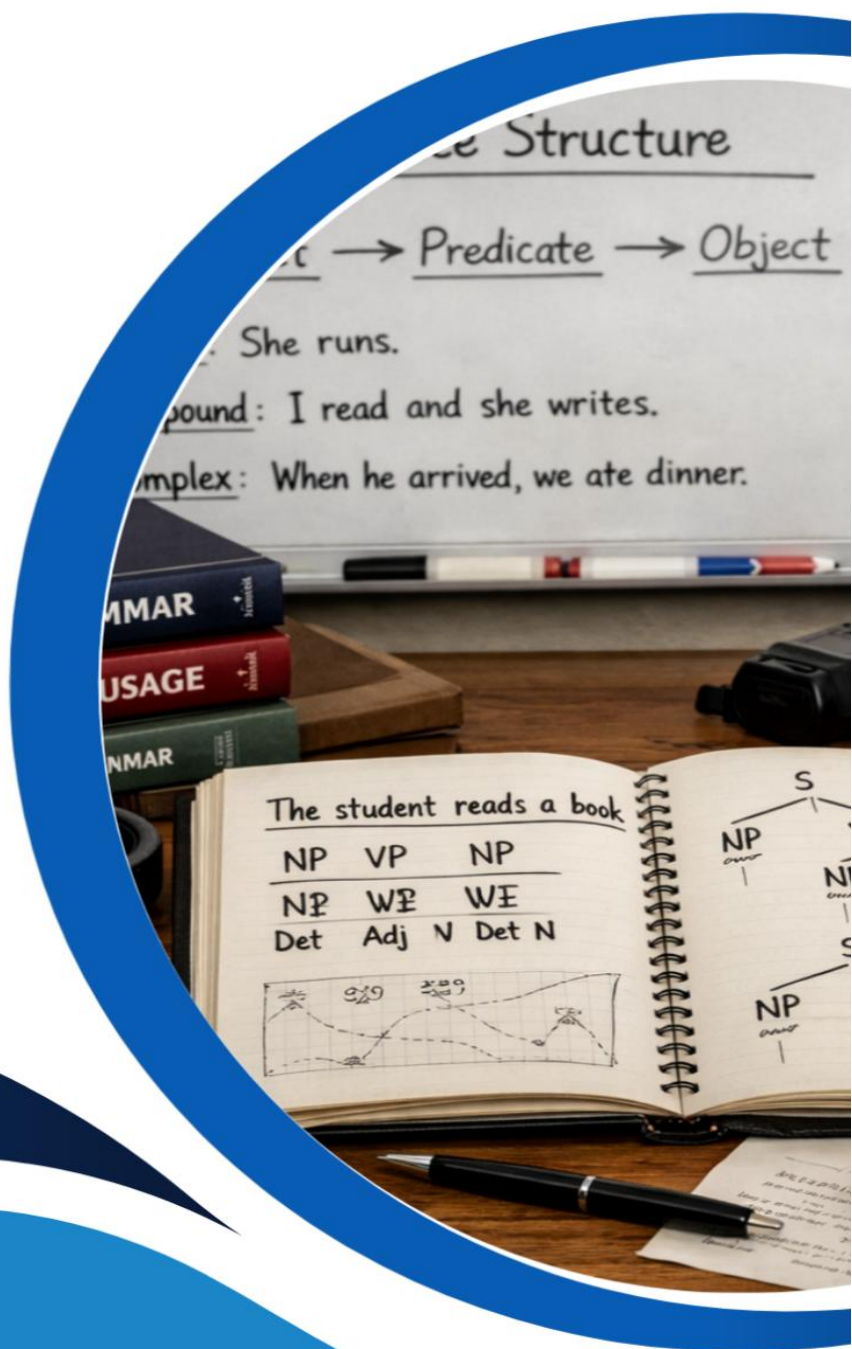


LIN203

GRAMMAR



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Course code: LIN 203
Course title: Grammar
Course credit load: 3 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures

Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description

Series 3: Functions and Rules in Grammar

Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description

Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages

Proposed Outline for Series 1

Part .1 Grammatical Units

- **1.1.1 Words as Units of Grammar**
- **1.1.2 Phrases and Clauses**
- **1.1.3 Sentences as Complete Units**

Part .2 Grammatical Functions

- **1.2.1 Subject, Predicate, and Object**
- **1.2.2 Modifiers and Complements**
- **1.2.3 Coordination and Subordination**

Part .3 Grammatical Structures

- **1.3.1 Linear and Hierarchical Structures**
- **1.3.2 Constituency and Dependency Relations**
- **1.3.3 Structural Ambiguity**

Part .4 Rules of Grammar

- **1.4.1 Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules**
- **1.4.2 Transformational Rules**
- **1.4.3 Constraints and Well-formedness**

Introduction

Language is built upon patterns that allow us to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. At the heart of these patterns lie grammatical units and structures, which provide the framework for



constructing meaningful sentences. Without an understanding of these foundations, it becomes difficult to analyse or describe how language works. This Series therefore sets the stage for your journey into grammar by focusing on the essential building blocks that underpin all linguistic analysis.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the ability to identify, describe, and analyse grammatical units and structures, and to explain how they function within sentences. By the end, you should be able to apply these concepts confidently in both theoretical and practical contexts.

