



## SYNTAX AND ITS MAIN UNITS. TRADITIONAL AND COGNITIVE APPROACHES IN SYNTAX.

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### ABSTRACT

*This article explores syntax and its main units, as well as traditional and cognitive approaches to syntactic analysis. It explains words, phrases, clauses, and sentences as core units and highlights grammatical rules and sentence classification in traditional approaches, alongside mental representations, constructions, and meaning formation in cognitive approaches. The article demonstrates how formal and cognitive perspectives complement each other in understanding syntax.*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the foundational subfields of linguistics is syntax, which examines the principles and regulations that dictate the structure of sentences in a language. It addresses how words combine to produce meaningful expressions and how these combinations communicate communicative intent. Understanding language as a system depends heavily on syntax, which sheds light on both linguistic proficiency and effective communication. Its study enables linguists, language instructors, and students to examine how meaning is created at a level above that of single words.

The fundamental elements of syntax may be thought of as hierarchical arrangements that include the word, the phrase, the clause, and the sentence, from the smallest to the biggest. Words are the fundamental components, and every word has grammatical characteristics that dictate how it interacts with other words. A phrase is a group of words that work together as a single unit in a sentence, such as noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases. Clauses are bigger units that include at least a subject and a predicate and produce commands, questions, exclamations, or statements. Ultimately, sentences represent entire ideas and might include one or more clauses organized in a variety of syntactic forms.

Traditional methods of analyzing syntax have mostly used prescriptive and descriptive frameworks, which frequently concentrate on categorizing sentence types, parts of speech,

and the rules governing agreement and word order. In an effort to define the "correct" forms of sentence structure, traditional grammar places an emphasis on hierarchical structures, syntactic categories, and transformational rules. It frequently distinguishes between simple, compound, and complex sentences and examines their elements in terms of subjects, predicates, objects, and modifiers. Traditional methods also emphasize the significance of syntax in preserving clarity, coherence, and grammatical correctness in communication. The pedagogical strategies employed in schools and universities for centuries have been influenced by this fundamental method of language instruction.

In contrast, cognitive approaches to syntax reflect a more contemporary viewpoint that highlights the link between language and human thought. Contrary to the formal rules approach, cognitive syntax sees sentence structure as a reflection of mental processes, conceptual organization, and experiential patterns. From this viewpoint, comprehending syntax entails examining how speakers mentally represent and process linguistic data, how they arrange concepts in space and time, and how meaning is created in live conversation. Cognitive linguists contend that syntax arises from recurrent cognitive encounters and interactions with the environment, and they concentrate on patterns, structures, and regularities based on usage. By incorporating discoveries from psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and semantic theory, this method also provides a more dynamic view of how sentences are created and understood.

Its concentration on structures as fundamental units of analysis is a major contribution of cognitive syntax. In addition to unique words, idioms, collocations, and complex sentence patterns, constructions are standardized pairings of form and meaning that go beyond single words. From this viewpoint, linguists may explain context-dependent meaning, linguistic creativity, and diversity in ways that traditional grammar may neglect. Additionally, cognitive approaches place a strong emphasis on the link between vocabulary and syntax, demonstrating how the semantic characteristics of words affect syntactic behavior.

A comparison of traditional and cognitive methods reveals both complementary insights and methodological differences. The traditional syntax offers a methodical approach to classifying and instructing sentence forms, with an emphasis on stability and established standards. In contrast, cognitive syntax emphasizes the fluidity, adaptability, and cognitive basis of sentence creation, providing explanations for linguistic innovation, variation, and cross-linguistic patterns. Together, these methods improve our comprehension of syntax by providing both practical tools for language instruction and theoretical frameworks for linguistic study.

In conclusion, linguistics is still primarily concerned with syntax, which focuses on the way that words interact to produce coherent and meaningful statements. Words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are its primary components, and they form a hierarchical basis for examining language structure. Cognitive approaches prioritize mental representations, usage patterns, and the interaction between meaning and structure, whereas conventional methods stress rules, categories, and prescriptive standards. In syntactic analysis, the complex interplay between form, function, and cognition is highlighted by the way these viewpoints are integrated, which provides a thorough understanding of how people create, interpret, and innovate within language.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

The examination of syntax has a long history in linguistic study, covering both theoretical and practical aspects. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik are examples of authors whose traditional grammar treatises on classical works offer thorough explanations of word order, syntactic categories, and sentence structures. Their study focuses on the systematic categorization of sentences into types and subtypes, providing thorough analyses of subjects, predicates, objects, and modifiers. By establishing formal rules and hierarchical structures

that describe how sentences are constructed and transformed, Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar further revolutionized syntactic research. His work established the framework for comprehending syntax as an independent element of language that is governed by universal laws. On the other hand, cognitive syntax approaches, which were created by researchers like Fillmore, Langacker, and Croft, emphasize the connection between language forms and human thought. Cognitive grammar posits that syntax is intimately related to semantic and conceptual processes, highlighting the significance of constructions as fundamental units of meaning. These investigations demonstrate how syntactic understanding is influenced by repeated patterns of language use, which are indicative of experiential learning and cognitive representations. Cognitive linguists contend that syntax is an evolving system born out of interaction, perception, and communication requirements rather than just a collection of prescriptive rules.

