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

Jizzakh branch of the National University of
Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek
The faculty of Psychology, department of Foreign languages
Phylology and foreign languages
Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla qizi
Student of group 302-21: Rustamova Zohida Zafar qizi

Annotation: This article provides an in-depth examination of syntax, the branch of linguistics that studies how words combine to form phrases and sentences. It outlines the main syntactic units—words, phrases, clauses, and sentences—and explains how these elements interact to convey meaning in language. The article then contrasts traditional and cognitive approaches to syntax. Traditional syntax emphasizes rule-based structures and formal hierarchies, focusing on sentence diagrams and fixed grammatical categories. In contrast, cognitive approaches view syntax as a reflection of human cognition, influenced by experience, context, and meaning. Key concepts such as Construction Grammar and embodied cognition demonstrate how cognitive linguistics connects syntax with conceptual and cultural aspects of language use. Through comparing both approaches, the article highlights how syntax operates not only as a structural system but also as a flexible, meaningful component of human communication. This dual perspective allows for a richer understanding of syntax's role in language and links it to broader cognitive and cultural processes.

Key words: Syntax, syntactic units, traditional syntax, cognitive syntax, phrase structure, Construction Grammar, embodied cognition, sentence structure, linguistic theory, language cognition, syntax and semantics, language structure, communication.

Syntax, as a subfield of linguistics, examines how words are structured into phrases and sentences to convey meaningful expressions. Its study provides insights into sentence structure, word relationships, and how meaning emerges from syntactic organization. This article explores the primary units of syntax and contrasts traditional syntactic theories with cognitive approaches, revealing the evolution of syntactic analysis in linguistic studies.

Understanding Syntax: Definition and Main Units

At its core, syntax concerns the rules governing the arrangement of words to create grammatically correct sentences. This organization allows languages to form a potentially

infinite variety of sentences from a finite set of words. Within syntactic theory, several key units form the building blocks of sentence structure:

- Words: The fundamental units of syntax, encompassing different types such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc., which carry lexical meaning and grammatical properties.

- Phrases: Groups of words that function as a single unit within a sentence. Common types include noun phrases (NP), verb phrases (VP), and prepositional phrases (PP).

- Clauses: Larger syntactic units that may contain a subject and a predicate, representing a complete thought or action.

- Sentences: The highest unit of syntax, combining clauses and phrases to express a coherent idea or question.

These units build a hierarchy, where smaller units combine to form larger structures, allowing languages to express complex ideas.

Traditional Approaches to Syntax

Traditional syntax, influenced by classical grammar and descriptive approaches, focuses on formal rules and structures that define grammatical correctness. Originating from early works like those of Aristotle and Latin grammarians, traditional syntax prioritizes clear-cut categories, word functions, and sentence diagrams to represent syntactic relationships.

Key Features of Traditional Syntax:

- Descriptive Rules: Traditional approaches often provide prescriptive rules on how words and phrases should be ordered. For example, in English, the standard sentence structure is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).

- Structural Hierarchies: Traditional syntax relies on sentence diagrams or tree structures to show how words are hierarchically organized.

- Category-Based: Words are grouped into categories such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, with each category having specific syntactic roles.

- Phrase Structure Rules: Sentence structures are determined by rules that specify how different phrase types (NP, VP, etc.) fit together, as described in works like Noam Chomsky's early syntactic theories.

Traditional syntax effectively describes observable linguistic patterns, but its rules can appear rigid and may lack insight into how syntax operates at a cognitive or functional level. This limitation has led to the development of alternative approaches to understanding syntax.

Cognitive Approaches to Syntax

Cognitive approaches, emerging in the late 20th century, present a more dynamic and context-sensitive view of syntax. Pioneered by linguists like George Lakoff and Ronald Langacker, cognitive linguistics suggests that syntax is not solely about abstract rules but is closely connected to human thought processes, perception, and conceptualization.

Key Principles of Cognitive Syntax:

- Meaning-Based Syntax: Unlike traditional syntax, cognitive approaches emphasize that syntax is fundamentally tied to meaning. Rather than being fixed structures, syntactic patterns reflect how speakers conceptualize events and relationships.

- Construction Grammar: A prominent cognitive approach, Construction Grammar posits that syntactic structures are "constructions," pairings of form and meaning that serve communicative functions. Each construction is seen as a learned pairing of syntactic pattern and semantic meaning.

- Embodied Cognition: Syntax is shaped by human perception and interaction with the physical world. For instance, spatial prepositions (like "in," "on," "under") reflect not only spatial relations but also mental conceptualizations shaped by experience.

- Flexibility and Contextuality: Cognitive syntax recognizes that syntax adapts based on context, speaker intentions, and cultural norms, allowing for more flexibility than the rigid rules of traditional syntax. Through cognitive approaches, syntax is seen as a reflection of general cognitive abilities, such as categorization, analogy, and metaphor. Syntax in cognitive linguistics is, therefore, not just a set of structural rules but a dynamic system that evolves alongside human experience.

