

MORPHOSYNTAX

Constructions of the World's Languages

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To the memory of my mother

Irene Shursky Croft

1926-2012

who was always a teacher

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Preface

This textbook provides a general survey of the morphosyntactic constructions of the world's languages. The textbook is directed towards advanced undergraduates and beginning graduate students studying syntax. At the University of New Mexico, I have taught this course as a one-semester course, following on an introductory undergraduate course in syntax where I present the same basic framework but apply it only to English until the second half of that course. However, a more leisurely journey through the material could be done in two semesters, or certain sections could be skipped or assigned as background reading in a one-semester course.

This textbook introduces students to syntactic analysis from a constructional and crosslinguistic perspective. The constructional approach has become more widely used, and it fits well with the crosslinguistic perspective of typology. The typological approach allows this textbook to be relevant to the study of any language. Also, students of a single language such as English, Spanish, Chinese or another language will best understand the grammatical structure of that language by placing it in the context of the range of grammatical variation of the world's languages. This is particularly relevant for a student analyzing and describing an undocumented or little-documented language. Fortunately, after sixty years of modern typological research, enough is known about much grammatical structure that an overview textbook such as this one is possible. By no means does this imply that we know everything about the grammatical constructions of the world's languages. Nor does this textbook capture everything that we have already learned about grammatical constructions. This would require a much larger, multivolume work.

The morphosyntactic analysis found in this textbook does not involve a notational framework for analyzing the structure of sentences, such as is found in most introductory textbooks of syntactic analysis. This is because many linguists who adhere to functional-typological linguistic theory argue for a "framework-free" grammatical theory (Haspelmath 2010a), and in practice reference grammars do not use notational frameworks in their language descriptions. Instead, this textbook presents a **functional framework**: an overview of the major functions expressed by language, both semantic content and information packaging (see chapters 1-2). This functional framework may also serve as a framework for the description of the morphosyntax of a language.

The absence of a notational framework does not entail the absence of analysis of morphosyntactic constructions, of course; this textbook contains many such analyses. The nature of such analyses will differ from that of analyses that are intended to represent the structure of a sentence in a particular notational framework. In "framework-free" grammatical theory, the analysis of a sentence in a specific language consists of identifying the construction it is an instance of, in terms of both function and morphosyntactic form, and understanding how the construction fits into the context of crosslinguistic variation and paths of grammatical change as well as its relation to other constructions in the language.

Of course, not all linguists will agree with all the syntactic analyses presented in this textbook. But the basic crosslinguistic facts and patterns presented here are likely to represent lasting empirical generalizations, and must be explained in some way, no matter what syntactic theory one follows. The content of this textbook should therefore be of value to all students of syntax.

A Note on Teaching Morphosyntax

This textbook is intended to be an advanced textbook on morphosyntax. It is assumed that a student has been exposed to language-specific grammatical analysis of the sort described at the beginning of §1.5, and is typical of introductory syntax courses. In such a course, students will have acquired some mastery of the linguistic way of analyzing morphosyntactic structure. They will also have acquired some familiarity with a range of basic constructions, their morphosyntactic form, and also their function, typically in the language of instruction and possibly in other languages.

At the University of New Mexico, an introductory undergraduate syntax course precedes the morphosyntax course for which this textbook was written. Although a “framework-free” grammatical theory is used in this textbook, for practical pedagogical reasons I have developed a syntactic annotation scheme for the introductory syntax course. The annotation scheme is similar in spirit and content to the Universal Dependencies project in natural language processing (Nivre 2015; Nivre et al. 2016; <http://www.universaldependencies.org>; Croft et al. 2017; Croft 2017b). Materials for the introductory course will be published in due course.

