeling (1924–2017).

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## *Abbreviations*

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ABS	absolutive case
ACC	accusative case
ADD	added information
ADV	adverbial case
AST	assertive particle
BNC	British National Corpus
COMP	comparative
COMPL	completion
COND	conditional
CONN	connective
CONTR	contrast
DAT	dative case
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
EMPH	emphatic
ERG	ergative case
EXCL	exclamative
F	feminine
GEN	genitive case
HYP	hypothetic
IC	immediate constituent
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfective
INC	incomplete
INDEF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental case
M	masculine
MUT	mutually
N	neutral

xiv *List of Abbreviations*

NO	none (zero)
NOM	nominative case
NON	negation
NONTHE	indefinite article
NP	noun phrase
PA	past tense
PF	perfective
PL	plural
POL	polite (Japanese)
PP	past participle
PR	present tense
PRED	predicative
PROGR	progressive
REL	relative case
RNC	Russian National Corpus
Q	question
SE	set expression
SG	(verb) singular (in glosses)
SING	singular
SOV	subject-object-verb
SVO	subject-verb-object
THE	definite article
TOP	topic