Comparing Traditional and Cognitive Approaches

While traditional and cognitive approaches to syntax differ, they complement each other in several ways. Traditional syntax provides precise, rule-based descriptions of sentence structure, beneficial for teaching grammar and understanding basic sentence formation. Cognitive approaches, on the other hand, offer a deeper understanding of why syntactic structures exist as they do and how they function in communication.

Major Contrasts:

Feature	Traditional Syntax	Cognitive Syntax
Focus	Rule-based sentence structure	Meaning-based, experience-driven structures
Methodology	Formal rules, sentence diagrams	Conceptual, functional analysis
Flexibility	Relatively rigid; rule-governed	Flexible; influenced by context and speaker intent
Relation to Meaning	Syntax often viewed as independent of semantics	Syntax is closely tied to semantics and conceptualization
Cultural Influence	Limited; syntax as universal rules	Strong; syntax shaped by cultural and contextual factors

The Interplay of Syntax and Semantics

Both approaches recognize that syntax is deeply linked to semantics, though they differ in how they define this relationship. Traditional syntax often treats syntax and semantics as separate, with syntax forming structures independently of meaning. Cognitive syntax, however, posits that syntax and semantics are inseparable, viewing syntactic patterns as inherently meaningful and reflective of mental processes.

Conclusion

In sum, both traditional and cognitive approaches to syntax contribute valuable perspectives to the study of language structure and meaning. Traditional syntax provides essential frameworks and analytical tools for identifying and describing grammatical patterns, forming a foundational approach for linguistic education and descriptive grammar. Cognitive approaches, meanwhile, enhance our understanding by situating syntax within the broader context of human cognition, making it possible to see syntax as an adaptive, flexible system deeply rooted in human experience, perception, and social interaction. Together, these approaches highlight that syntax is not merely a set of rigid rules but a dynamic reflection of both universal linguistic structures and individual, culturally influenced ways of thinking. By integrating insights from both approaches, linguists and language learners alike can achieve a more comprehensive view of language, recognizing syntax as a structured yet evolving component of human communication. This synthesis not only enriches our understanding of syntax but also strengthens the interdisciplinary links between linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science. The study of syntax, whether through traditional or cognitive approaches, reveals much about the human capacity for language. Traditional syntax emphasizes formal rules and structures, serving as a foundational approach for linguistic analysis. Cognitive approaches expand this understanding, connecting syntax with human cognition and culture. By examining syntax through these dual lenses, we gain a richer perspective on language, one that acknowledges both its structural complexity and its adaptive, meaningful nature in human communication.

REFERENCES

1. Chomsky, N. (1957). Syntactic Structures. Mouton.

2. Croft, W., & Cruse, D. A. (2004). Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge University Press.

3. Goldberg, A. E. (1995). Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure. University of Chicago Press.

4. Jackendoff, R. (2002). Foundations of Language: Brain, Meaning, Grammar, Evolution. Oxford University Press.

5. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors We Live By. University of Chicago Press.

6. Langacker, R. W. (1987). Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford University Press.

7. Saeed, J. I. (2015). Semantics. John Wiley & Sons.

8. Teshaboyeva, N., & Mamayoqubova, S. (2020). COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING. In МОЛОДОЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬ: ВЫЗОВЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ (pp. 409-414).

9. Teshaboyeva, N. (2020). LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY, ITS STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE NEW PERSPECTIVE DIRECTIONS. In МОЛОДОЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬ: ВЫЗОВЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ (pp. 415-420).

10. Teshaboyeva, N. Z. (2019). TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE INTESL AND TEFL CLASSROOMS. In СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ: АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ, ДОСТИЖЕНИЯ И ИННОВАЦИИ (pp. 82-84).

11. Хидирова, Д., & Тешабоева, Н. (2022). Pedagogical conditions for the development of the healthy thinking in students. Zamonaviy innovatsion tadqiqotlarning dolzarb muammolari va rivojlanish tendensiyalari: yechimlar va istiqbollar, 1(1), 120-122.

12. Gaybullayeva, N. D. K., & Kizi, T. N. Z. (2022). THE ROLE OF INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN TEACHING LANGUAGE LEARNERS FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND MAINLY ENGLISH. *Central Asian Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies (CARJIS)*, *2*(10), 8-10.

13. Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla qizi, Jurayev Muhammadrahim Murod o'g'li, & Mamirova Munisa Rajab qizi. (2021). Language Learning Culturally and the Role of Literature in Teaching Process. *Central Asian Journal of Theoretical and Applied Science*, *2*(3), 1-5. Retrieved from https://www.cajotas.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJOTAS/article/view/84

14. Teshaboyeva, N. (2023). THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM IN PRESENT DAY. Журнал иностранных языков и лингвистики, 5(5).

15. Teshaboyeva, N. (2023). THE MODERN INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES. Журнал иностранных языков и лингвистики, 5(5).

16. Teshaboyeva, N. Z. (2023, November). Adjective word group and its types. In " Conference on Universal Science Research 2023" (Vol. 1, No. 11, pp. 59-61).

17. Teshaboyeva, N. Z. (2023, November). Modifications of Consonants in Connected speech. In " Conference on Universal Science Research 2023" (Vol. 1, No. 11, pp. 7-9).