We shall commence this Series by examining grammatical units, beginning with words, phrases, clauses, and sentences as complete units of grammar. Next, we will move on to grammatical functions, considering roles such as subject, predicate, object, modifiers, and complements. Following that, we will explore grammatical structures, looking at linear and hierarchical arrangements, constituency, and dependency relations. Finally, we will wrap up by studying rules of grammar, including prescriptive and descriptive approaches, transformational rules, and constraints that determine well-formedness. This sequential flow will provide you with a solid foundation for the more advanced topics that follow in later Series.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define grammatical units including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences,
- **SLO 1.2** explain the major grammatical functions such as subject, predicate, object, modifiers, and complements,
- **SLO 1.3** analyse grammatical structures by identifying linear and hierarchical arrangements, constituency, and dependency relations,
- **SLO 1.4** evaluate rules of grammar by distinguishing between prescriptive and descriptive approaches, and
- **SLO 1.5** assess transformational rules and constraints to determine the well-formedness of sentences.

1.1 Grammatical Units

Grammatical units are the fundamental building blocks of language. They provide the structure upon which meaning is conveyed and sentences are formed. In this Part, we will explore words, phrases, clauses, and sentences as distinct units of grammar. Each of these units has a specific role, and together they form the basis for syntactic analysis.

1.1.1 Words as units of grammar

A **word** is the smallest independent grammatical unit that carries meaning. Words can be classified into categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Each category performs a unique



function in sentence construction. For example, nouns name entities, verbs express actions or states, and adjectives describe qualities.

Words combine to form larger units, but they remain the essential elements of grammar. Without words, phrases and sentences cannot exist.

Fill in the blank: A _____ is the smallest independent grammatical unit that carries meaning.

Pronoun	Takes the place of a noun
Adjective	Describes or modifies a noun or pronoun
Verb	Describes an action, occurrence, or state of being
Adverb	Describes or modifies an adjective, a verb, another adverb, or a whole sentence
Preposition	Shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence
Conjunction	Connects different parts of a sentence to express multiple ideas
Interjection	Expresses emotion, gives commands, or serves as a greeting, usually standing alone in a sentence

Example Sentence
A cheerful bird sang loudly in the tree, but, alas, it flew away.

grammarly

Figure 1.1 Categories of words in grammar

1.1.2 Phrases and clauses

A **phrase** is a group of words that functions as a single unit within a sentence but does not contain both a subject and a predicate. Examples include noun phrases (*the tall boy*), verb phrases (*is running*), and prepositional phrases (*in the garden*).

A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a subject and a predicate. Clauses may be independent, forming complete sentences, or dependent, requiring another clause to complete their meaning.

Fill in the blank: A _____ contains both a subject and a predicate, while a _____ does not.

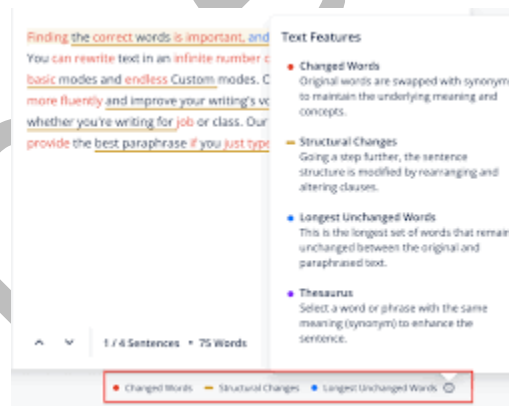


Plate 1.2 Examples of phrases in sentences

1.1.3 Sentences as complete units

A **sentence** is the largest grammatical unit that expresses a complete thought. It typically contains at least one independent clause, and it may include additional dependent clauses. Sentences can be simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex, depending on their structure.

Sentences are the ultimate product of combining words, phrases, and clauses. They allow speakers and writers to communicate ideas clearly and effectively.

Fill in the blank: A _____ is the largest grammatical unit that expresses a complete thought.

