Parts of speech and dependent clauses: A typological study

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I like languages. At least that much was clear to me when I finished high school. The problem was that I didn't know yet why I liked them so much. And since there didn't seem to be any particular language that I liked better than any other, I decided to start studying my own language: Dutch. During my first classes in Dutch syntax I discovered, to my great excitement, that there was a real academic discipline devoted to my gut feeling about languages; it was called Linguistics. Moreover, I realized that the existence of Linguistics implied the existence of Linguists. Very soon I knew I wanted to belong to this group of people – that I wanted to be a linguist. I hope this book shows that I have taken an important step on my way to becoming one.

One day in August 2004, when it was pouring with rain and I was in a particularly bad mood, Kees Hengeveld called me to say that I got the job: I was going to be a PhD candidate at the Department of Theoretical Linguistics of the University of Amsterdam. Three days later my desk was waiting for me at the Herengracht 338. Some years earlier, when I was still a student, the huge, high-ceilinged, large-windowed room on the ground floor of this beautiful building had been renovated. I remember clearly that I peeped inside the room and thought: If only one of these desks could once be mine…and here it was!

The other desks in the room belonged to three wonderful persons: Rafael, Annerieke, and Gerry. They were the firsts of many more people that have made my time as a PhD candidate so thoroughly enjoyable. I wish
to express my deep gratitude to all of them.

First, I want to thank Kees, for the enthusiasm, dedication, and patience with which he helped me to structure lines of thought, improve analyses, and gain confidence as a researcher along the way. He did this not only in his role of supervisor of my MA, MPhil, and PhD theses, but also as a colleague in our various joint projects. I am very grateful for all these years of collaboration, during which I learned innumerable cool things about innumerable cool languages, as well as a few lessons about myself. Among the latter, there is one thing Kees taught me that I will always remember: that it is essential to invest energy in those things in (linguistic) life that make one’s heart beat faster.

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confirmed, time and again, my feeling that linguists are inspiring, open-minded, and great fun!

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