CHAPTER 2 Identifying clauses and clause constituents

1 Free-for-all parsing

Analyse the following sentence into its component parts, labelling and identifying as many grammatical features as you can.

- Start by identifying the ranking clauses;
- then split the clauses into their component groups and phrases;
- label these in both structural (e.g. nominal group) and clause functional (e.g. Subject) terms;
- next identify the parts of each group, including embedded clauses;
- again label them in both structural (e.g. noun) and functional (e.g. Head) terms;
- finally, analyse within embedded clauses in the same way as for the ranking clauses.

The owner of a Greek Restaurant which sparked off a late-night street-brawl has played down the incident, dismissing claims that more than 100 revellers were in the fight.

Here is a reminder of the terms you will need:

clause types: independent/dependent
embedded
finite/non-finite

clause functions: Subject, Predicator, Object, Complement, Adjunct

groups: nominal, verbal, adverbial, adjectival

group functions: Premodifier, Head, Postmodifier

phrases: prepositional phrase

word classes: noun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction

2 Structural and functional labels

Identify at least one example of the following forms performing the functions described in the extract below.

a noun functioning as Premodifier to another noun
b adjectival group functioning as Complement
c adverbial group functioning as Adjunct
d prepositional phrase functioning as Adjunct
e prepositional phrase functioning as Postmodifier in a nominal group
f embedded clause functioning as Postmodifier in a nominal group
The dispossessed must have bitter feelings towards a Government that has treated them so callously. Home owners and small businesses want predictable interest rates. Even today’s rates with low inflation are too high compared with one or two per cent charged in the expanding economies of Asia. The remedy is in the Government’s hands, and to hear them deny responsibility makes me furious.

3 SPOCA

Analyse the following extracts in terms of the functional clause constituents (SPOCA). In the first, the constituents that you need to label have already been separated; in the two others, you must also decide what the constituents are.

a. (from a novel)
Rose put down her glass and went to the window.
She could see the floodlit tower and lights in the trees by the river.
Her heart heaved within her
as if it were some huge thing which she had swallowed.
She suddenly wanted to sob with joy and fear.

b. (from a book on evolution)
We animals are the most complicated things in the known universe. The universe that we know is a tiny fragment of the actual universe. Even more complicated objects than us may exist on other planets, and some of them may already know about us. But this doesn’t alter the point that I want to make.

c. (from a textbook review)
Introducing Grammar by Edward Woods is in the Penguin English Applied Linguistics Series. The stated aims of the series are: ‘to provide short, clear and accessible guides to key topics ... ’. This is a slim paperback of 128 pages that homes in on key areas of practical value. This is intended as an introductory book to the area, and the main topics cover: the nature of grammar; relationships between grammar and communication, grammar and the syllabus, grammar and methodology; grammar tasks and language awareness.