Sentence Type	Definition	Key Components
Simple	Expresses a single complete thought.	1 Independent Clause
Compound	Joins two related, complete thoughts.	2+ Independent Clauses (joined by <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>or</i>)
Complex	Connects a main idea with a supporting detail.	1 Independent + 1 or more Dependent Clauses
Compound-Complex	A multi-part sentence for detailed ideas.	2+ Independent + 1+ Dependent Clauses

Box 1.1: Types of sentences

Pilot questions 1.1

- Which of the following is the smallest independent grammatical unit that carries meaning?
a) Phrase b) Word c) Clause d) Sentence
- A group of words that functions as a single unit but does not contain both a subject and a predicate is called a:
a) Clause b) Sentence c) Phrase d) Object
- Which of the following contains both a subject and a predicate?
a) Phrase b) Clause c) Word d) Modifier
- A sentence that contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause is classified as:
a) Simple sentence b) Compound sentence c) Complex sentence d) Compound-complex sentence
- Fill in the blank: A _____ is the largest grammatical unit that expresses a complete thought.

1.2 Grammatical Functions



Grammatical functions describe the roles that different units of grammar play within a sentence. While grammatical units such as words, phrases, and clauses provide the building blocks, functions explain how these blocks interact to create meaning. In this Part, we will examine subjects, predicates, objects, modifiers, complements, and the relationships of coordination and subordination.

1.2.1 Subject, predicate, and object

The **subject** is the grammatical function that typically indicates who or what performs the action in a sentence. The **predicate** expresses what is being said about the subject, often containing the verb and additional information. The **object** is the entity that receives the action of the verb.

For example, in the sentence *The student reads a book*, “The student” is the subject, “reads” is the predicate, and “a book” is the object.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *The teacher explains the lesson*, the _____ is “The teacher”, the _____ is “explains”, and the _____ is “the lesson”.

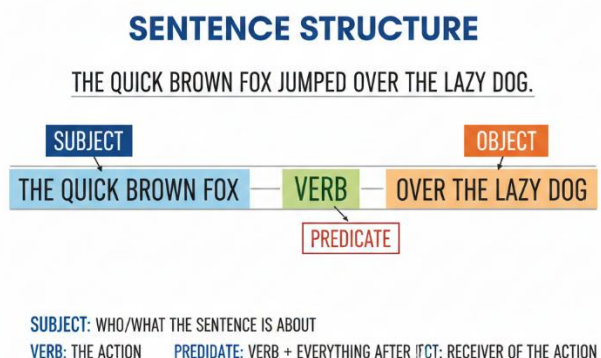


Figure 1.2 Subject, predicate, and object in a sentence

1.2.2 Modifiers and complements

A **modifier** is a word or group of words that provides additional information about another element in a sentence. Adjectives and adverbs are common modifiers. For example, in *The tall boy runs quickly*, “tall” modifies “boy” and “quickly” modifies “runs”.



A **complement** is a word or group of words that completes the meaning of a predicate. Complements can be objects, subject complements, or object complements. For instance, in *She is a teacher*, “a teacher” is a subject complement that completes the meaning of “is”.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *The cake tastes sweet*, the word “sweet” functions as a _____.

What is a Dangling Modifier?

modifier is a modifier (word, phrase, or clause) that fails to modify anything in the sentence.

After writing, the dogs went for a walk.

Dogs can't write, so the modifier isn't modifying anything. **the dogs** is a noun/pronoun to modify.

After writing, she went for a walk with the dogs.

The modifier modifies “she,” which makes the sentence clear. **she** refers to a person who can write.

Plate 1.3 Examples of modifiers and complements

1.2.3 Coordination and subordination

Coordination occurs when two or more grammatical units of equal status are joined together, often using conjunctions such as “and”, “or”, or “but”. For example, *She sings and dances*.

Subordination occurs when one grammatical unit depends on another, usually introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as “because”, “although”, or “when”. For example, *She sings because she is happy*.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *He stayed at home because it was raining*, the clause “because it was raining” is _____ to the main clause.

Strategy	Definition	Common Connectors (Conjunctions)	Example Sentence
Coordination	Joins two ideas of equal importance.	<i>and, but, or, so, for, yet, nor</i> (FANBOYS)	She reads and she writes.
Subordination	Connects a main idea to a less important detail.	<i>because, although, if, since, while, after</i>	He left because he was tired.

