

Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar

The handbook

Edited by

Stefan Müller

Anne Abeillé

Robert D. Borsley

Jean-Pierre Koenig

Empirically Oriented Theoretical
Morphology and Syntax

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Contents

Preface	v
I Introduction	
1 Basic properties and elements Anne Abeillé & Robert D. Borsley	3
2 The evolution of HPSG Dan Flickinger, Carl Pollard & Tom Wasow	47
3 Formal background Frank Richter	85
4 The nature and role of the lexicon in HPSG Anthony Davis & Jean-Pierre Koenig	121
5 HPSG in understudied languages Douglas L. Ball	171
II Syntactic phenomena	
6 Agreement Stephen Wechsler	209
7 Case Adam Przepiórkowski	233
8 Nominal structures Frank Van Eynde	263

Contents

9	Argument structure and linking	
	Stephen Wechsler, Jean-Pierre Koenig & Anthony Davis	303
10	Constituent order	
	Stefan Müller	353
11	Complex predicates	
	Danièle Godard & Pollet Samvelian	399
12	Control and Raising	
	Anne Abeillé	467
13	Unbounded dependencies	
	Robert D. Borsley & Berthold Crysmann	513
14	Relative clauses in HPSG	
	Doug Arnold & Danièle Godard	573
15	Island phenomena and related matters	
	Rui Chaves	639
16	Coordination	
	Anne Abeillé & Rui Chaves	695
17	Idioms	
	Manfred Sailer	747
18	Negation	
	Jong-Bok Kim	781
19	Ellipsis	
	Joanna Nykiel & Jong-Bok Kim	817
20	Anaphoric Binding	
	Stefan Müller & António Branco	857
III	Other levels of description	
21	Morphology	
	Berthold Crysmann	909

22 Semantics	
Jean-Pierre Koenig & Frank Richter	961
23 Information structure	
Kordula De Kuthy	1003■
IV Other areas of linguistics	
24 Processing	
Tom Wasow	1041■
25 Computational linguistics and grammar engineering	
Emily M. Bender & Guy Emerson	1063■
26 Grammar in dialogue	
Andy Lücking, Jonathan Ginzburg & Robin Cooper	1109■
27 Sign languages	
Markus Steinbach & Anke Holler	1155■
28 Gesture	
Andy Lücking	1157■
V The broader picture	
29 HPSG and Minimalism	
Robert D. Borsley & Stefan Müller	1209■
30 HPSG and Categorical Grammar	
Yusuke Kubota	1283■
31 HPSG and Lexical Functional Grammar	
Stephen Wechsler & Ash Asudeh	1345■
32 HPSG and Dependency Grammar	
Richard Hudson	1397■
33 HPSG and Construction Grammar	
Stefan Müller	1443■

Contents

Indexes

1497■

Preface

Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) is a declarative (or, as is often said, constraint-based) monostratal approach to grammar which dates back to early 1985, when Carl Pollard presented his Lectures on HPSG. It was developed initially in joint work by Pollard and Ivan Sag, but many other people have made important contributions to its development over the decades. It provides a framework for the formulation and implementation of natural language grammars which are (i) linguistically motivated, (ii) formally explicit, and (iii) computationally tractable. From the very beginning it has involved both theoretical and computational work seeking both to address the theoretical concerns of linguists and the practical issues involved in building a useful natural language processing system.

HPSG is an eclectic framework which has drawn ideas from the earlier Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (GPSG, [Gazdar et al. 1985](#)), Categorical Grammar ([Ajdukiewicz 1935](#)), and Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG, [Bresnan 1982](#)), among others. It has naturally evolved over the decades. Thus, the construction-based version of HPSG, which emerged in the mid-1990s ([Sag 1997](#); [Ginzburg & Sag 2000](#)), differs from earlier work ([Pollard & Sag 1987](#); [1994](#)) in employing complex hierarchies of phrase types or constructions. Similarly, the more recent Sign-Based Construction Grammar approach differs from earlier versions of HPSG in making a distinction between signs and constructions and using it to make a number of simplifications ([Sag 2012](#)).

Over the years, there have been groups of HPSG researchers in many locations engaged in both descriptive and theoretical work and often in building HPSG-based computational systems. There have also been various research and teaching networks, and an annual conference since 1993. The result of this work is a rich and varied body of research focusing on a variety of languages and offering a variety of insights. The present volume seeks to provide a picture of where HPSG is today. It begins with a number of introductory chapters dealing with various general issues. These are followed by chapters outlining HPSG ideas about some of the most important syntactic phenomena. Next are a series of chapters on other levels of description, and then chapters on other areas of

linguistics. A final group of chapters considers the relation between HPSG and other theoretical frameworks.

It should be noted that for various reasons not all areas of HPSG research are covered in the handbook (e.g., phonology). So, the fact that a particular topic is not addressed in the handbook should not be interpreted as an absence of research on the topic. Readers interested in such topics can refer to the HPSG online bibliography maintained at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.¹

All chapters were reviewed by one author and at least one of the editors. All chapters were reviewed by Stefan Müller. Jean-Pierre Koenig and Stefan Müller did a final round of reading all papers and checked for consistency and cross-linking between the chapters.

Open access

Many authors of this handbook have previously been involved in several other handbook projects (some that cover various aspects of HPSG), and by now there are at least five handbook articles on HPSG available. But the editors felt that writing one authoritative resource describing the framework and being available free of charge to everybody was an important service to the linguistic community. We hence decided to publish the book open access with Language Science Press.

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We thank Sebastian Nordhoff and Felix Kopecky for constant support regarding \LaTeX issues, both for the book project overall and for individual authors. Felix implemented a new \LaTeX class for typesetting AVMs, `langsci-avm`, which was used for typesetting this book. It is compatible with more modern font management systems and with the `forest` package, which is used for most of the trees in this book.

¹<https://hpsg.hu-berlin.de/HPSG-Bib/>, 2020-03-18.

We thank Sašo Živanović for writing and maintaining the forest package and for help specifying particular styles with very advanced features. His package turned typesetting trees from a nightmare into pure fun! To make the handling of this large book possible, Stefan Müller asked Sašo for help with externalization of forest trees, which led to the development of the memoize package. The HPSG handbook and other book projects by Stefan were an ideal testing ground for externalization of `tikz` pictures. Stefan wants to thank Sašo for the intense collaboration that led to a package of great value for everybody living in the woods.

The code of the book is available on GitHub, and we hope that it may serve as a role model for future publications of HPSG papers.

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Part I

Introduction