When I have taught the advanced morphosyntax course, each student “adopts” a reference grammar of a language and uses it to describe where “their” language fits into the crosslinguistic patterns in the expression of the function of the constructions in the chapters. These descriptive assignments allow a student to see a richer and more detailed example of the type of grammatical phenomena surveyed in the textbook. By using a sample of languages from different genetic families and geographical areas, one can capture a good deal of crosslinguistic diversity in a single class, as well as bringing out constructions that are unusual or anomalous from a typological perspective, or are not discussed in this book. This teaching method is now more easily done with the online availability of digital versions of many unpublished dissertations and open-source published reference grammars.

It is in fact quite a challenge to find information in a reference grammar—whether it is a grammar of a well documented and widely spoken language or of a small indigenous language—and to place it in the context of crosslinguistic patterns for the constructions in question. Every reference grammar is organized in a different way, and some topics are more thoroughly covered than others (and some are not covered at all), for various reasons. Moreover, the terminology that is used in grammars, and even the types of analyses of grammatical constructions that are found in the grammar, are highly variable and not infrequently ambiguous or confusing. Some of the reasons for this are discussed in chapter 1 of this book.

There has been much improvement in language description in the past sixty years and especially in the last thirty years. However, many languages have gone extinct, others are highly endangered or moribund, and the time and resources available for language documentation are very limited. For this reason, students and scholars interested in understanding a grammatical phenomenon in its crosslinguistic diversity, and uncovering what universal patterns there might be, will always have to interpret incomplete data collected at different times in the past that is presented in ways that are not always easy to decipher. Hence one useful analytical skill in learning morphosyntax in a crosslinguistic perspective is the ability to figure out as best as possible what is going on in a language you don’t speak from whatever descriptive materials are available.

Acknowledgements

The idea for this book began a very long time ago, around 1985, when as a graduate student I taught a seminar on functional-typological syntax to my fellow graduate students at Stanford. Other prototypes for the course were a syntax course I taught for a couple of years at the University of Michigan in the late 1980s, and the syntax course I taught at the Summer Institute of the Linguistic Society of America at the University of New Mexico in 1995. But it wasn't until after I began teaching at the University of New Mexico in 2006 that I again had the opportunity to teach the core syntax courses, Grammatical Analysis and Morphosyntax, in the linguistics department. I began to develop the materials for Morphosyntax in earnest in 2012.

I taught Morphosyntax several times in the 2010s. For one year, my then doctoral student Logan Sutton taught the course, and at the end of my teaching career, my colleague Rosa Vallejos took over the course. Logan and especially Rosa gave me excellent advice on teaching the course. My heartfelt thanks go out especially to the many students at the University of New Mexico who took Morphosyntax over the years, from myself, Logan or Rosa. All of the students helped me, or forced me, to confront the challenge of teaching complex and wide-ranging material to both undergraduates and graduate students.

Morphosyntax is the final course in a sequence at the University of New Mexico that begins with an introduction to linguistics for undergraduate majors focused on phonological and morphological problem-solving, and continues with Grammatical Analysis, an undergraduate course in syntax meant as an introduction to the functional-typological approach presented in this textbook. A “grammar team” consisting of Dawn Nordquist, Rosa Vallejos and I, supported by several students—Chris Peverada, Katherine Looney, Corrine Occhino-Kehoe and Michael Regan—worked on the three courses and how they would complement each other and build on the preceding courses in the sequence. I learned much from this planning process and from all of the grammar team who worked on this process.

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The knowledge contained in this book would not exist if it were not for the many, many linguists, fieldworkers and native speakers who described and analyzed the many languages that informed the typological research described herein, both well-known and endangered. We are all indebted to the native speaker consultants who shared their knowledge of their languages with us. I hope that the information this book will make a small contribution to the process of language description. I am grateful to Harald Hammarström for assistance in obtaining copies of some of the language sources cited in this book.

This book builds on the research of many linguists in many different areas, particularly modern syntactic typology, semantics and pragmatics, and construction grammar. Some of them have become dear friends to me as well as respected scholars in the field. My thanks go especially to Greg Anderson, Joan Bybee, Bernard Comrie, Sonia Cristofaro, Matthew Dryer, Martin Haspelmath, Masha Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Anna Siewierska—tragically lost to us too early, Leon Stassen and Len Talmy for their long and deep friendships as well as their important contributions to linguistics.

