TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH

The Clause and its Place in the Definition of Sentence

E. O. Winter

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E. O. Winter

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Introduction

Preliminaries

The present study is an attempt to show that the foundations of a contextual grammar of English must be firmly based on an adequate definition of the sentence. The elements of a contextual grammar are built upon the relevant work of past and present scholars who have tackled the thorny problem of describing the English language as they find it. I wish to mention especially A. S. Hornby's description of the predictability of the verb patterns in English in *Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954; 1975); A. A. Hill's impressive attempt to marry sound and structure in *Introduction to Linguistic Structures* (1958); C. F. Hockett's *Course in Modern Linguistics* (1956); G. C. Scheurweghs's *Present-Day English Syntax* (1959), a description of English by text example; R. Quirk's *The Use of English* (1968, revised); and, finally, D. Bolinger's *Aspects of Language* (1968, revised). Over and above these, the most important influence on the approach I have adopted here is C. C. Fries's *The Structure of English* (1952; 1957). It is sad that the full implications of his approach to syntax and morphology were never fully understood. This is particularly true of his illustration of the differences between grammatical and lexical meanings and their interaction with each other. This has led me to distinguish a third class of item, which I call vocabulary-3 words. These pattern like open-class lexical items but relate parts of the text in the same way as closed-system items such as subordinators. An example would be the word **reason**, which paraphrases and signals the same semantic relation as the subordinator **because** (Winter, 1977, p. 25).

One of the consequences of accepting Fries's signalling approach towards structural and lexical meaning was that I favoured a decoding approach towards research. It was above all Fries's discussion of the problems of defining the sentence that eventually stimulated me to having a crack at it myself after all these years. As readers of Fries will know, he eventually adopts the non-semantic definition of Bloomfield, though he makes it clear that Bloomfield's definition and a similar one by Jespersen (1924) are both built upon an earlier one by Meillet (1903). Meillet's definition in turn is presumably built upon the notion of independence in very much earlier grammarians who confused independence of the clause with 'completeness of thought', an understandable confusion. I quote the well-known Bloomfield (1926) 'independence' definition from Fries:

Each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form.

Fries notes significantly:

The basic problem of the practical investigation undertaken here is not solved simply by accepting Bloomfield's definition of a sentence. As one approaches the body of recorded speech which constitutes the material to be analysed (or any body of recorded speech), just how should he proceed to discover the portions of an utterance that are not 'parts of any larger construction'? How can he find out the 'grammatical constructions' by virtue of which certain linguistic forms are included in larger linguistic forms? What procedures will enable him to decide which linguistic forms 'stand alone as independent utterances'? (1952, pp. 21–2)

Fries resolves the purely grammatical problem by using the term *utterance unit* for 'those chunks of talk that are marked off by a shift of speaker' (Fries, 1952, p. 23). Fries divides utterance units into (i) single minimum free utterances, (ii) single expanded free utterances (both of which are sentences) and (iii) sequences of two or more free utterances. Elsewhere (Winter, 1979, pp. 95–133) I have discussed evidence in principle for this third category, and in particular his notion of a larger linguistic unit consisting of a 'situation' sentence followed by a 'sequence' sentence which contains a clear signal of its sequence. This signalling principle is illustrated by Fries's (A) (1952, p. 246) and my (B) examples:

	Situation sentence	*Sequence sentence*
(A)	Sunday we're going out in our boat for a picnic and we'd like to have you go with us.	*That* is *the* boat that is over near M— C—.

(B) Scratch any Quaker you meet – even the most solid and secure – and under the surface you'll probably find that he is not nearly so rigid as you expect about his religious beliefs and practices. *This is because* nobody tells him what to believe. (*Observer*, 23 January 1966, p. 24)

The sequence signals here are the pronominal heads as subject, the **that** in (A) and the **this** in (B), both of which refer back to parts of the preceding sentence and both of which answer **wh**-questions on their 'situation sentence in (A) 'What boat is that?' and in (B) 'Why is this?' The important linguistic point at this stage of our knowledge is that the meaning of their sequence sentences must be seen as a function of the meaning of their 'situation' sentences, so that together they form a semantically indivisible two-sentence utterance unit. (Please note that my term 'situation' is not the same as Fries's term here and does not

imply that it comes first in sequence. For me 'situation sentence' refers to the semantics of a clause answering the question: 'What is the situation?')