Box 1.2: Examples of coordination and subordination

Pilot questions 1.2



1. Which of the following typically indicates who or what performs the action in a sentence?
a) Predicate b) Object c) Subject d) Modifier
2. In the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, the word “ball” functions as the: a) Subject b) Predicate c) Object d) Complement
3. Which of the following provides additional information about another element in a sentence? a) Modifier b) Predicate c) Clause d) Subject
4. In the sentence *She is a doctor*, the phrase “a doctor” is a: a) Object complement b) Subject complement c) Modifier d) Predicate
5. Fill in the blank: In the sentence *She stayed at home because she was tired*, the clause “because she was tired” is _____ to the main clause.

1.3 Grammatical Structures

Grammatical structures refer to the ways in which words, phrases, and clauses are organised to form sentences. They show how units of grammar are arranged and related to one another, allowing us to interpret meaning accurately. In this Part, we will examine linear and hierarchical structures, constituency and dependency relations, and structural ambiguity.

1.3.1 Linear and hierarchical structures

A **linear structure** is the arrangement of words in a sequence, one after another, as they appear in spoken or written language. For example, in the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, the words follow a left-to-right order.

A **hierarchical structure** goes beyond sequence, showing how words group together into larger units such as phrases and clauses. For instance, *The boy* forms a noun phrase, and *kicked the ball* forms a verb phrase. Together, they create a sentence.

Fill in the blank: A _____ structure shows the order of words in a sequence, while a _____ structure shows how words group into larger units.



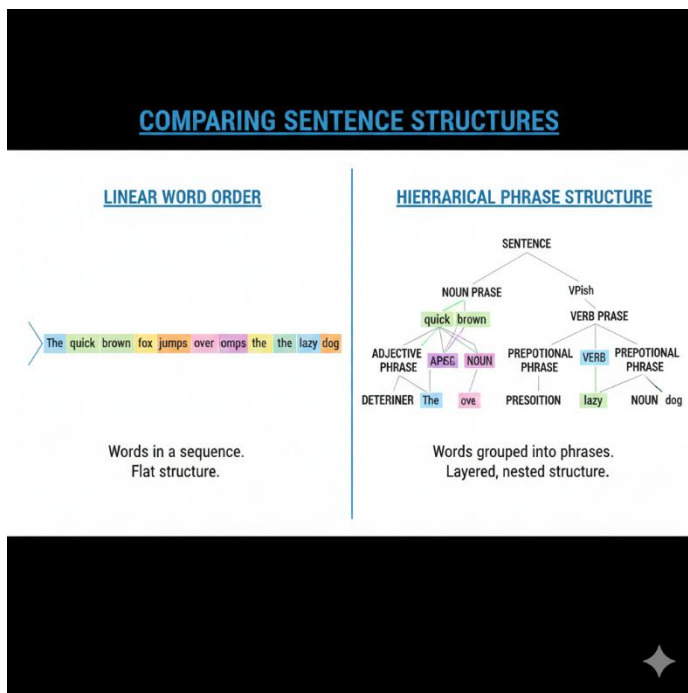


Figure 1.4 Linear and hierarchical structures in grammar

1.3.2 Constituency and dependency relations

Constituency refers to the grouping of words into units that function together. For example, in *The big dog barked loudly*, “The big dog” is a constituent functioning as the subject.

Dependency relations describe how words depend on one another for meaning. In the same sentence, “dog” is the head noun, and “big” depends on it as a modifier. Constituency shows grouping, while dependency shows relationships.

Fill in the blank: In the phrase *the tall building*, the word “tall” depends on the word _____.

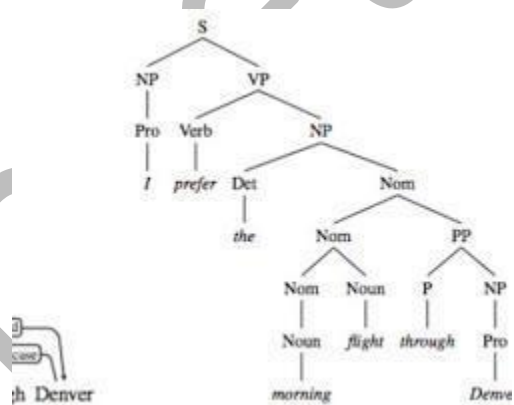


Plate 1.5 Constituency and dependency relations



1.3.3 Structural ambiguity

Structural ambiguity occurs when a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way due to its grammatical structure. For example, *Visiting relatives can be annoying* may mean that relatives who visit are annoying, or that the act of visiting relatives is annoying.

Ambiguity arises because of different possible groupings or dependencies within the sentence. Recognising structural ambiguity is important for accurate analysis and interpretation.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *Flying planes can be dangerous* is an example of _____.