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Finally, there are those who were my teachers. I had many; four stood out in their influence on this book. Jim McCawley at the University of Chicago—also tragically lost to us too early—and Jerry Hobbs at SRI International taught me healthily heterodox approaches to semantics and pragmatics. Elizabeth Traugott taught me the importance of diachronic processes as well as the interplay of semantics and pragmatics. Last but not least, Joe Greenberg taught me so much about all aspects of language through his publications, his classes, and our many one-on-one meetings in his office while I was working on my dissertation and for many years afterwards, all the way to the end of his life. His intellect and erudition was awesome; he was also humble, generous, and passionately curious and excited about every new discovery he made in a language.

This book would not be possible without all of the aforementioned linguists upon whose work it is built. Nor would it have been possible without the love and support of my wife, Carol Toffaleti, over the decades, through all the joys and sorrows that there have been, and will be.

I dedicate this volume to my mother, Irene Croft, who taught me so many things, from my first words to the latest Balkan folkdance. She was only able to be a teacher for part of her professional career, but it was the part she loved the most. I am grateful to her for everything she gave to me. Her ashes rest with my father's ashes in Big Basin Redwoods State Park in California—joined now by the ashes of the immolated redwood trees that towered over them, giants of a rapidly collapsing natural world that we knew, loved, and defended any way we could.

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A Note on Language Examples

This textbook, like other typologically oriented books, presents example sentences from a large number of languages. Any such survey necessarily draws on a wide variety of sources, since the author does not have direct knowledge of the vast majority of the languages in the book. It is therefore quite challenging to verify the accuracy of all of the examples cited.

The solution to this problem is to make it as easy as possible for the reader to verify the examples by checking in the cited sources. In this book, both primary and secondary sources have been used. A ‘primary source’ is a reference grammar or other publication produced by a native speaker or a field linguist with direct knowledge of the language, or in some cases data provided by a native speaker or a field linguist to the author based on a questionnaire provided by the author. A ‘secondary source’ is a linguistic work, usually a cross-linguistic or typological analysis, that draws on primary sources for some or all of its data.

In this book I have checked the primary sources cited by secondary sources where possible. The manner of citation represents how the example was cited and checked. Page references are cited where available. Let us say Gramm (1995) is a primary source such as a reference grammar, and Topol (2007) is a secondary source such as a typological survey. The following are the types of citations for examples are found in this book:

Gramm (1995:146) - I consulted the primary source directly

Gramm (1995:146); cf. Topol (2007:301) - I consulted the secondary source, and was able to check the primary source

Topol (2007:301), from Gramm (1995:146) - I consulted the secondary source, which cited the primary source, but I was not able to check the primary source

Topol (2007:301), from Gramm (1995) - I consulted the secondary source, which did not provide a page citation for the primary source, and I was not able to check the source

Topol (2007:301) - I consulted the secondary source, which may have drawn on direct knowledge, or did not cite a primary source

As for the examples themselves, non-English examples are generally given in a morphologically segmented form, followed by an interlinear morpheme translation (IMT) and a free translation (see §1.6). In a few cases, an unsegmented original text is given in a separate line, particularly when morphophonological changes obscure the morpheme segmentation. However, for reasons of space, an unsegmented original text is not generally given even when available.

The orthography or transcription of the source is almost always followed, including transliterations from other scripts. This may lead to alternative orthographies or transcriptions for the same language if examples are drawn from different sources. Changes to the transcription, if any, are noted in the citation.

