CROOM HELM LINGUISTIC THEORY GUIDES

RELATIONAL GRAMMAR

BARRY J. BLAKE

Relational Grammar

Barry J. Blake

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Croom Helm Linguistic Theory Guides

General editor Dick Hudson

1974年，由 David Perlmutter 和 Paul Postal 提出的“关系语法学说”首次公布于世。至今，已有150余位语言学者发表了数百篇有关的学术论文，一些论文专集亦曾出版。

本书是第一部以成书形式出现的“关系语法”专著。

作者系澳大利亚知名的语言学家。

本书阐明了“关系语法学说”的基本观点，并与其它语法理论进行了比较。所有“关系语法学说”特有的术语及规则都予以解释和举例说明。书中还包括语言形态和句法方面的资料。

本书对熟悉传统语法的读者也不难理解。

《关系语法》可供从事语法研究和对现代语法感兴趣的人士参考。

Series editor's preface

The Croom Helm Linguistic Theory guides have been commissioned with a rather special readership in mind – the typical linguist, who knows a good deal about a small number of theories in his or her area of specialism, but is baffled by the problem of keeping up with other theories even in that area, to say nothing of other areas. There just aren't enough hours in the day to read more widely, and even if there were it wouldn't help much because so much of the literature is simply incomprehensible except to the initiated. The result is that most of us cultivate our own garden reasonably conscientiously, but have very little idea of what is happening in other people's gardens.

This theoretical narrowing is a practical problem if you are expected to teach on a broad front – say, to give a course of lectures on syntactic theory – when you only know one theory of syntax. Honesty demands that one should tell students about alternative approaches, but how can you when you have at best a hazy idea of what most theories have to say? Another practical problem is the danger of missing pearls of wisdom which might be vitally important in one's research, because they happen to have been formulated in terms of some unfamiliar theory. There can be very few linguists who have not rediscovered some wheel in their area of specialism, out of ignorance about work in other theories.

However, there is an even more serious problem at the research level, because one of the main goals of our joint research effort is to work towards the best possible theory (or set of theories), and this can only be done if we constantly compare and evaluate all the available theories. From this perspective, it is simply pointless to spend one's life developing one theory, or some part of it, if it is already outclassed by some other theory. It is true that evaluation of theories is quite a subjective matter, and is far too complex for any kind of absolute certainty to be arrived at. All we can do is to make a reasonably dispassionate, though subjective, assessment of

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the strengths and weaknesses of the alternatives, in the full expectation that our colleagues may disagree radically with our verdict. Total ignorance of the alternative theories is clearly not a good basis for evaluating them – though it is arguably better than the misinformation that can be used to bolster one's confidence in one's favourite theory.

It is with these problems in mind, then, that we have planned the Linguistic Theory guides. Each book in the series will focus on one theory that is currently prominent in the literature (or in a few special cases, on a range of such theories). The list of titles is open-ended, and new titles will be added as new theories come into prominence. The aim will be both to inform and to evaluate – to provide enough information to enable the reader to appreciate whatever literature presupposes the theory concerned, and to highlight its strengths and weaknesses. The intention is emphatically not to sell the theory, though the evaluation will naturally be sufficiently positive to explain why the theory is worth considering seriously. Several of the theories are already well provided with textbooks which say a great deal about their strengths and very little about their weaknesses. We assume that our typical reader finds such books irritating at best. What they want is clear exposition at the right level of sophistication (i.e. well above first-year undergraduate level), and wise evaluation, both internally and in relation to other theories.

It is not easy to write a book with these qualities, and we have selected our authors with great care. What we have looked for in each case is essentially someone who is a sympathetic outsider, rather than a devotee of the theory – someone who has experience of working within other theories, but who is well-disposed to the theory concerned, and reasonably well-informed about it. We hope that this recipe will produce books which will be acceptably non-partisan in tone, but we have also taken steps to make them factually reliable as descriptions of the theories concerned. Each book has benefited from detailed comment by at least one prominent devotee (a term which we do not apply disparagingly – without their devotees theories would not come into being, still less develop, and there would be no theoretical linguistics), as well as by an outside reader. Needless to say, the authors have been allowed to stick to their evaluations if the protests of their devotee readers have failed to change their minds.

It is our sincere hope that these books will make a significant contribution to the growth and development of our subject, as well as being helpful to those who read them.