Example Sentence	Meaning A (Interpretation 1)	Meaning B (Interpretation 2)
"Visiting relatives can be annoying."	The act of you going to visit them is annoying.	The relatives who are currently visiting you are annoying.
"Flying planes can be dangerous."	The act of piloting a plane is a dangerous activity.	Planes that are currently in the air (flying) are dangerous objects.
"Old men and women"	Only the men are old.	Both the men and the women are old.

Box 1.3: Examples of structural ambiguity

Pilot questions 1.3

1. Which of the following shows the order of words in a sequence? a) Hierarchical structure b) Linear structure c) Constituency d) Dependency
2. In the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, "The boy" is an example of: a) Predicate b) Object c) Constituent d) Modifier
3. Which of the following describes how words depend on one another for meaning? a) Constituency b) Dependency relations c) Linear structure d) Ambiguity
4. The sentence *Visiting relatives can be annoying* illustrates: a) Linear structure b) Constituency c) Structural ambiguity d) Predicate function
5. Fill in the blank: In the phrase *the tall building*, the word "tall" depends on the word _____.

1.4 Rules of Grammar

Rules of grammar provide the framework that governs how words, phrases, and clauses are combined to form sentences. These rules ensure that language is structured, meaningful, and communicable. In this Part, we will explore prescriptive and descriptive rules, transformational rules, and constraints that determine well-formedness.



1.4.1 Prescriptive and descriptive rules

Prescriptive rules are traditional guidelines that dictate how language should be used. They are often found in grammar handbooks and emphasise correctness, such as avoiding double negatives or splitting infinitives.

Descriptive rules focus on how language is actually used by speakers and writers. They do not judge correctness but instead describe patterns and variations in real communication.

Fill in the blank: Rules that describe how language is actually used, without judging correctness, are called _____ rules.

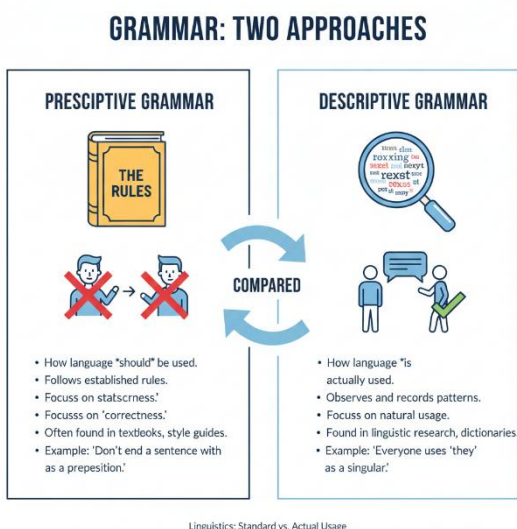


Figure 1.6 Prescriptive and descriptive rules in grammar

1.4.2 Transformational rules

Transformational rules explain how sentences can be changed from one form to another while retaining meaning. For example, the active sentence *The boy kicked the ball* can be transformed into the passive sentence 'The ball was kicked *by the boy*'.

These rules are central to syntactic theory, showing how deep structures are converted into surface structures.

Fill in the blank: The sentence '*The ball was kicked by the boy*' is a _____ transformation.



Past Continuous	She was writing a letter.	A letter was being written .
Present Perfect	She has written a letter.	A letter has been written .
Past Perfect	She had written a letter.	A letter had been written .
Future Simple	She will write a letter.	A letter will be written .
Future Be Going To	She is going to write a letter.	A letter is going to be written .
Infinitive	She has to write a letter.	A letter has to be written .
Modal	She should write a letter.	A letter should be written .
Modal Perfect	She must have written a letter.	A letter must have been written .

Plate 1.7 Active and passive transformations

1.4.3 Constraints and well-formedness

Constraints are limits that prevent certain combinations of words or structures from being acceptable in a language. For example, *She is example, She is taller than him* is not well-formed because it violates structural-formed because it violates structural constraints.

Well-formedness refers to whether a sentence follows the rules of grammar and is acceptable to native speakers. A well-formed sentence is grammatically correct and interpretable.

Fill in the blank: A sentence that follows the rules of grammar and is acceptable to native speakers is said to be _____.

Status	Sentence	Explanation
Well-Formed	She is taller than he is.	Follows standard comparative structure where "he" is the subject of the implied verb "is."
Ill-Formed	She is taller than him.*	Often considered ill-formed in formal prescriptive grammar because "him" is an object pronoun used where a subject is expected.
Well-Formed	The children are playing outside.	Follows standard English Word Order (Subject + Verb + Adverbial).
Ill-Formed	Playing outside the children are.*	Violates English syntax rules; the word order does not match standard declarative patterns.

