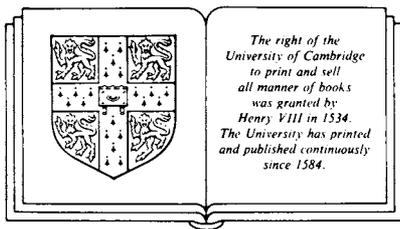

Language typology and syntactic description

Volume I
Clause structure

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Introduction

Clause structure is the first of three volumes comprising the work *Language typology and syntactic description*. The second volume is *Complex constructions* and the third is *Grammatical categories and the lexicon*. Our purpose has been to do a cross-linguistic survey of syntactic and morphological structure that can serve as a manual for field workers, and for anyone interested in relating observations about particular languages to a general theory of language.

In investigating the structure of a language, it is of first importance to know what to look for, to have informed expectations, a working hypothesis about the likely correlations between various aspects of syntax and word formation among the languages of the world. One can never prepare fully in advance for the 'how-to-do-it', the methodology of field work. A great deal of that will depend on an unpredictable interaction of ethos, personality and on-the-spot ingenuity. And indeed, discovery and understanding in science come as unplanned-for gifts of the imagination. One must welcome the particular characteristics of a language that make it a unique cultural artifact, and different from any other, but at the same time, one will understand the workings of the language better, even in its most distinctive traits, the more one knows what languages tend to be like.

There are six chapters in this volume. It begins with two chapters on component parts and relations within the clause. The first is by Paul Schachter on part-of-speech systems. He discusses both content-word and function-word categories. While all languages have verbs and nouns, he shows they may differ from each other in the other categories they possess; nevertheless, he demonstrates certain consistent tendencies in the grouping of notions and functions among the parts of speech.

The second chapter is by Avery Andrews on the major functions of the noun phrase. He distinguishes common grammatical functions for noun phrases and then shows how particular noun phrases operate in the syntax of a language such that they could be said to be part of a

system of grammatical relations. He surveys the major variants of these systems.

The four remaining chapters concern clause and sentence types. In the third chapter of the volume, Jerrold Sadock and Arnold Zwicky discuss speech act distinctions in syntax. They consider the sentence types into which the main clauses of a language can be categorized, with concern for both their form and their use.

In the fourth chapter of the volume, John Payne discusses negation. He takes care to establish language-independent criteria for the various ways in which negation has scope within the syntax of sentences, and then surveys the variety of forms that these different kinds of negation can take.

In the fifth chapter, Edward Keenan writes about the passive construction, a means of constructing clauses with the same propositional content as can be expressed by the active but with marked effects of foregrounding and backgrounding. He contrasts it briefly with other foregrounding and backgrounding constructions, and devotes most of the chapter to the place of the passive in the syntactic systems of the world's languages.

The sixth and final chapter is by William Foley and Robert D. Van Valin, Jr with the title 'Information packaging in the clause'. This chapter complements the preceding one on passives in that it gives a broader overview of foregrounding and backgrounding constructions, and the authors develop an essentially functional typology for such constructions.

Note: References to chapters in all three volumes of *Syntactic typology and language description* are preceded by the volume number. For example: chapter 1.2 (chapter 2, this volume), chapter 11.3 (Volume 11, chapter 3).