Like Fries before me, my approach to the problem of defining the sentence is to examine the nature of the sentence in its utterance unit with its adjoining sentence. I also investigate the semantic as well as the syntactic boundaries of sentence. This means going outside the grammatical boundary of sentence as defined by Bloomfield and others, and attempting to work out the boundaries of a semantic unit for sequences of two or more sentences. I have already tackled this question elsewhere (Winter, 1971, 1974, 1977 and 1979) under the general heading of 'Clause Relations', the study of how we understand a clause or sentence in the light of other clauses or sentences.

Having considered utterance units of two or more sentences, I turned to re-examining the question 'What is a sentence?' Fortified by the solid description by Fries of its grammatical signalling, I now see the role of clause structure as the signalling of its contextual role as clause in the utterance unit or clause relation.

At present, the notion of 'sentence' is bedevilled by its conflation with the notion of 'clause'. There is no doubt whatever that much of the linguistic discussion of 'sentence' has centred on the tacit grammatical unit of independent clause. But, as we will note later, the grammatical unit of independent clause often contains other clauses, independent and subordinate. The definitions of sentence described by Fries do not account for the notion of clause, though traditional grammar has three kinds of grammatical sentence: simple sentence, complex sentence and compound sentence. Simple sentence is where there is just one clause which is also an independent clause; complex sentence is where there are two or more clauses, one of which is an independent (or main) clause and the other subordinate; and compound sentence is where there are two or more clauses, both of which are independent.

I propose to redefine the term 'sentence' to account for how it is used to communicate from a decoding point of view. The definition has to distinguish between two kinds of semantic boundary: the semantic boundary which coincides with the grammatical boundaries of simple sentence, complex sentence, and compound sentence, and the semantic boundary of the unit which coincides with two or more such sentences.

2 Problems of Defining the Sentence

I found that there were five main problems in tackling the definition of 'sentence':

(i) How to reconcile the notion of 'sentence' with the various communicative functions of 'clause', for example subordinate clause, independent clause, question clause, etc.

(ii) The confusion of sentence and clause in talking about matters of clause structure. Quirk *et al.* (1972, pp. 34–50), and many others, speak of subject, verb, object, adjunct, etc., as *sentence structure*.

(iii) No single definition of 'sentence' could cover the communicative function of clause in both its grammatical and semantic aspects as clause.

(iv) The difference in contextual meaning between independent clause and subordinate clause which had to be taken into account by the definition. I have already noted the essence of this difference in Winter (1977, p. 45), but it requires further description to meet the requirements of a comprehensive definition. This essence is the Prague School's notion of functional sentence perspective in which the sentence offers 'given' and 'new' information.

(v) An adequate definition has to account for the contextual role of subordinate clause as a basic function of (independent or main) clause, and ought not to treat subordination as something somehow 'included' or extraneous to the sentence.

I resolved problem (i) by deciding to use the term 'sentence' for the clause in its communicative function, namely the independent clause, by distinguishing between the various functions of the clause, and by contrasting independent clause with question clause. Problem (ii) can be resolved by only using the term 'clause' to speak of *clause structure*. Problem (iii) was resolved by settling for the notion of a composite definition, all of whose parts should apply.

Problems (iv) and (v) are closely related. We cannot fully describe independence without subordination since, as we will later note, their contrast in grammatical status corresponds with a contrast in their information status or the status of knowledge which their clauses signal. The Prague School's notions of 'given' and 'new' information certainly apply here, but it is not enough to account for the communicative function of clause. What we need to know as linguists is what kind of information is 'given' or 'new'. My resolution of this particular problem is to distinguish between two kinds of fundamental information that any clause gives: this is the information of the clause which answers the **wh**-question – 'What do you **know** (about X person, event, state, etc.)?' – and the information of the clause which answers the **wh**-question – 'What do you **think** (about X person, event, state, etc., that you know about)?' (cf. discussion of the use of the question criterion on pages 7, 8, 19).