Box 1.4: Examples of well-formed and ill-formed sentences

Pilot questions 1.4



1. Which type of rule dictates how language should be used according to traditional standards? a) Descriptive? a) Descriptive rule b) Prescriptive rule c) Transformational rule d) Constraint rule
2. Rules that describe actual patterns of language use without judging correctness are called: a) Prescriptive rules b) Descriptive rules c) Transform b) Descriptive rational rules d) Well-formedness rules
3. The sentence '*The ball was kicked by the boy*' is an example of: a) Constraint violation b) Prescriptive rule c) Passive transformation rule d) Descriptive rule
4. Which of the following refers to whether a sentence is grammatically correct and interpretable? a) Constraint? a) Constraint b) Well-formedness c) Predicate function d) Object complement
5. Fill in the blank: A sentence that violates structural limits and is not acceptable to native speakers is _____.

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the foundations of grammatical units and structures, which form the essential basis for analysing and describing language. By working through the content, you have seen how grammar provides both the building blocks and the organising principles that allow sentences to convey meaning clearly and effectively.

We began by exploring grammatical units, starting with words, then moving to phrases, clauses, and sentences as complete structures. We then examined grammatical functions such as subjects, predicates, objects, modifiers, and complements, before considering how coordination and subordination shape relationships within sentences. Following that, we analysed grammatical structures, looking at linear and hierarchical arrangements, constituency, dependency relations, and structural ambiguity. Finally, we studied rules of grammar, distinguishing between prescriptive and descriptive approaches, applying transformational rules, and recognising constraints that determine well-formedness. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define key grammatical units, explain their functions, analyse structures, and evaluate rules of grammar with confidence.

Glossary of Terms

- **Clause:** A group of words that contains both a subject and a predicate. Clauses may be independent, forming complete sentences, or dependent, requiring another clause to complete their meaning.
- **Complement:** A word or group of words that completes the meaning of a predicate. Complements can be subject complements, object complements, or other elements that add necessary information.
- **Constituency:** The grouping of words into units that function together in a sentence, such as noun phrases or verb phrases.



- **Constraint:** A grammatical limit that prevents certain combinations of words or structures from being acceptable in a language.
- **Dependency relations:** The way words rely on one another for meaning, often showing which word is the head and which words modify or depend on it.
- **Descriptive rules:** Rules that explain how language is actually used by speakers and writers, without judging correctness.
- **Modifier:** A word or group of words that provides additional information about another element in a sentence, such as adjectives or adverbs.
- **Object:** The grammatical function that receives the action of the verb in a sentence.
- **Phrase:** A group of words that functions as a single unit within a sentence but does not contain both a subject and a predicate.
- **Predicate:** The part of a sentence that expresses what is being said about the subject, usually containing the verb and related information.
- **Prescriptive rules:** Traditional guidelines that dictate how language should be used, often emphasising correctness and standard usage.
- **Sentence:** The largest grammatical unit that expresses a complete thought, typically containing at least one independent clause.
- **Structural ambiguity:** A situation where a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way due to its grammatical structure.
- **Subject:** The grammatical function that typically indicates who or what performs the action in a sentence.
- **Transformational rules:** Rules that explain how sentences can be changed from one form to another, such as converting active sentences into passive ones.
- **Well-formedness:** The quality of a sentence being grammatically correct and acceptable to native speakers.
- **Word:** The smallest independent grammatical unit that carries meaning, classified into categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Which of the following is the smallest independent grammatical unit that carries meaning?
a) Phrase b) Word c) Clause d) Sentence (*Linked to SLO 1.1*)
2. A group of words that contains both a subject and a predicate is called a: a) Phrase b) Clause c) Modifier d) Complement (*Linked to SLO 1.1*)
3. Which grammatical function typically indicates who or what performs the action in a sentence? a) Predicate b) Object c) Subject d) Modifier (*Linked to SLO 1.2*)
4. The sentence *Visiting relatives can be annoying* illustrates: a) Linear structure b) Constituency c) Structural ambiguity d) Predicate function (*Linked to SLO 1.3*)
5. Rules that describe actual patterns of language use without judging correctness are called: a) Prescriptive rules b) Descriptive rules c) Transformational rules d) Constraints (*Linked to SLO 1.4*)

Short-answer questions



6. Define a **phrase** and give one example. (Linked to SLO 1.1)
7. Explain the difference between a **modifier** and a **complement**. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
8. What is meant by **dependency relations** in grammar? Provide a simple illustration. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
9. Distinguish between **prescriptive rules** and **descriptive rules** with one example each. (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Long-answer questions