Dick Hudson

Preface

Relational Grammar was developed by David Perlmutter and Paul Postal in the early 1970s and first presented to a large audience at the 1974 Linguistic Society of America Summer Institute in Amherst. The first publications began appearing around this time and by the end of 1987 about 150 linguists had written in this framework, contributing between them over 300 papers, over 40 theses (honours, MA, and PhD), and more than a dozen anthologies and published monographs. However, until now there has been no general book-length treatment of the theory, though a useful booklet by Donald Frantz outlining typical Relational Grammar analyses was put out by the Indiana University Linguistics Club (Frantz 1981).

The present text describes the basic ideas, evaluates them, and compares them with other approaches in other theories. The treatment is straightforward and should be comprehensible to anyone conversant with traditional grammatical terminology. All the unfamiliar terms and conventions of Relational Grammar are explained and illustrated.

The book is aimed primarily at readers interested in modern theories of grammar, but it should also be of relevance to those who are interested in surface-based, function-oriented, comparative linguistics. It contains a wealth of data on morphology and syntax and it also includes comparisons of Relational Grammar analyses with those of 'non-aligned' linguists who are working with much the same data (see section 8.2).

My own background is in Australian Aboriginal languages and this is reflected in the sentences from Kalkatungu and Yalarnnga sprinkled among the examples that are quoted from the Relational Grammar literature. This background has also given me an interest in ergativity and has prompted a section on Relational Grammar's treatment of ergative languages, among which I include many Philippines-type languages like Tagalog, which I claim have been seriously misrepresented in the literature.

Barry Blake
December 1988

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To the readers of my manuscript I am most grateful for their insightful comments: Matthew Dryer, Anna Siewierska, Jae Jung Song, Stan Starosta, and Nigel Vincent; Dick Hudson, who read in his capacity as editor; Bernard Comrie, who read as the referee; and Bill Davies, who read the draft from the point of view of Relational Grammar.

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On the clerical side I cannot forget Judy Westwood for her typing, Barbara Upton for producing the igloos with MacDraw, and Graham Scott for taking the time to help them both, and last and least, Celia Blake for helping with the proof-reading.

Abbreviations and symbols

abl	ablative
abs	absolutive
acc	accusative
adv,advan	advancement marker
AF	Actor focus
aor	aorist
APG	Arc Pair Grammar
asp	aspect
ass	assertion
aux	auxiliary
ben	beneficiary, benefactive
cau	cause
Cho	chômeur
COP	copula
cl	clitic
D	dummy
dat	dative
det	determiner
detr(ans)	detransitive (derived intransitive) marker
DO	direct object
e	empty category
emph	emphatic
erg	ergative
ev	eventive
evid	evidential
f(em)	feminine
foc	focus
fut	future
gen	genitive
ger	gerundive
GR	grammatical relation
H	head

impf	imperfect
imperf	imperfective
inf	infinitive
instr	instrument, instrumental
IO	indirect object
lk	linker
loc	locative
LSA	Linguistic Society of America
m	masculine
N	noun
neg	negative
NP	noun phrase
obl	oblique
P	predicate
part	participle
pass	passive
perf	perfect
PF	Patient focus
pl	plural
PO	primary object
POSS	possessor
PP	prepositional phrase
prep	preposition
pres	present
prt	particle
PRO	PRO-noun, unspecified nominal
purp	purposive
Q	question
R	recipient, retreat
re	reflexive
rec	recent past
recip	reciprocal
refl	reflexive
rel	relativizer
RG	Relational Grammar
s	singular
S	sentence
SC	structural change
SD	structural description
seq	sequential
sg	singular
SO	secondary object
Su	subject
subj	subjunctive

SUL	Stratal Uniqueness Law
t	trace
TG	Transformational Grammar
top	topic
tr	transitive
U	Union
UAH	Universal Alignment Hypothesis
UHS	Unspecified Human Subject
UNSPEC	unspecified nominal
V	verb
VP	verb phrase
1	subject, first person
2	direct object, second person
3	indirect object, third person
1AEX	1 Advancement Exclusiveness Law
$\hat{1}$	subject chômeur
$\hat{2}$	direct object chômeur
$\hat{3}$	indirect object chômeur
$\hat{p}$	predicate chômeur
$<$	derived from

