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Analysing English Sentences

Second Edition

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Analysing English Sentences, 2nd Edition

Andrew Radford has acquired an unrivalled reputation over the past thirty years for writing syntax textbooks in which difficult concepts are clearly explained without the excessive use of technical jargon. *Analysing English Sentences* continues in this tradition, offering a well-structured introduction to English syntax and contemporary syntactic theory which is supported throughout with learning aids such as summaries, lists of key hypotheses and principles, extensive references, handy hints and exercises. Instructors will also benefit from the book's free online resources, which include PowerPoint slides of each chapter's key points and analyses of exercise material, as well as an answer key for all the in-book exercises.

This second edition has been thoroughly revised and updated throughout, and includes additional exercises, as well as an entirely new chapter on exclamative and relative clauses. Assuming no prior knowledge of grammar, this is an approachable introduction to the subject for undergraduate and graduate students.

ANDREW RADFORD is an emeritus professor at the University of Essex. He has written a number of popular textbooks, including *Transformational Syntax* (1981) and *Minimalist Syntax* (2004), and has co-authored two introductions to linguistics.

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Preface

Overview

This book has grown out of a substantial reworking of my *Analysing English Sentences* book published by Cambridge University Press in 2009, which itself was a reworking of my *Minimalist Syntax* book published in 2004. Feedback from teachers, students and reviewers led me to make substantial changes to numerous parts of the text and exercises, and to add new chapters, exercises and references: details of the most substantial revisions are given below. This new book has three main aims. The first is to provide an intensive introduction to key background assumptions in syntactic theory, to how the *syntactic component* of a grammar works, and to the argumentation and critical evaluation skills which underlie contemporary work in syntax. The second is to provide a description of a range of phenomena in English syntax, making use of the theoretical concepts and constructs introduced in the book. The third is (through the extensive exercise material in the book) to enable readers to gain experience in devising analyses of specific phenomena, and in critically evaluating the theoretical and descriptive strengths and weaknesses of competing analyses.

Key features

The book is intended to be suitable for people with little (if any) grammatical knowledge and/or experience of linguistics; it is aimed at intermediate undergraduates, or graduates in the first year of a Masters programme. It is not historicist or comparative in orientation and does not presuppose knowledge of earlier or alternative models of grammar. It is written in an approachable style, avoiding unnecessary complexity and unexplained jargon. Each chapter contains

- a core text (divided up into ten sections or so) focusing on a specific topic
- a summary recapitulating the main points in the chapter
- a list of key concepts/principles introduced in the chapter
- a bibliographical section providing extensive references to original source material
- a workbook section containing two (or more) different kinds of exercise

- a set of model answers accompanying the exercises, together with extensive helpful hints designed to eliminate common errors students make and to help students whose native language is not English
- an extensive glossary and integral list of abbreviations.

The bibliographical background section often contains references to primary research works which are highly technical in nature, and so it would not be appropriate for students to tackle them until they have read the whole book: they are intended to provide a useful source of bibliographical information for extended essays or research projects in particular areas, rather than being essential back-up reading: indeed, the exercises in the book are designed in such a way that they can be tackled on the basis of the coursebook material alone. The Glossary at the end of the book provides guidance on how key technical terms are used (both theory-specific terms like **EPP** and traditional terms like **subject**): technical terms are written in **bold** print when they are mentioned for the first time in any given chapter (*italics* and underlining being used for highlighting particular expressions – e.g. a key word appearing in an example sentence). The Glossary also contains an integrated list of abbreviations.

The book is intensive and progressive in nature, which means that it starts at an elementary level but gets progressively harder as you delve further into the book. Successive chapters become cumulatively more complex, in that each chapter presupposes material covered in previous chapters as well as introducing new material: hence, it is helpful to go back and read material from earlier chapters every so often. In some cases, analyses presented in earlier chapters are subsequently refined or revised in the light of new assumptions made in later chapters.