I decided that we should re-examine the contextual role of independence and subordination in these terms, but found that the main

obstacle to any successful attempt at defining the sentence was the greater structural and semantic complexity of subordination over independence. I accordingly decided to concentrate the focus of this work on describing the problems of subordination, contrasting subordination with independence whenever possible, with the eventual view of synthesising subordinate clause with independent clause in the definition.

As will be seen, the problem of subordination is not merely one of how it is signalled - by conjunction, verb morphology, etc. - but of what kinds of subordinate clause there are and what kinds of contextual function they have *as structures which are somehow contained within the grammatical boundary of (main) clause in its sentence function*. One particular theoretical problem is the role of postmodifier-like independent clauses which interrupt the structure of the (main) clause. I call this kind of interruptive process *interpolation*, and see it as a form of *interjection*. Interpolation is treated as a kind of adverbial adjunct function and is described along with what is traditionally regarded as subordinate clause. I found it necessary to compare and contrast interpolation with the other postmodifier-like function, apposition, since the two functions can have similarities in their structural manifestation, and can merge their meanings in a multiple relation.

In brief, the key to working out a definition of sentence is that (i) it must be a composite one which accounts both for the basic meaning of the clause and for the contextual role of independent clause and subordinate clause in the sentence, and (ii) in doing so it must account for subordination as a basic function of (main) clause. The descriptive strategy is to concentrate on describing the subordinate clause in its environment of main clause.

3 Problems of Description

In redescribing the various kinds of subordination, it will be noted that there are two extremes in the amount of description. The relative clause is barely touched upon except in relation to its communicative role. In contrast, the adverbial clause has a very much more detailed description. This requires explanation. The problem about relative clause is the existence of relative-clause-type grammar, for example noun clauses such as the **what**-clause where the **what** element is both indirect question and nominal head, as in 6.4.1 below.

The adverbial clause, on the other hand, constitutes the central problem in studying subordination in English. The main problem lies in its mobility within the main clause and, more particularly, in what

semantic changes follow changes of its position relative to its main clause in terms of 'given' and 'new' information. I have taken the simplest course in adopting the three basic positions in the clause as in G. C. Scheurweghs (1959), namely front-position, mid-position and end-position. I found that the only way we could discuss the meanings of these changes of position was to present the adverbial clause and its main clause in their larger contexts. The approach adopted towards describing these positions in the clause was to describe front- and end-position separately and compare them in respect of their contextual meanings, and then describe the mid-position separately and contrast it in turn with front- and end-position.

The main criterion for examining the use of adverbial clause was for us to use the question criterion in order to establish what was 'given' or 'known' to the adverbial clause. Of the two positions, front- and end-position, end-position has the more severe problems in establishing the meaning of the adverbial clause. The analysis used is described below under 'Methods and Problems of Analysis'.

The most controversial of the subordinate structures is the category of *interpolation*, which I treat as a kind of special adverbial adjunct to the host clause. Here the crucial point to reconcile is the idea that a grammatically independent clause can be subordinate because it is included within the grammatical boundary of its host clause.

4 Methods and Problems of Analysis

The strategy of my presentation is to use traditional grammatical categories wherever possible, extending them in respect of the semantics of their contextual functions, and to present my own categories where the need arises. With very rare exceptions, the material used in this study is from written English, and the term 'sentence' is used in the first instance for the orthographic sentence: 'that which is between full stops', whether there is one clause or more clauses, that is, whether it is a simple sentence, a complex sentence or a compound sentence. Wherever I required a one-clause sentence example of English I have used Scheurweghs (1959) which, although it seldom uses examples of more than one sentence, cites their provenance so that interested readers could turn up their larger contexts.

In this study of the English clause, when we speak of grammar or parts of the sentence, we speak of the *clause* and *clause structure.* While acknowledging that speech is primary, I regard written English examples as being sufficiently close to the facts of living language to be taken seriously as evidence for our discussions of clause. I also regard

the intonation of speech as equally important with the other devices of grammar described in this study. I would even insist that in further developments of a contextual grammar of English the elements of this grammar must be married to their appropriate places within the intonation system of English, probably using a system compatible with the type proposed by Brazil *et al.* (1980). Whatever the differences between written and spoken English, they are not serious enough to invalidate my arguments about a contextual grammar based on examples of written English.