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Chapter 1

Outline

1.1 Basic notions

Relational Grammar (RG) was developed primarily by David Perlmutter and Paul Postal in the early 1970s. In this theory grammatical relations are taken to be undefined primitives. The set of relations recognized includes **subject**, **direct object**, **indirect object**, and an as yet undetermined number of **oblique** relations including **benefactive**, **locative**, and **instrumental**. The three relations subject, object, and indirect object are collectively called **terms**. These and the obliques form a hierarchy as in [1]:

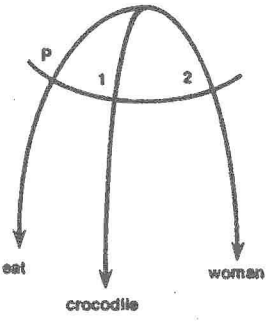
[1] subject (1) direct object (2) indirect object (3) obliques

The terms are conventionally referred to by their position in the hierarchy, so a subject is referred to as 1, a direct object as 2, and an indirect object as 3. 1 and 2 are known collectively as **nuclear** relations and 2 and 3 as **object** relations.

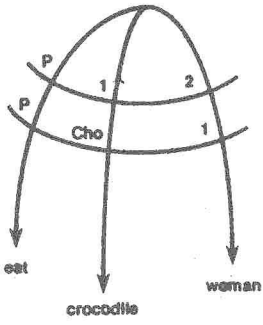
The relational structure of a clause can be represented in a stratal diagram. The relational structure of the active sentence [2a] is displayed in [3a] and the relational structure of its passive counterpart [2b] is shown in [3b]:

[2a] The crocodile ate the woman.
[2b] The woman was eaten by the crocodile.

[3a]



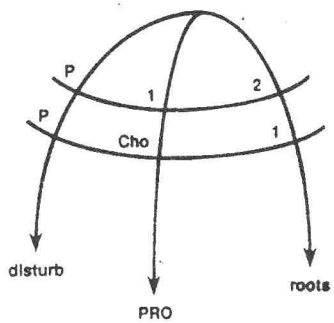
[3b]



In these networks linear order has been abstracted and the substructure of the predicate and of the noun phrases has been ignored. The active clause [2a] is considered to have a predicate, designated P, a subject, designated 1, and a direct object, designated 2. There is only one **stratum** or level. In the relational structure of the passive there are two strata. The initial stratum is the same as the sole stratum of the active, but the second and final stratum reflects **revaluations**. The initial direct object has advanced to subject and the initial subject has been demoted to the **chômeur** relation (abbreviated *Cho*). The notion of chômeur is peculiar to Relational Grammar and represents one of the innovations of the theory. Informally the chômeur relation is the relation held by a nominal that has been ousted from term status, i.e. from 1, 2, or 3. A chômeur lacks at least some of the grammatical properties of the corresponding term; the subject chômeur in [3b], unlike the subject in [3a], fails to control agreement on the verb, for instance, and occupies a peripheral, optional position in the clause. The term *chômeur* comes from the French word for unemployed or idle person. The related term **chômage** is also used. Thus one could describe *the crocodile* in [2b] being 'put en chômage' or 'going into chômage'.

An agentless passive such as *Their roots had been disturbed* is allotted an initial stratum in which the initial 1 is unspecified and consequently has no realization. This generic nominal is usually represented in recent Relational Grammar literature as PRO:

[4a] Their roots had been disturbed.
[4b]



In early versions of the theory initial stratum relations were held to be linked to semantic roles in a universal way, an agent always being an initial 1, a patient an initial 2, and the recipient of a predicate like *give* an initial 3. This principle is known as the **Universal Alignment Hypothesis** (Perlmutter and Postal 1984a:97; orig. 1978). This hypothesis is untenable in its strict form (see section 2.2.), but with a two-place verb a prototypical agent and a prototypical patient, as in *The man hit the dog*, are always taken to be initial 1 and 2 respectively.

The label **indirect object** is used for the recipient in a clause like [5a] but not for the first object in the two-object construction exemplified in [5b]. A sentence like [5a] is considered to have a single stratum with initial relations being reflected directly (as shown in [6a]), but a sentence like [5b] is considered to involve two strata with the initial indirect object having advanced to direct object in the second stratum pushing the initial direct object into chômage [6b]:

[5a] Mao gave power to the people.[1]
[5b] Mao gave the people power.

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