

Given the length and nature of this book, there will be relatively few readers who begin at the beginning and work their way through the chapters in order to the end. We envisage, rather, that readers will typically be reading individual chapters, or parts thereof, without having read all that precedes, and the main purpose of this syntactic overview is to enable the separate chapters to be read in the context of the grammar as a whole.

We begin by clarifying the relation between sentence and clause, and then introduce the distinction between canonical and non-canonical clauses, which plays an important role in the organisation of the grammar. The following sections then survey very briefly the fifteen chapters that deal with syntax (as opposed to morphology or punctuation), noting especially features of our analysis that depart from traditional grammar.

1 Sentence and clause

Syntax is concerned with the way words combine to form sentences. The sentence is the largest unit of syntax, while the word is the smallest. The structure of composite words is also a matter of grammar (of morphology rather than syntax), but the study of the relations between sentences within a larger text or discourse falls outside the domain of grammar. Such relations are different in kind from those that obtain within a sentence, and are outside the scope of this book.

We take sentences, like words, to be units which occur sequentially in texts, but are not in general contained one within another. Compare:

- [1] i *Jill seems quite friendly.*
 ii *I think Jill seems quite friendly.*
 iii *Jill seems quite friendly, but her husband is extremely shy.*

Jill seems quite friendly is a sentence in [i], but not in [ii–iii], where it is merely part of a sentence – just as in all three examples *friend* is part of a word, but not itself a word.

In all three examples *Jill seems quite friendly* is a clause. This is the term we apply to a syntactic construction consisting (in the central cases) of a subject and a predicate. In [iii] one clause is contained, or embedded, within a larger one, for we likewise have a subject–predicate relation between *I* and *think Jill seems quite friendly*. In [iii] we have one clause coordinated with another rather than embedded within it: *her husband* is subject, *is extremely shy* predicate and *but* is the marker of the coordination relation. We will say, then, that in [i–ii] the sentence has the form of a clause, while in [iii] it has the