The morpheme segmentations and IMTs also generally follow the sources, which again may lead to discrepancies for examples from the same language but different sources. The annotation of morpheme segmentation is standardized to the Leipzig Glossing Rules (see §1.6). Abbreviations for common grammatical morphemes are standardized, following either the Leipzig Glossing Rules or the much longer list of abbreviations from the Framework for Descriptive Grammars project (see the List of Abbreviations following this note). Abbreviations

for less common or unique grammatical morphemes are retained as long as they are not also used for common grammatical morphemes, and they are explained in the text when the example is introduced. In some cases, the source does not provide a morpheme segmentation and/or IMT, but the secondary source reconstructs them. If this is done, it is noted in the citation.

The specific part of the construction being discussed in the text is generally highlighted in boldface in the IMT.

Please contact me with any corrections to examples.

List of Abbreviations

The following list represents abbreviations for common grammatical categories that are standardized in the examples in the text. This list is based on the list of abbreviations of the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Balthasar Bickel, Bernard Comrie, Martin Haspelmath; see §1.6) and the much larger list of abbreviations in *Typology and Universals*, 2nd edition (Croft 2003), which was originally a list developed for the Framework for Descriptive Grammars project (Bernard Comrie, William Croft, Christian Lehmann and Dietmar Zaefferer) and largely adopted by the EUROTYP project. In some cases, the abbreviations in these two sources differed. The Leipzig Glossing Rules abbreviation was chosen except for DISTR, INCL, EXCL and NMLZ (see DSTR, IN, EX and NR). Three new abbreviations are used: CAU instead of CAUS, ANTP for ANTIP, contrasting with the newly included category ANTC (the latter two from Martin Haspelmath).

Some examples in the text will contain abbreviations for rare or unique grammatical categories; these will be explained in the citation for the example.

1	first person	ALLOC	allocutive
12	first person dual inclusive (if treated as a quasi-singular)	AN	animate
		ANA	anaphoric
2	second person	ANT	anterior
3	third person	ANTC	anticausative
A	transitive agent	ANTP	antipassive
ABESS	abessive ('without')	AOR	aorist
ABL	ablative ('from')	APPL	applicative
ABS	absolutive case	ART	article
ABSL	absolute form	ASP	aspect
ABST	abstract (nominalization)	ASSR	assertive
ACC	accusative	ASSOC	associative
ACCES	accessory case	AT	attributor
ACCID	accidental (action)	AUG	augmentative
ACT	active	AUX	auxiliary
ACTR	Actor	AVERS	aversive ('lest')
ADESS	adessive ('on')	BEN	benefactive
ADJ	adjective	BUFF	phonological buffer element
ADJR	adjectivalizer	CARD	cardinal (numeral)
ADM	admonitive	CAU	causative
ADV	adverb(ial)	CIRC	circumstantial
ADVRS	adversative	CJPRT	conjunctive participle
ADVR	adverbializer	CLF	classifier
AFF	affirmative	CLn	noun class n
AFFCT	affective	CMPL	completive
AG	agent(ive)	CMPR	comparative
AGR	agreement	CNJ	conjunction
AL	alienable	CO	coordinator
ALL	allative ('to')	COLL	collective