The main problem of analysis was that I felt that I could not count on a knowledge of clause relations (as described in Winter 1971, 1974, 1977 and 1979), but would have to confine myself to the larger clause relations which I have called *situation* and *evaluation*, and *hypothetical* and *real*. The phenomenon of clause relations in English is still in the process of being described and analysed with the ultimate objective of marrying it with the grammar of the English clause. To compensate for the limited use of clause relations, I have for instance depended upon the notion of topic development in analysing adverbial clause placement (7.2) as it enabled me to link the adverbial clause and its main clause to its immediately adjoining context of sentences. Instead of clause relations, I depend on certain mutually predictive semantic categories of the clause such as affirmation and denial as part of the hypothetical and real relation, situation and evaluation clause, unspecific and specific clause, and 'know' and 'think' clauses. In addition, I wish to use the notions of topic development, Interpolation clause, and the question criterion. Examples of these categories and concepts now follow in a general description of my analytical procedure.

The use of the question criterion to examine meaning in syntax is an application of the approach proposed by Anna Granville Hatcher in two articles in *Word*, Volume 12 (1956): first, the proposal itself in 'Syntax and the Sentence' and then its application to the analysis of Spanish in her monograph, 'Theme and Underlying Question'. In the first article she proposes to use questions in the search for more specific relationships between meaning and form in language. She noted then that the appeal to question-and-answer in establishing the point of a predication was not unknown to grammarians, though it had only been used sporadically up to then. This still seems true today.

We take the pragmatic view that for every clause there must be a question to which it represents an answer, and that this requirement should be applied to the parts of the clause as well. We take the clause in its context of adjoining clauses and ask ourselves, 'What question does the clause under consideration answer of its adjoining clause or clauses in this particular context?' This refinement of the requirement

for a clause to represent an answer to a particular question of a particular clause in the context is necessary because, out of context, any sentence can represent answers to as many questions as it has parts.

For example, in the well-known made-up example in (C) below, the semantics of context would differ according to what parts of the clause were already 'known' or 'given' by its preceding context, and what parts were presented as 'new' or 'not hitherto known'. This kind of semantics relates the decoder's state of knowledge.

(C) I persuaded John to leave. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 22)

Following Quirk *et al.* (1972, p. 396), we take the approach that the question provides what is true, or presupposed as true, and asks for new information. The different state of information for each part of the clause would correspond to different questions which ask for 'new' information to be supplied for what is presupposed as already true. The answers to these questions would correspond directly with their intonation in spoken form. For example, if the stress was on the infinitive verb **leave**, then the question for it is: '**What did** you persuade John **to do**?', where the parts in bold type show that the question demands the lexical realisation of its to-finitive clause as something like **to leave**. Other questions can refer to subject: '**Who** persuaded John to leave?'; to main verb: '**What did** you **do** to John?'; to object: **Who** did you persuade to leave?'; to the verb **persuade** as opposed to any other verb, such as **force**: '**How did** you **get** John to leave?' The sentences that contain answers to these questions would have the stress on the new information of their replies.

A written example like this would imply at least all the contexts that are open to the questions. However, in context, the adjoining sentences, especially the preceding sentence(s), would narrow down to a specific question to which the sentence under consideration would represent a reply, as in (D) below:

(D) Mr Baldwin promised to resign if the Cabinet refused his request. It did refuse and he did not resign.

Here, the first sentence is the hypothetical and the second sentence is the real member of the hypothetical and real relation. The hypotheticality is linguistically signalled by the verb **promise** which makes explicit that he is promising, not resigning. The second sentence co-ordinates an affirmation clause and a denial clause. Notice that the compound sentence here answers a compound **yes/no**-question: 'Did it refuse his request and did he resign?' – (yes) it did refuse, and (no) he did not resign. Now notice in particular that this question for the real

member, the question for the truth of what actually happened later, is basically a 'know' question, because we could preface it with a steering question: 'What do you **know** about the subsequent events: did the Cabinet (actually) refuse his request and did he (actually) resign?'