18. Teshaboyeva, N., & Rayimberdiyev, S. (2023, May). THE IMPORTANCE OF USING MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH CLASSES. In Academic International Conference on Multi-Disciplinary Studies and Education (Vol. 1, No. 8, pp. 149-153).

19. Nafisa, T., & Marina, S. (2023). TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN TESL AND TEFL CLASSROOMS. International Journal of Contemporary Scientific and Technical Research, 465-469.

20. Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla kizi, & Akramov Ibrohimjon. (2023). WORD FORMATION. COMPOUNDING. "XXI ASRDA INNOVATSION TEXNOLOGIYALAR, FAN VA TA'LIM TARAQQIYOTIDAGI DOLZARB MUAMMOLAR" Nomli Respublika Ilmiy-Amaliy Konferensiyasi, 1(12), 109–113. Retrieved from https://universalpublishings.com/index.php/itfttdm/article/view/3187

21. Teshaboyeva, N., & Yakubova, N. (2023). CHANGES OF MEANING OF WORDS. Центральноазиатский журнал образования и инноваций, 2(12), 126-129.

22. Sharifova Dinora Tohir qizi, & Teshaboyeva Nafisa. (2023). " NOUNS AND THEIR GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES". Новости образования: исследование в XXI веке, 2(16), 292–297. извлечено от http://nauchniyimpuls.ru/index.php/noiv/article/view/13128

23. Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla kizi, & Akramov Ibrohimjon. (2023). WORD FORMATION. COMPOUNDING. "XXI ASRDA INNOVATSION TEXNOLOGIYALAR, FAN VA TA'LIM TARAQQIYOTIDAGI DOLZARB MUAMMOLAR" Nomli Respublika Ilmiy-Amaliy Konferensiyasi, 1(12), 109–113. Retrieved from https://universalpublishings.com/index.php/itfttdm/article/view/3187

24. Qodirova Aziza Yunusovna, & Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla qizi. (2023). "VERBS AND THEIR GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES". Новости образования: исследование в XXI веке, 2(16), 280–283. извлечено от http://nauchniyimpuls.ru/index.php/noiv/article/view/13126

25. Tuxtayeva Aziza Ilhom qizi, & Teshaboyeva Nafisa. (2023). Word Formation: Compounding . "Conference on Universal Science Research 2023", 1(12), 113–115. Retrieved from https://universalpublishings.com/index.php/cusr/article/view/3185

26. Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla, & Iskandarova Sarvinoz Shukurullo qizi. (2023). THE CLASSIFICATION OF SYNONYMS AND THEIR SPECIFIC FEATURES. "XXI ASRDA INNOVATSION TEXNOLOGIYALAR, FAN VA TA'LIM TARAQQIYOTIDAGI DOLZARB MUAMMOLAR" Nomli Respublika Ilmiy-Amaliy Konferensiyasi, 1(12), 126–131. Retrieved from https://universalpublishings.com/index.php/itfttdm/article/view/3191

27. Тешабоева, Н. (2023). Teaching writing as a major part of productive skills in mixed ability classes . Информатика и инженерные технологии, 1(2), 652–656. извлечено от https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/computer-engineering/article/view/25759

28. Teshaboyeva, N., & Yakubova, N. (2023). WORD FORMATION. COMPOUNDING. *Development of pedagogical technologies in modern sciences*, *2*(12), 187-192.

29. Teshaboyeva, N. (2023). Compound sentences in the English language. *Yangi O'zbekiston taraqqiyotida tadqiqotlarni o'rni va rivojlanish omillari*, *2*(2), 68-70.

30. Nafisa, T. (2023). THE USA ECONOMY, INDUSTRY, MANUFACTURING AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF GREAT BRITAIN. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RECENTLY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHER'S THEORY*, *1*(9), 94-97.

31. Nafisa, T. (2023, December). Secondary ways of word formation. In *" Conference on Universal Science Research 2023"* (Vol. 1, No. 12, pp. 109-112).

32. Nafisa, T. (2023). VOWELS AND THEIR MODIFACATIONS. *Новости образования: исследование в XXI веке*, *2*(16), 298-305.

33. Nafisa, T. (2023, December). Secondary ways of word formation. In *" Conference on Universal Science Research 2023"* (Vol. 1, No. 12, pp. 109-112).

34. Nafisa, T. (2023). THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE USA: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION, SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION, SCHOOL FORMS. *The Role of Exact Sciences in the Era of Modern Development*, *1*(6), 53-57.

35. Qizi, T. N. Z., & Umedovich, M. Y. (2023). AMERICAN-BASED PRONUNCIATION STANDARDS OF ENGLISH. *Scientific Impulse*, *2*(15), 563-567.

36. Nafisa, T. (2023, December). Word Formation: Compounding. In *" Conference on Universal Science Research 2023"* (Vol. 1, No. 12, pp. 113-115).

37. Nafisa, T. (2023). NOUNS AND THEIR GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES. *Новости образования: исследование в XXI веке*, *2*(16), 292-297.