Differences from *Analysing English Sentences* (2009) and *Minimalist Syntax* (2004)

There are five main differences between the new book and its 2009 and/or 2004 predecessors. One is that the new book has restored and updated the chapter (= Ch. 2) on grammatical categories and features that appeared in the 2004 book but was omitted in the 2009 one, because teachers felt this is useful for students with little or no previous background in linguistics. A second difference is that the present book includes substantial new (text and exercise) material which compares, contrasts and evaluates alternative analyses of specific phenomena (e.g. a range of different analyses of relative clauses in the text and exercise material in Chapter 7): this is in response to a criticism that there wasn't enough evaluation of alternative analyses in the earlier books. A third difference is that there is more explicit formulation of the key hypotheses and principles which guide the discussion throughout the book, and this is designed to give a greater continuity and cohesion between chapters. A fourth difference is that the material from the 2004 and 2009 books is being divided into two separate volumes (*intermediate* and *advanced*): the first (= this one) is intended as an

intermediate introduction to syntax, and the second (= to be published at a later date) is intended as a follow-up book covering more advanced topics. This is in response to comments from teachers and students that there simply wasn't enough time in a one-term or one-semester course to cover anything like all the material in my 2009 book. (I will never forget one student telling me that she had studied my book in three different universities in three different countries, but in none of them had the course ever got past Chapter 6.) Specific details of the changes made to individual chapters are given below. The fifth difference is that (in response to widespread requests from teachers) I have produced an *Answer Key* which provides a detailed answer to every one of the exercise examples included in the book: this will be available for free for teachers who adopt the book to download from a password-protected website.

CHAPTER 1 In this chapter on *grammar*, a new section has been added on approaches to grammar (§1.2) comparing prescriptive and descriptive approaches to grammar, and discussing the pros and cons of different methods of collecting data. New sections have also been added on universals (§1.4) and the nature of universals (§1.5), and the discussion of the Minimalist approach has been updated. Additional material has been added to the sections on parameters (§1.7) and on parameter setting (§1.8).

CHAPTER 2 I have restored the chapter on *words* which appeared in the 2004 book (but was omitted in the 2009 one). This chapter includes a discussion of categories and features (in response to remarks from teachers that students with little or no previous knowledge of grammar need more grounding in this). An entirely new section has been included on items difficult to categorise, containing discussion on the nature of *whether, how come* and (factive) *how* in present-day English.

CHAPTER 3 This is a chapter on *structure* which includes new material in §3.5 comparing the NP and DP approaches to nominals, and new material on syntactic structure in §3.6. In addition, a new section on word order has been added in §3.8.

CHAPTER 4 In this chapter on *null constituents*, additional material has been added on small clauses in §4.6, on clause typing in §4.7, on default case in §4.9, on adnominal adjectives in §4.11 and on null prepositions in §4.11.

CHAPTER 5 This chapter deals with *Head Movement*. The analysis of Auxiliary Inversion presented in §5.2 and §5.3 has been completely rewritten, in order to make it more consistent with Chapter 6. New sections have been added on CP recursion (§5.4) and null operators (§5.5). The sections on DO-support (§5.10) and Head Movement in nominals (§5.11) have been completely rewritten. Additional exercise material on DO-support and on nominals in Chaucer has been added to exercise §5.2.

CHAPTER 6 This whole chapter on *Wh-Movement* has been completely rewritten and reorganised (and restricted to wh-questions), with some important changes to details of the analysis. A new section has been added covering constraints on movement (§6.9). Extensive new exercise material has been introduced.

CHAPTER 7 This is an entirely new chapter on *A-bar Movement.* It begins with a section on wh-exclamatives (§7.2), and then goes on (in §7.3) to discuss various types

of relative clause. §7.4 provides a Wh-Movement account of restrictive relative clauses, and §7.5 outlines problems with it. §7.6 sketches an alternative Antecedent Raising account, §7.7 refines this and §7.8 outlines potential problems. §7.9 argues that restrictive relatives have two distinct sources, one involving Wh-Movement, and the other Antecedent Raising. §7.10 argues that Wh-Movement in interrogatives, exclamatives and relatives is a specific instance of a more general type of A-bar Movement operation which also subsumes other operations like Neg-Movement, Deg-Movement, Foc-Movement and Top-Movement. A substantial raft of new exercises are included at the end of the chapter, one on exclamatives in contemporary and Elizabethan English, a second on WH+COMP structures, a third on free relatives, a fourth on resumptive relatives and a fifth on restrictive relatives: the aim in all but the first of these exercises is to get students to use the data they are given to evaluate two or more competing analyses of the relevant types of structure.