The semantic categories of *situation* and *evaluation* clause are unfamiliar and require some explanation. The awkward member to grasp at first is the *evaluation* member. *Evaluation clause* may evaluate either a *basis* or 'fact' or it may evaluate a *situation* which need not be a *basis*. In (E) below, the first clause is an evaluation clause which is also a denial clause, and the second clause is a basis for the evaluation by denial.

(E) There is no justification for the widely held idea that monkeys spend much of their time 'flea catching' – they are, as it happens, particularly devoid of all forms of ecto-parasites. (*New Scientist*, 1 August 1967, p. 236)

We can regard the first clause as a **no**-reply to an evaluation clause asked as a **yes/no**-question: 'Is there any justification for the widely held idea that monkeys spend much of their time "flea catching"?' The second clause answers the **wh**-question: 'How do you **know** this (is true)?' The first clause evaluates the widely held idea that monkeys spend much of their time 'flea catching'.

The notion of situation must be clearly seen as 'linguistic situation' or linguistic representation of real situation. Basically, there are three kinds of situation, two of which are linguistic. The first is the non-linguistic real-world situation, also called context of situation. The second is the strictly selective linguistic representation of this real-world situation. The clause or clauses here answer the question: 'What is the situation (that is relevant) here?' The third is the chunk of preceding text whose overall structure is taken as linguistic situation to be evaluated by clause: 'What do you **think** of the situation here?' This is textual evaluation, as in (F) below, where the evaluation clause is in bold type. The preceding description of the situation for **Abortion** constitutes the textual situation which it is evaluating.

(F) But events move slowly. Abortion has been a dilemma, a scandal, a racket and a tragedy for so long that it produces in most people a stultifying sense of ill-omen and despair that inhibits action, not encourages it. Every day the phones ring, the curtains are drawn, the lies are told, the money changes hands, the women breathe again. **One day it may look barbaric, but for the moment it's our natural condition**. (*Observer*, 24 October 1965, p. 8)

Notice that the second sentence is an evaluation of the situation for

abortion, and that the third sentence fills out the typical detail of the real-world situation for abortion. This detail represents 'know' information in contrast with the 'think' information of the fourth sentence. Notice finally that the last sentence answers the **wh**-question: 'What do you *think* of the situation for abortion as it is described here?'

Next, we consider the semantic category of *unspecific* and *specific clause*. The linguistic principle at its simplest is that *unspecific clause* requires *specific clause(s)* to provide the intelligibility of some or all of its clause's lexical choices. Sometimes we can have a special operations clause which requires the whole of its predicate to be specified next, as in (G) below, or part of its clause to be fully specified next, as in (H) below. The key linguistic concept in unspecific and specific clause is the notion of *lexical realisation*; that is, certain items of the clause may be lexically realised outside its sentence or clause boundary so that we have to take the clause and the adjoining clause as a single semantic unit for the understanding of both clauses. (See Winter, 1977, pp. 57–73.)

In (G) below, the cataphoric substitute clause **did something else as well as finger evidence** anticipates the compatible lexical realisation which follows in the very next sentence. The anticipatory element is printed bold.

(G) Bullet 399 and Frame 313 aside, the Warren Commission **did something else as well as finger evidence.** Incidental to the matter of the report it also gave a horrific picture of a floating, rootless, footloose society in America drifting aimlessly and apparently endlessly from bedsitters in the South to rented rooms in Texas. And this seemed to be a vital clue to Oswald's or for that matter Jack Ruby's character. (*Guardian*, 30 January 1967, p. 7)

One way of understanding what lexical realisation means is to see it as an answer to a **wh**-question: 'What is this something else that the Warren Commission did as well as finger evidence?' The substitute clause **did something else** signals a startling piece of information which is compatible with fingering evidence.

In (H) below, the first sentence is an unspecific clause in respect of the specific meaning of the nominal group (taking) **unpopular measures.** The next two sentences specify **against whom** the unpopular measures are being taken.

