Syntax: A Generative Introduction

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Building on the success of the bestselling first edition, the second edition of this textbook provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the major issues in Principles and Parameters syntactic theory, including phrase structure, the lexicon, case theory, movement, and locality conditions.

Includes new and extended problem sets in every chapter, all of which have been annotated for level and skill type Features three new chapters on advanced topics including vP shells, object shells, control, gapping and ellipsis and an additional chapter on advanced topics in binding Offers a brief survey of both Lexical-Functional Grammar and Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar Succeeds in strengthening the reader's foundational knowledge, and prepares them for more advanced study Supported by an instructor's manual and online resources for students and instructors, available at www.blackwellpublishing.com/carnie

Syntax: A Generative Introduction Details

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Lily Tice says

Syntax is such a tricky, tricky beast to learn, but this book made it worth it. I'm so used to Sahara-dry linguistics textbooks and this was a delight (well, for a textbook). The chapters were broken down into manageable sections, each syntactic phenomenon was explained as clearly as could be reasonably expected (given how ridiculously nuancy syntactic theory is), and most importantly, the examples were usually subtly hilarious. I'm a big fan of using humor to cope with how mindnumbingly difficult syntax is, because let's face it... SYNTACTICIANS ARE HILARIOUS (promiscuous case, anyone?). Would definitely recommend for all your syntax needs.

Marcus Lira says

Carnie's style is great: This book is very pleasant to read and the concepts are very easy to grasp. As an outsider (I'm a functional typologist, so to speak), I just thought it was odd that, except for the exercises, English was ubiquitous. But, I guess that's true of most books on generative grammar...

Isabel Garriga says

If you have the option to use another textbook, do so.
I can't deny that concepts are explained very well, but the flow of the chapters leaves a lot to be desired. You'll constantly be told to forget what you had just learned (i.e. how to draw trees) in the previous chapter, and replace it with some new concept. There are not enough examples which recap what you have learned previously with the new additions to the grammar structure.
Not user friendly.

Jared Collier says

Solid overall presentation of Generative Syntax, ranging from basic principles to sophisticated generative-based analyses of language phenomena.

Aleeh Urie says

Iummato

Grace Co says

i learned this is not what i want to do with my life, neither the topic or the act of reading about the topic. this book makes me feel like im wasting the best years of my life trapped inside the hackneyed drivel of a syntactician.

Paz Alonso says

exam in 2 weeks. i can't even rate this.

Darya Conmigo says

Might be a good read for those new to linguistics - the first few chapters deal with broader issues like the question of innateness of Language, acquisition vs learning, speech parts, etc. Very detailed introduction to tree drawing, some interesting examples from a good selection of languages in exercises. However, if you are generally familiar with the x-bar theory and such, you might want to search for something more advanced...

Meena says

I love linguistics and books about linguistics, but this book just didn't cut it.
Syntax used to be my favourite branch of linguistics because I enjoyed drawing syntax trees. This book had too much theory in it and not enough trees -- and that's just not my thing...
I just wished the author didn't constantly make assumptions that I had to "un-learn" in the following chapter. Why am I learning things in the first place if I'm just going to unlearn them?! I especially detested that I had to start off with a simple flat tree -- it confused the hell outta me later on when X-bar theory was introduced. I don't see how or why that is an efficient method of solidifying my knowledge and application skills in syntax. It just didn't work with me.

Taking a syntax course, I expected to be drawing more syntax trees (which is what I LOVE about syntax) than talking about theories... oh, well. Disappointed.

Bahareh says

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Rebecca says

If you're a dewey-eyed, impressionable undergraduate with a budding passion for syntax and an unquestioning belief in anything Chomsky says, you might find this book a good place to start. If you're smart, or a graduate student, or enjoy knowing things that are true about the world when you open a non-fiction book, stay away.

???? ???? ???? says

This is a good introduction to syntax, especially in the framework initiated by Chomsky, and developed into today's Minimalist Program.
From reading How to Study Linguistics: A Guide to Understanding Language. Palgrave Study Guides. I have come to learn that there are two broad approaches to syntax: the 'formalist' and the 'functional'. The formalist approach is represented in many theories, three of which are this book, namely, the P & P, LFG and HPSG.
Besides learning much about the aforementioned theories and especially learning the P & P theory, I admired the author's acknowledgement of the credit of and recommendation of Liliane Haegeman's Introduction to Government and Binding Theory, Elizabeth Cowper's A Concise Introduction to Syntactic Theory: The Government-Binding Approach and Andrew Radford's books, having myself read the first and benefited much from the latter's books. He passed to the reader a useful advice from his teacher Ken Hale which is worth mentioning. I quote here the author's words:

> *theoretical syntax is best informed by cross-linguistic research; while at the same time, the accurate documentation of languages requires a sophisticated understanding of grammatical theory.*

The book is divided into 5 parts, but I'd like to divide it otherwise into 3 parts: the first 15 chapters together, and the other two each on its own, where- using quotes from the book-

> The first fifteen chapters of this textbook are an introduction to syntactic theory from ... the perspective of the Chomskyan Principles and Parameters (P&P) approach (and its descendant: Minimalism). ... and the 16th we look at two other popular formalisms: Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) and Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG).

These three theories belong to the formalist approach to syntax. Carnie says:
"LFG and HPSG are considered to be generative grammars, just like P&P. Where all these theories differ is

in the precise formulation of the rules and constraints."

Then he answers an important question: **<u>"Is there one correct theory or what is the best theory of all?"</u>** saying

"choosing among formalisms ... to a great degree comes down to a matter of the range of phenomena one wants to account for and one's preferred means of formal expression."

Also, he advises that

> **"most researchers do their work within only one formalism. But this doesn't mean that I shouldn't be familiar with other formalisms too. An important body of work is conducted in these formalisms, and their results are often directly relevant to work being done in Chomskyan P&P syntax. Being able to interpret work done in these alternative approaches is a very useful skill (and unfortunately, one rarely taught to beginning syntacticians [like myself, the reviewer]). The results found in other approaches to syntax have often affected the development of P&P theory."**

Yet from readings in fiqh "Islamic jurisprudence" I have come to know that you ought to start with one theory or one perspective until you gain full command of it, the you may go into studying another theory or perspective thus getting great insights into your topic (It's kind of doing a comparative study).

Also, one of the things I admired in the book, which I always I admire, is the recommendations or suggested readings section.

Stanley says

Finished the 3rd edition. I don't understand why all the alternative approaches other than Chomskyan Minimalist Program have been excluded from the last few chapters. Even though they are still provided through the publisher's website (for free), it is so shameful that they are not printed on paper. These less popular but still intuitive approaches still worth learning for those who, the writer friendly called, 'young syntacticians.'

The omitted parts are substituted for still immature chapters on the so-called contemporary Minimalist Program. Not only the last couple of chapters are not well-written (relative to the Part 2, which I might say the clearest accounts on what should be dealt with Syntax 101), some of the arguments in the last chapters are somewhat contradictory.

However, except for the unripened hurried approach to the Minimalist Program, the baseline GB matters are clearly spelt out, which I always recommend the textbook to anyone interested in syntax.

For those who want to focus on more serious and recent studies in the Generative enterprise, please refer to Radford's book. But for beginners, Carnie's textbook (this one) is out of question.

Calista says

The constant let's assume that this is true to prove our next theory really started to wear on me.

Ash says

3.5/5.
The concepts are explained well, but it's simply not the best structured and is a one-sided introduction.

You won't regret reading it, if you're new to the topic, but you probably won't enjoy, look back on it with fondness, or be referring to it much in the future.