COM	comitative	EXCL	exclamation
COMP	complementizer	EXST	exist(ence), existential
CONC	concessive	F	feminine
COND	conditional	FACT	factitive
CONN	connective	FAM	familiar
CONST	construct form	FIN	finite
CONT	continuous	FNL	final position marker
CONTR	contrastive	FOC	focus
COP	copula	FREQ	frequentative
CORR	correlative	FRM	formal
CUST	customary	FUT	future
CVB	converb	GEN	genitive
D1	deictic of 1 person	GER	gerund (verbal adverb)
D12	deictic of 12 person	GNR	generic
D2	deictic of 2 person	HAB	habitual
D3	deictic of 3 person	HEST	hesternal (past, future)
DAT	dative	HOD	hodiernal (past, future)
DECL	declarative	HON	honorific
DEF	definite	HORT	hortative
DEFR	deferential	HUM	human
DEM	demonstrative	HYP	hypothetical
DEP	dependent (deranked) verb form	ILL	illative ('into')
DER	derivational morpheme	IMM	immediate (past, future)
DES	desiderative	IMP	imperative
DET	determiner	IMPR	impersonal
DETR	detransitivizer	IN	inclusive
DIM	diminutive	INAL	inalienable
DIR	directional	INAN	inanimate
DIST	distal (= 3 person deictic)	INCH	inchoative
DITR	ditransitive	INCP	inceptive
DO	direct object	IND	indicative
DS	different subject	INDF	indefinite
DSTR	distributive	INESS	inessive ('in')
DU	dual	INF	infinitive
DUB	dubitative	INFR	inferential
DUR	durative	INGR	ingressive
DWNT	downtoner ('a little X, somewhat X, X-ish')	INJ	injunctive
DYN	dynamic (vs. stative)	INS	instrumental
EL	elative ('out of')	INT	interrogative
EMPH	emphatic	INTR	intransitive
EQT	equative (adjective)	INTS	intensifier
ERG	ergative	INV	inverse
ESS	essive ('as')	INVS	invisible
EVID	evidential	IO	indirect object
EX	exclusive	IPFV	imperfect(ive)
		IRR	irrealis

ITER	iterative	POT	potential
JUSS	jussive	PRED	predicative
LIG	ligature	PREP	preposition
LNK	linker	PREV	preverb
LOC	locative	PRF	perfect
LOG	logophoric	PRN	pronoun
M	masculine	PROG	progressive
MAL	malefactive	PROH	prohibitive
MAN	manner	PROL	prolative ('along')
MDL	modal	PROX	proximal (= 1 person deictic)
MED	medial (verb form)	PRS	present
MEDP	mediopassive	PRT	preterite
MEDT	mediate (= 2 person deictic)	PRTT	partitive
MID	middle	PRVT	privative ('without')
MOD	modifier	PRXT	proximate (vs. obviative)
N	neuter	PST	past
N-	non- (e.g., NFIN, NFOC, NFUT, NHUM, NPST, NSG, NSPEC, NTOP, NVOL)	PTCL	particle
NARR	narrative (tense)	PTCP	participle
NCLF	numeral classifier	PURP	purpose, purposive
NEAR	near (past, future)	Q	question particle/marker
NEC	necessity	QUAD	quadral
NEG	negative, negation	QUOT	quotative
NOM	nominative	R	ditransitive "recipient"
NR	nominalizer	RDP	reduplication
OBJ	object	REC	recent (past)
OBL	oblique	RECP	reciprocal
OBLG	obligative	REF	referential
OBV	obviative	REFL	reflexive
OPT	optative	REFR	referential ('about')
ORD	ordinal (numeral)	REL	relative clause marker (other than relative pronoun)
P	transitive patient	REM	remote (past, future)
PASS	passive	REMT	remote (distance)
PAU	paucal	RES	resultative
PCLF	possessive classifier	RL	realis
PEJ	pejorative	RLT	relative (case)
PFV	perfective	RPRN	relative pronoun
PL	plural	S	intransitive subject
PLT	pluritive	SBJ	subject
PLUP	pluperfect	SBJV	subjunctive
PNCT	punctual	SENS	sensory evidential
PO	primary object	SEQ	sequential, consecutive
POL	polite	SG	singular
POSS	possessive	SGT	singulative
POST	postposition	SIM	simultaneous
		SML	semelfactive

SO	secondary object	TRL	trial
SPEC	specific	TRNS	transitivizer
SS	same subject	UNDR	undergoer
STAT	stative	UNSP	unspecified (agent, etc.)
SUBR	subordinator	VAL	validator
SUP	superlative	VERS	version
T	ditransitive “theme”	VIS	visible
TEMP	temporal	VISL	visual evidential
TERM	terminative	VN	verbal noun
TNS	tense	VOC	vocative
TOP	topic	VOL	volitional
TR	transitive	VR	verbalizer
TRNSL	translative (“becoming”)		