(H) Mr HEATH is more convincing in presenting himself as the Prime Minister who would really get tough in taking unpopular measures (which is perhaps one reason why he is lagging behind Mr Wilson in popularity). This is true of his policies towards the trade unions. It is

also true of his plan to introduce an element of discrimination in welfare benefits so as to concentrate them where they are needed most. (*Observer*, 27 March 1966, p. 10)

I see the second and third sentences as *affirmation by example* where the examples are assumed known to the readers. The question which the writer seems to be anticipating is the **yes/no**-question: 'Isn't this true of his policies towards the trade unions?' Similar considerations apply to the third sentence. The linguistic point about **yes/no**-questions is that we have a fully formed clause which represents what is presupposed to be true, but which requires confirmation one way or the other.

These are just two examples of the many kinds of unspecific clause there are in English, but they suffice to illustrate the principle. I have ignored examples of the use of the conjunction **More specifically** since the principle of unspecific clause can be illustrated without examples like these.

Next, the category of interpolation requires some explanation, as I regard it as a very important category of adjunct in the description of the clause in English. Interpolation is otherwise known as *parenthesis* or *aside*. We are interested in the semantics of interpolation as a special adjunct function whose distinguishing feature is its interruption of the (main) clause with evaluative material. In (I) below, there is an interpolation by independent clause whose syntactic boundary is shown by the two dash signs. It interrupts the syntactic relation between the indirect and the direct object of the verb **tell**.

(I) However, the authorities tell me – **and I think now that I believe them** – that there isn't really any need to lose sleep over him. (See 9.5)

What interests us in the semantics of the English clause is that parenthesis is not any old irrelevant intrusion into the clause, but has its own meaning as intruding adjunct. Here the writer is commenting on the direct object. As an evaluation clause it answers the **wh**-question: 'What do you now think of what the authorities are telling you here?'

Perhaps the most controversial part of the present study of the English clause is the idea that the fundamental information of the clause consists of a complementarity between 'know' and 'think' information. The notion of 'know' and 'think' clauses is a notion about the superordinate verb in the **wh**-question which could elicit them. I regard the relation of situation and evaluation as offering 'know' and 'think' information respectively, but of being a special case

of 'know' and 'think'. The other case of 'know' and 'think' clause is important in understanding the role of modal verbs. Modal verbs superimpose a 'think' upon 'know' verbs. The difference between the modal verb group **can make** and the zero modal verb group **is being grown** is illustrated by (J) below.

Fungus food ready for the hard sell

(J) A fungus that **can make** a protein, as good as the animal product, from carbohydrates **is being grown** by Rank Hovis McDougall Ltd. It is hoped that it will be possible to turn the new food source into marketable foodstuff within the next five years . . . (*New Scientist*, 29 May 1970, p. 29)

First note that it is not a fungus that makes a protein, etc. but it is *evaluated* as a fungus that has the ability to make protein. Second, notice that the verbal group **is being grown** as a definite clause simply signals that the process of growing is known to be happening right at that moment; not having a modal verb like **can** it is non-evaluative or non-speculative. The verb **hoped** is 'think' as are the remaining clauses in the **that**-clause subject which follows it. The future tense auxiliary **will** is evaluative in the sense that it *speculates.*

This area of the semantics of the verb has still to be developed and cannot be ignored. We could begin by concentrating on studies of the superordinate verbs of **wh**-questions; for instance, we could ask ourselves whether 'think' verbs will distinguish between verbs like **persuade** and **expect**.