10. Analyse the sentence *The tall boy quickly finished his homework* by identifying its grammatical units, functions, and structure. (Linked to SLOs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
11. Evaluate the importance of **transformational rules** in grammar, using examples to show how they affect sentence structure. (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Word
2. Clause
3. Subject
4. Structural ambiguity
5. Descriptive rules

Short-answer questions

6. A phrase is a group of words that functions as a single unit but does not contain both a subject and a predicate. Example: *the tall boy*.
7. A modifier adds extra information about another element (e.g., *quickly* in *runs quickly*), while a complement completes the meaning of a predicate (e.g., *a teacher* in *She is a teacher*).
8. Dependency relations show how words rely on one another for meaning. Example: In *the tall building*, “tall” depends on “building”.
9. Prescriptive rules dictate how language should be used (e.g., “Do not use double negatives”), while descriptive rules explain how language is actually used (e.g., “Double negatives are common in some dialects”).

Long-answer questions

10. *Basic response:*
 - Grammatical units: words (*The, tall, boy, quickly, finished, his, homework*), phrases (*The tall boy, quickly finished his homework*).
 - Functions: subject (*The tall boy*), predicate (*quickly finished his homework*), object (*his homework*).
 - Structure: linear order with hierarchical grouping into noun phrase and verb phrase.



Value-added response:

- Constituency: NP (*The tall boy*), VP (*quickly finished his homework*).
- Dependency: “tall” depends on “boy”, “quickly” depends on “finished”.
- Ambiguity: minimal, but could be extended if modifiers were rearranged.

11. *Basic response:* Transformational rules explain how sentences can change form while retaining meaning, such as active to passive. Example: *The boy kicked the ball* → *The ball was kicked by the boy*.

Value-added response: Transformational rules are crucial in syntactic theory, showing how deep structures are converted into surface structures. They also highlight variations across languages, such as question formation (*She is coming* → *Is she coming?*), and help linguists understand universal principles of grammar.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

Pilot questions 1.1

1. Word
2. Phrase
3. Clause
4. Complex sentence
5. Sentence

Pilot questions 1.2

1. Subject
2. Object
3. Modifier
4. Subject complement
5. Subordinate

Pilot questions 1.3

1. Linear structure
2. Constituent
3. Dependency relations
4. Structural ambiguity
5. Building

Pilot questions 1.4

1. Prescriptive rule
2. Descriptive rules
3. Passive transformation



4. Well-formedness
5. Ill-formed

References and Attributions [Series 1]

The following references and attributions cover the sources and illustration prompts used throughout **Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

General References

- OpenStax. (n.d.). *English grammar resources*. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org>
- OER Commons. (n.d.). *Grammar and language learning materials*. Retrieved from <https://oercommons.org>

Illustrations

Figure 1.1 Categories of words in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (parts of speech diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a simple diagram showing categories of words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs.”

Plate 1.2 Examples of phrases in sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of phrases and clauses).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image of sentences with phrases highlighted in colour.”

Box 1.1 Types of sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (types of sentences grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing types of sentences with definitions.”

Figure 1.2 Subject, predicate, and object in a sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (subject predicate object diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram labelling subject, predicate, and object in a sentence.”

Plate 1.3 Examples of modifiers and complements

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of modifiers and complements).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image of sentences with modifiers and complements highlighted in colour.”

Box 1.2 Examples of coordination and subordination

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (coordination and subordination grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of coordination and subordination.”



Figure 1.4 Linear and hierarchical structures in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (linear vs hierarchical structure grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram comparing linear word order and hierarchical phrase structure.”

Plate 1.5 Constituency and dependency relations

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (constituency vs dependency grammar diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a tree diagram for constituency and arrows for dependency relations.”

Box 1.3 Examples of structural ambiguity

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (structural ambiguity examples grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of structural ambiguity in sentences.”

Figure 1.6 Prescriptive and descriptive rules in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (prescriptive vs descriptive grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram comparing prescriptive rules vs descriptive rules in grammar.”

Plate 1.7 Active and passive transformations

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (active passive transformation grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations.”

Box 1.4 Well-formedness in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (well formed vs ill formed sentences grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of well-formed and ill-formed sentences.”

