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This textbook is a privileged window into what generative linguists have in mind when they talk about syntax. It allows students with no background in the area to gain an accurate view of syntax understood as part of the human faculty of language. This last assumption explains the fact that some issues (e.g. binding and existential sentences), as long as they do not point crucially at the computational system of human language, are not addressed here, although raising predicates and double object constructions are. Others, such as displacement, phrase and sentence structure, and ellipsis, receive an extensive presentation. The text fully develops within the minimalist program, although the use of concepts belonging to previous stages, such as movement and displacement versus merge in context, also has a different purpose. There are questions left open, such as those regarding the relationship between thought and language or processing and parsing (Ch.2), while for others, such as coordination (Ch. 4), a possible solution is given.

Apart from the nine chapters and the references, the book contains a glossary, with 138 items, an index—although only thematic, and 160 exercises. The exercises in the different chapters appear spread throughout the text in a way that makes them part of the content. Some of them recapitulate the explanation, but many others either push it forward or complete it. At the end of each chapter, a comprehensive summary and a bibliographical note with references to the ‘must’ in the literature of the relevant area are most welcome. English is the language used to present most of the phenomena, although other languages do appear: German (the head parameter), Russian (displacement), Portuguese (displacement), Welsh (word order), Chinese and Japanese (word order, wh-movement), French, Spanish, and Irish (wh-movement), and Greek (preposition stranding in sluicing).

With respect to the content, Ch. 1 takes the reader in a very appealing way right into the complexity of what the computational system of human language is supposed to be. Ch. 2 deals with the topic of internal language as an object of inquiry and the general framework that relies on this concept, including such topics as how language is acquired and how it is put to use. Chs. 3–5 concentrate on categories and constituents, labels, argument structure, and phrase structure and clause structure, jointly with the operations and theoretical principles needed to construct them, namely Merge and the no tampering condition. The different types of displacement and its effects on various elements, along with its theoretical implications are studied in Chs. 6–8. Finally, Ch. 9 deals with the syntactic processes of ellipsis and sluicing.

The book is strongly recommended for those students and professors who want to be conducted by compelling evidence and rich reasoning directly into what can be considered the computational faculty of human language put to work, that is, syntax and its interaction with the interfaces (the logical form and the phonological form).