Teaching materials

I have prepared an accompanying Answer Key providing detailed answers to all the exercise examples in the book. I have additionally prepared some accompanying PowerPoint materials which (for each chapter) provide a brief summary of the key points in the chapter as well as providing answers to some of the exercise examples in the chapter. This is available only to teachers adopting the book as a coursebook (and is provided for free) and can be accessed from a password-protected website.

Acknowledgments

I am grovelingly grateful to Neil Smith for his perennially pertinent and perceptive comments on an earlier draughty draft of the whole manuscript: he has helped to eliminate black holes in argumentation and hopefully make the whole more wholesome. I am also grateful to Martin Atkinson for fertile feedback on an early draft of Chapter 1, and to Bob Borsley, Memo Cinque, Chris Collins and Annabel Cormack for guiding my earlier misguided attempts at producing a draft of Chapter 7. I'm also grateful to the editor Andrew Winnard and his production team for putting up with periodic procrastination, and wimpish wolf-crying and whingeing, and particularly to the copy editor Jacqueline French for teaching me that the Uniformity Principle applies to manuscripts as well as syntactic structures, and that the Economy Principle requires minimising (and in the best-case Minimalist scenario, *eliminating*) the use of *viz*.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my beloved but beleaguered wife Khadija (with heartfelt thanks for the love, friendship, care and concern she has shown for me over the past four decades – in spite of having to put up with authorial autism, temperamental tantrums, man maladies, etc.) and to her two sons Karim and Mourad, with whom I have shared many memorable moments and a passion for football. *Allez l'OM!*

Contents

1 Grammar

1.1 Overview

In broad terms, this book is concerned with **syntax** in general, and with the syntax of English in particular. Syntax is one of the two key areas of what is traditionally called 'grammar' – the other being **morphology**. Morphology is the study of how words are formed out of smaller units (called **morphemes**) and so addresses questions such as 'What are the component morphemes of a word like *antidisestablishmentarianism*, and what is the nature of the operations by which they are combined together to form the overall word?' Syntax is the study of the way in which phrases and sentences are structured out of words, and so addresses questions like 'What is the structure of a sentence like *Where's the president going?* and what is the nature of the grammatical operations by which its component words are combined together to form the overall sentence structure?' This chapter begins (in §1.2) by looking at a range of approaches to the study of grammar, before going on (in §1.3) to look at how syntax was studied in **traditional grammar**: this also provides an opportunity to introduce some useful grammatical terminology. In the remainder of the chapter, we look at the approach to syntax adopted within the theory of **Universal Grammar/UG** developed by Chomsky over the past six decades. (Note that a convention used throughout the book is that key technical terms are in bold print when first introduced in a given chapter; such terms are generally given an entry in the Glossary at the end of the book if they are used in several different sections of the book, though not if they occur in only one section of the book and are glossed there.)

1.2 Approaches to grammar

A fundamental question that needs to be resolved at the outset concerns what kind of approach to adopt in studying grammar. There are two diametrically opposed answers to this question found in work on grammar. One sees the role of grammar as being essentially **prescriptive** (i.e. prescribing norms for grammatical correctness, linguistic purity and literary excellence); the other sees the role of grammar as being inherently **descriptive** (i.e describing the way people speak or write their native language). We can illustrate the differences between these two approaches in relation to the following dialogue between the

fictional Oxford detective Morse and his assistant Lewis, as they are looking at a dead body (where capital letters in the dialogue mark emphatic stress, and italics mark items of grammatical interest):

(1) MORSE: I think he was murdered, Lewis
LEWIS: *Who by*, sir?
MORSE: *By whom*, Lewis, *by whom*. Didn't they teach grammar at that COMPREHENSIVE school of yours?