Finally, the notion of *Topic* needs some explanation. In working out how questions relate the semantics of adverbial clauses to their preceding or adjoining context of sentences, we need the notion of topic in its simplest form. This notion does not mean the lexical participants or actors, etc. in the clause, but *what is predicated of these participants.*

In (K) below, we see the use of a substitute clause whose function is to pick up the preceding topic of **having to use force in Rhodesia,** complete with the participant **Britain.** Here we have the **if**-clause picking up the topic for the change of topic which follows in the second co-ordinate main clause to the notion of **discharging a duty it still owes to Rhodesia's African population.**

(K) It may be that Britain will have to use force in Rhodesia. If **it does so,** it will not be to please any other member of the Commonwealth but to discharge the duty it still owes to Rhodesia's African population. Now that most of what was the British Empire has been dissolved, there is a tendency among people in Britain to assume that what happens in the rest of it is no longer our responsibility. This is an escapist attitude. (*Guardian*, 11 November 1965, p. 10)

Using the adverbial clause of the next sentence as the basis for our **wh**-question, we can see it as an answer to the question: 'What has happened to this sense of duty **now that most of what was the British Empire has been dissolved**?' Thus we see that this sentence and the last sentence develop the topic of **our duty** as the responsibility which we can no longer assume away.

When an adverbial clause is in end-position, its topic is most likely to be developed as the next immediate sentence in its paragraph. In (L) below, the preceding topic is **research in management**, with the **because**-clause introducing a change in topic from being invalid to what is wrong with it.

(L) The other sort of investigator is practical enough, but can hardly be called a scientist at all. Dr. V. L. Allen once remarked that nearly all the research in management that there had ever been was invalid from the start, **because it had asked the wrong questions**. For example, if you were studying absenteeism, the practical question you might want to ask was obviously 'why do people stay away from work?'. But the real scientific problem that underlay it might be a more general one: 'Why do people go to work in the first place?' (*TES*, 11 November 1966, p. 1153)

The two sentences which follow the **because**-clause develop its topic of the wrong question, with the clause connector **For example** signalling this clearly.

In studying adverbial clause placement, we note that in front-position, as in (K), the adverbial clause picks up the preceding topic, while in end-position, as in (L), its topic is picked up by the next immediate sentence in its paragraph. The notion of topic is crude and the use of questions as criteria requires further development as do most other considerations in grammar where we are interested in contextual semantics. However, there is no avoiding the use of topic and question criteria if we are to tackle questions of contextual semantics.

I have not pursued every avenue in either topic or question and hope the reader will fill out his own knowledge and develop this approach further. There should be no surprise at this after over twenty years of general neglect of simple matters of observation of language use.

5 The Outline of the Discussion

The work is in four main parts as described below, culminating in the tripartite definition of the sentence.

5.1 The Nature of the Clause (Sections 1 - 3)

My basic strategy here is to tackle the question of what is a clause? before turning to the question of the subordinate clause in its environment of independent clause. The clause is dealt with in three sections: (Section 1) sentence distinguished from clause, introducing the notion of parsing or the signalling approach developed from C. C. Fries; (Section 2) the clause as the sole device of lexical selection, introducing the idea of the clause as a representational vehicle *whose meaning is more than the sum total of its parts*; and (Section 3) the grammatical status of the clause, introducing the contextual difference between independence and subordination.

5.2 Subordination in English (Sections 4 - 9)

Here the strategy of description is to work from the very familiar to the less familiar notions of subordination. The approach is to consider as candidates for subordination any clauses or structures that are included within the grammar of the clause. Subordination is divided into six groups: (1) the relative clause, (2) the two kinds of noun clause, (3) the adverbial clause, (4) problems of non-finite clauses which do not have subordinating conjunctions, (5) apposition, and (6) interpolation as controversial super-adjunct for the clause.

Having described the problems of subordinate structures and some of the solutions to these problems, I next sum up subordination in contrast with independence and take into account the contextual roles of clauses other than subordinate. This is required to round out the description of clause in preparation for the attempt to define the sentence.

5.3 Subordination and Non-Subordination (Section 10)

After summarising and concluding upon the role of subordinate clause, it is necessary to consider, albeit very briefly, the contextual role of special operations clauses of which cleft and pseudo-cleft clauses are just two among many. The chief point about special operations clauses is that they are not basic clauses, but special grammatical operations upon basic clause structure; that is, instead of having lexical participants at subject, object or complement in a clause which has a lexical verb, they have grammatical operators which signal the particular contextual role of their clause in some way; details and examples are given at 10.3.4, 'The Marked Special Operations Clause'.

Having described the roles of subordinate clause, independent