



Syntactic Theory: A Formal Introduction

Ivan A. Sag, Thomas Wasow

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Syntactic Theory: A Formal Introduction is unlike any other introductory textbook on the market. Targeting students with strong formal/mathematical skills, but assuming no particular previous background, this book focuses on the development of precisely formulated grammars whose empirical predictions can be directly tested. The book begins with the inadequacy of context-free phrase structure grammars, motivating the introduction of feature structures, types and type constraints as ways of expressing linguistic generalizations. Step by step, students are led to discover a grammar that covers the core areas of English syntax that have been central to syntactic theory in the last quarter century, including: complementation, control, 'raising constructions', passives, the auxiliary system, and the analysis of long distance dependency constructions. Special attention is given to the treatment of dialect variation, especially with respect to African American Vernacular English, which has been of considerable interest with regard to the educational practice of American school systems.

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