Morse was educated at a *grammar* school – i.e. an elitist school which sought to give pupils a 'proper education' and taught them grammar, so that they could learn to speak and write 'properly' (i.e. in a prestigious form of Standard English). Lewis, by contrast, was educated at a *comprehensive* school – i.e. a more socially inclusive type of school which admitted pupils from a much broader social spectrum and didn't force-feed them with grammar. The linguistic skirmish between Lewis and Morse in (1) revolves round the grammar of an italicised phrase which comprises the preposition *by* and the pronoun *who(m)*. The differences between what the two men say relates to (i) the form of the pronoun (*who* or *whom*?), and (ii) the position of the pronoun (before or after the preposition *by*?). Lewis uses the pronoun form *who*, and positions the pronoun before the preposition when he asks 'Who by?' Morse corrects Lewis and instead uses the pronoun form *whom* and positions the pronoun after the preposition when he says 'By whom?' But why does Morse correct Lewis? The answer is that Morse was taught traditional prescriptive grammatical rules at his grammar school, including two which can be outlined informally as follows:

(2) (i) The form *who* is used as a subject of a finite verb, and *whom* as the object of a verb or preposition.
(ii) Never end a phrase, clause or sentence with a preposition.

When Lewis asks 'Who by?' he violates both rules. This is because the pronoun *who(m)* is the object of the preposition *by* and rule (2i) stipulates that *whom* must therefore be used, and rule (2ii) specifies that the preposition should not be positioned at the end of a phrase. The corrected form 'By whom?' produced by Morse obeys both rules, in that *whom* is used in conformity with rule (2i), and *by* is positioned in front of its object *whom* in conformity with rule (2ii).

The more general question raised by the dialogue in (1) is the following. When studying grammar, should we adopt a descriptive approach and *describe* what ordinary people like Lewis actually say, or should we adopt a prescriptive approach and *prescribe* what people like Morse think they ought to say? There are several reasons for rejecting the prescriptive approach. For one thing, it is elitist and socially divisive, in that a privileged elite attempts to lay down grammatical norms and impose them on everyone else in society. Secondly, the grammatical norms which prescriptivists seek to impose are often derived from structures found in 'dead' languages like Latin, which is somehow regarded as a model of grammatical precision and linguistic purity: and so, because Latin made

a distinction between subject and object forms of pronouns, English must do so as well; and because Latin (generally) positioned prepositions before their objects, English must do so as well. Such an approach fails to recognise typological diversity in languages – i.e. that there are many different types of structure found in the world's 8,000 or so known languages. Thirdly, the prescriptive approach fails to recognise sociolinguistic variation – i.e. that different types of structure are found in different styles and varieties of English (e.g. *Who by?* is used in colloquial English, and *By whom?* in formal styles of English). And fourthly, the prescriptive approach also fails to recognise linguistic change – i.e. that languages are constantly evolving, and that structures used centuries ago may no longer be in use today (e.g. *whom* is an archaic form which has largely dropped out of use and is no longer part of the grammar of teenagers today). For reasons such as these, the approach taken to grammar in work over the past seventy years or so has been descriptive.

What this means is that in attempting to devise a grammar of (e.g.) English, we aim to describe the range of grammatical structures found in present-day English. But how do we determine what is or isn't grammatical in present-day English? One approach is to study **usage** (i.e. the range of structures used by people when they speak or write). Linguists who adopt this kind of approach rely on data from a **corpus** (e.g. a computerised database such as the British National Corpus) containing authentic examples of spoken or written English. Such corpora offer the advantage that they contain millions of sentences, and the sentences have usually been codified/tagged by a team of researchers, so simplifying the task of searching for examples of a particular construction. Some linguists treat the Web as a form of corpus, and use a search engine to find examples from the Internet of the kinds of structures they are interested in.

The usefulness of corpora can be illustrated as follows. One of the ways I collect data on spoken English is by listening to live, unscripted radio and TV broadcasts, and noting down unusual structures (often using them as exercise material in my syntax books). An interesting sentence which I heard one day (reported in Radford 2004: 429; 8a) is the following:

(3) What is thought has happened to him? (Interviewer, BBC Radio 5 Live)

When I first heard the sentence in (3), I wasn't sure what to make of it. One possibility that occurred to me is that it might be an accidental speech error (perhaps induced by the pressure of live broadcasting), representing a **blend** of the two different structures in (4), formed by combining the italicised part of (4a) with the italicised part of (4b):

(4) (a) *What is thought* to have happened to him?
(b) What is it thought *has happened to him*?

However, an alternative possibility is that the kind of structure in (3) is not a speech error but rather a productive structure – albeit not one described in standard grammars of English. To check on whether (3) is a productive structure