



# Syntactic Structures Revisited: Contemporary Lectures on Classic Transformational Theory (Current Studies in Linguistics)

By Howard Lasnik

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**Syntactic Structures Revisited: Contemporary Lectures on Classic Transformational Theory (Current Studies in Linguistics)** By Howard Lasnik

**with Marcela Depiante and Arthur Stepanov**

This book provides an introduction to some classic ideas and analyses of transformational generative grammar, viewed both on their own terms and from a more modern, or minimalist perspective. The major focus is on the set of analyses treating English verbal morphology. The book shows how the analyses in Chomsky's classic *Syntactic Structures* actually work, filling in underlying assumptions and often unstated formal particulars. From there the book moves to successive theoretical developments and revisions -- both in general and in particular as they pertain to inflectional verbal morphology. After comparing Chomsky's economy-based account with his later minimalist approach, the book concludes with a hybrid theory of English verbal morphology that includes elements of both *Syntactic Structures* and *A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory*.

*Current Studies in Linguistics No. 33*

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- Sales Rank: #2032140 in Books
- Published on: 2000-01-28
- Original language: English
- Subtitled in: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.90" h x .50" w x 6.80" l, .91 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Generative grammarians work with a fluid paradigm but it flows around rocks and boulders; these are the solid arguments and analyses that the river must always content with. Lasnik revisits the source of the river--the work from 40 years ago. He shows how old ideas have come and gone and come back, how new ideas have enriched the old or missed them, how the water has flowed around the boulders, sometimes smoothly and sometimes churning into a froth."

(David Lightfoot, Professor of Linguistics, University of Maryland)

"The second best thing to participating in Howard Lasnik's class is to read about it. In *Syntactic Structures Revisited*, he allows us to witness his dynamic presentation, in this case relating to Affix Hopping. He gives us the most current version of the theory. Chomsky's early analysis--his best ever--is brought back in all its magic, to the delight of the audience."

(Juan Uriagereka, Department of Linguistics, University of Maryland)

"The single most influential piece of syntactic analysis within the generative tradition is Chomsky's analysis of the English auxilliary system. Lasnik, Depiante and Stepanov revisit this wonderful piece of syntax and allow us to savor its historical significance again. More impressive still, they show that the problems Chomsky's classic analysis addressed are still very much alive and of great interest given the current Minimalist theory."

(Norbert Hornstein, Department of Linguistics, University of Maryland)

"Anybody who wants to understand what the enterprise of generative grammar is about should not look further than this book, based on classroom lectures by Howard Lasnik. It is an extraordinary achievement by one of the leading scholars and most gifted and inspiring teachers in the field."

(Zeljko Bošković, Department of Linguistics, University of Connecticut)

"For those who think the history of generative grammar is dead and buried, this book provides much needed shock therapy. With great clarity, insight, and close attention to empirical detail, Lasnik illuminated the central role of the issues, concepts, and analyses of *Syntactic Structures* in the development of syntactic theory from the beginnings of transformational grammar to the minimalist program. A brilliant commentary on its predecessor, *Syntactic Structures Revisited* should be required reading for anyone who seeks a deeper understanding of the structure of linguistic theory and the computational nature of human language."

(Robert Freiden, Program in Linguistics, Princeton University)

[About the Author](#)

Howard Lasnik is a Professor at the University of Connecticut.

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