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Coordination and constituency

Houtman, Joop

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Coordination and Constituency

A Study in Categorical Grammar

Joop Houtman

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door

Joop Houtman

geboren op 3 april 1957
te Groningen

Promotor: Prof. dr. F. Zwarts

Referent: Dr. G. Bouma

voor Barbara en Simon

Preface

I would like to thank Frans Zwarts for being a most inspiring promotor. He always encouraged me to go on with the project and to finish it, even in times I would rather turn my back on linguistics. His optimism on the outcome of the enterprise was overwhelming and infectious. I thank him furthermore for bringing me back to linguistics in november 1992, after almost four years of adventure in unemployment and public relations. In fall 1992, he managed to temporarily get me on the pay roll of the Department of Alfa-Informatica of which he was interim-professor at that time.

Furthermore, I would like to thank 'referent' Gosse Bouma for his critical and accurate reading of the manuscript. The thesis benefitted a lot from the always honest and sometimes harsh comments, which provided him the nickname 'Bouma the butcher'.

The members of the evaluation committee commented upon the manuscript at length and in detail. I thank Dick Oehrle and John Nerbonne for their comments, their suggestions for improvement, and for removing 70% of the comma's I had brought in. Considering the differences between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses the book obtained a whole new meaning. I also thank Mark Steedman, not only for being a member of the evaluation committee but also because his work on coordination and gapping laid the foundation of my investigations.

The research for this thesis started in 1986, after Johan van Benthem and Albert Sassen successfully applied for a NWO-grant. Johan has always been a major source of inspiration for work in the categorial grammar framework and although my work deals with the description of natural language phenomena rather than investigations in formal systems and their properties, his work provided an indispensable formal background to my research. After Albert's retirement, Frans became professor for Dutch linguistics, but Albert was and still is present at many promotions. On these occasions, he always inquires after the stage the project is in.

viii *Preface*

I would like to thank NWO, the Dutch organization for scientific research, and the Stichting Taalwetenschap (the foundation for Linguistics) of that time, for the financial support from february 1986 up to february 1989 (grant 300-163-027). I didn't manage to finish my thesis in that period, but I owe some of my results to the research during those years.

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Shortly after I was taken on in november 1992, I used to boast about the wonderful atmosphere at the Dutch Department, where I was detached during my NWO research period (1986-1989). And I meant it because it was not only a fruitful, but most of all an extremely humorous environment. I thank Dicky Gilbers, Jan Jullens, Sietze Looyenga en Ron van Zonneveld for the serious discussions and the laughs. But when (and if) I get back at the Dutch Department some day, I will certainly boast about the brotherly spirit in the Department of Alfa-Informatica.

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Grodil, secretariaat Taalwetenschap
Oude Kijk in't Jatstraat 26
9712 EK Groningen
The Netherlands
e-mail: tenk@let.rug.nl