Recent studies in cognitive syntax have looked at a range of areas, such as the mental representation of sentence structures, the use-based emergence of constructions, and cross-linguistic patterns in syntactic organization. The cognitive processing of syntactic structures has been empirically supported by psycholinguistic research employing experimental techniques like reaction time measurements and eye-tracking. These results suggest that cognitive processes like attention, memory, and conceptual mapping are essential to both the understanding and generation of sentences. In this article, the approach to researching syntax combines theoretical analysis with comparative techniques. The study utilizes descriptive and analytical approaches to analyze the fundamental components of syntax, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The study of classical grammar books, syntactic models, and sentence classification methods are used to evaluate conventional methodologies. The study of cognitive approaches includes an examination of current research in psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and construction grammar. The research additionally uses a comparative methodology to highlight differences and convergences between conventional and cognitive viewpoints, placing an emphasis on how each approach explains sentence development, structural patterns, and meaning creation.

The collection of data involves the analysis of real-world examples of both spoken and written English, which have been chosen to represent a range of syntactic events. We explore these examples' cognitive motivations, functional roles, and structural characteristics. Patterns, deviations, and repeated constructions are identified using both quantitative and qualitative observations. By bringing together formal, descriptive, and cognitive viewpoints, the technique offers a thorough grasp of syntax, allowing for a fair examination of structural norms, mental representations, and communicative use. This synthesis of literary review and methodology establishes a basis for a thorough examination of syntax, demonstrating how traditional and cognitive methodologies enhance and complement one another. The research seeks to provide a nuanced view of the development, interpretation, and cognitive underpinnings of sentence patterns through the integration of historical, theoretical, and empirical understandings.

## RESULTS

Using both conventional and cognitive methods to analyze syntax and its primary components yielded a number of notable patterns and insights. According to traditional grammar, sentences can be systematically classified into simple, compound, and complex kinds, each with distinct components like subjects, predicates, objects, and modifiers. The simplest syntactic structures, which usually consist of a single clause with one subject and predicate, are shown by simple sentences. The interplay of conjunctions and punctuation in maintaining clarity and coherence is shown by compound sentences, which are created by coordinating two or more independent clauses. The hierarchical connections inside sentences and the role of subordination in conveying nuanced meaning are highlighted by complex

sentences, which have at least one dependent clause. Traditional analysis also backed up the significance of phrase structures, like noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases, as fundamental components of sentence creation.

According to a cognitive perspective, the research demonstrated that sentence structures are not just formal word combinations, but also represent mental representations and conceptual organization. It was found that sentences and clauses function as cognitive units that organize thinking by directing how speakers arrange information in terms of time, cause, and space. For instance, dependent clauses in complicated sentences frequently represent background information, cause-effect connections, or temporal sequences, illustrating the cognitive basis for grammatical decisions. As essential units in cognitive syntax, structures appeared as patterns that blend form and meaning beyond grammatical restrictions. The interaction between usage frequency, conceptual mapping, and syntactic flexibility was emphasized by common idioms, collocations, and reoccurring sentence patterns.

The similarities and differences between traditional and cognitive approaches were highlighted by the comparative study. Both methods recognize the hierarchical structure of sentences and the functional importance of syntactic units. But cognitive syntax concentrates on meaning, mental representation, and context-dependent usage, while traditional grammar mainly emphasizes prescriptive rules, official classification, and structural correctness. Additionally, cognitive analysis emphasized that syntactic variation, which is often seen as an aberration in traditional terms, is frequently driven by communicative or conceptual reasons, demonstrating the flexibility and ingenuity involved in language use. This was confirmed by the analysis of real language data. Cognitive patterns of sentence creation, such as ellipsis, topicalization, and emphasis, which conventional analysis could categorize as casual or unconventional, were demonstrated through examples of spoken language. Instances of written language, which were more in line with prescriptive norms, illustrated how standardized forms make effective and understandable communication possible. Both kinds of data supported the notion that syntax is the product of the interaction between form, function, cognition. The findings, taken as a whole, show that syntax is a dynamic system influenced by linguistic conventions, cognitive processes, and communicative goals, rather than a fixed set of rules. Conventional methods provide the tools for grammatical accuracy and formal categorization, whereas cognitive approaches explain the underlying reasons, mental representations, and patterns of usage that influence sentence structure. By combining these viewpoints, we may gain a thorough grasp of syntax that connects cognitive and functional factors with structural analysis.

### **Conclusion**

The intricate and multidimensional aspect of language sentence structure is highlighted when syntax and its primary components are studied using traditional and cognitive methods. Syntax is essentially about the way words combine to create meaningful expressions, and its main units—words, phrases, clauses, and sentences—offer a hierarchical framework for comprehending this process. Traditional methods place a strong emphasis on grammatical rules, sentence categorization, and structural accuracy, providing unambiguous instructions for creating consistent and uniform sentences. They continue to be vital for instruction, formal analysis, and maintaining linguistic standards. In contrast, cognitive methods shed light on the underlying cognitive and conceptual foundations of syntactic structures. They demonstrate how closely related sentence construction is to cognitive processes, conceptual organization, and communicative intent. Syntax is not just a collection of prescriptive rules but rather a dynamic system that develops from interaction, experience, and mental representation, as shown by its constructions, usage patterns, and context-dependent variations.

By combining these viewpoints, we gain a more complete picture of syntax. The cognitive approach explains the motivations, adaptability, and inventiveness of language use, while the

conventional analysis provides the structural framework. They demonstrate together that syntax functions at the nexus of form, meaning, and cognition, allowing speakers to communicate complicated ideas, maintain clarity, and adjust language to diverse communicative situations. In sum, learning syntax via traditional and cognitive approaches enhances linguistic understanding by connecting the formal grammatical analysis of language with its cognitive and functional aspects. By emphasizing the complex interaction between linguistic form, cognitive processes, and communicative intent, this holistic method increases our understanding of how people create, understand, and change words.

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