Course code: LIN 203

Course title: Grammar

Course credit load: 3 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures

Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description

Series 3: Functions and Rules in Grammar



Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description

Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages

Proposed Outline for Series 2

Part .1 Approaches to Sentence Analysis

- 2.1.1 Traditional grammar approaches
- 2.1.2 Structuralist approaches
- 2.1.3 Generative grammar approaches

Part .2 Sentence Types and Patterns

- 2.2.1 Simple sentences
- 2.2.2 Compound sentences
- 2.2.3 Complex sentences
- 2.2.4 Compound-complex sentences

Part .3 Sentence Functions in Communication

- 2.3.1 Declarative sentences
- 2.3.2 Interrogative sentences
- 2.3.3 Imperative sentences
- 2.3.4 Exclamatory sentences

Part .4 Linguistic Description of Sentences

- 2.4.1 Constituency and phrase structure rules
- 2.4.2 Transformations and movement
- 2.4.3 Ambiguity and interpretation

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the foundations of grammatical units and structures, learning how words, phrases, clauses, and sentences form the building blocks of language. Having established this groundwork, we now turn our attention to how sentences can be analysed and described in detail. This Series is particularly relevant because it equips you with the tools to examine sentence patterns, functions, and transformations, which are essential for both linguistic study and effective communication.

The aim of this Series is to guide you in analysing sentences systematically and to enable you to describe their structures and functions using appropriate linguistic frameworks. By the end of the Series, you will be able to apply different approaches to sentence analysis, identify sentence types and functions, and evaluate how linguistic rules shape sentence construction.

We shall commence this Series by considering various approaches to sentence analysis, including traditional, structuralist, and generative perspectives. Next, we will examine sentence



types and patterns, looking closely at simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Following that, we will explore sentence functions in communication, focusing on declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory forms. Finally, we will wrap up by studying the linguistic description of sentences, where we will analyse constituency, phrase structure rules, transformations, and ambiguity. This progression will ensure that you gain both theoretical insight and practical skills in sentence analysis and description.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 2.1** describe traditional, structuralist, and generative approaches to sentence analysis,
- **SLO 2.2** classify sentences according to their structural patterns as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex,
- **SLO 2.3** identify and explain the communicative functions of sentences as declarative, interrogative, imperative, or exclamatory,
- **SLO 2.4** analyse sentences using linguistic description, focusing on constituency, phrase structure rules, transformations, and ambiguity.

2.1 Approaches to Sentence Analysis

Analysing sentences is a central task in linguistics and grammar. It allows us to understand how words and structures combine to convey meaning. Over time, different approaches have been developed to explain sentence organisation, each reflecting a particular perspective on language. In this Part, we will explore three major approaches: traditional grammar, structuralist grammar, and generative grammar.

2.1.1 Traditional grammar approaches

Traditional grammar refers to the set of rules and classifications developed from classical languages such as Latin and Greek. It focuses on prescriptive norms, categorising words into parts of speech and defining sentence structures based on correctness. Traditional grammar often emphasises the subject–predicate division and the identification of objects and complements.

This approach is widely used in schools and remains familiar to learners, although it sometimes overlooks the complexities of actual language use.

Fill in the blank: Traditional grammar often divides a sentence into two main parts, the _____ and the predicate.

[Insert Figure here] Diagram showing subject–predicate division in a simple sentence. *Figure 2.1 Subject–predicate division in traditional grammar* AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a diagram showing subject–predicate division in a sentence.” Search string: “traditional grammar subject predicate diagram site:oercommons.org”

2.1.2 Structuralist approaches



Structuralist grammar emerged in the early twentieth century, focusing on the systematic description of language as a structure. It emphasises relationships between elements rather than prescriptive rules. Structuralists analyse sentences by breaking them into constituents and examining how these units function together.

This approach highlights the importance of patterns and distribution, showing how meaning arises from the arrangement of elements.

Fill in the blank: Structuralist grammar focuses on the _____ between elements in a sentence rather than prescriptive rules.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing a sentence broken into constituents with labels for noun phrase and verb phrase. *Plate 2.2 Constituency analysis in structuralist grammar* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing a sentence broken into noun phrase and verb phrase constituents.” Search string: “structuralist grammar constituency analysis site:openstax.org”

2.1.3 Generative grammar approaches

Generative grammar was introduced by Noam Chomsky in the mid-twentieth century. It seeks to explain how speakers can generate an infinite number of sentences using a finite set of rules. Generative grammar distinguishes between **deep structure**, which represents the underlying meaning, and **surface structure**, which represents the actual form of the sentence.

Transformational rules are central to this approach, showing how sentences can be altered while retaining meaning. For example, an active sentence can be transformed into a passive one.

Fill in the blank: Generative grammar distinguishes between _____ structure and surface structure.

[Insert Box here] Box 2.1: Key features of generative grammar

- Deep structure and surface structure distinction
- Transformational rules for sentence variation
- Focus on universal principles of language

AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a text box listing key features of generative grammar.” Search string: “generative grammar deep vs surface structure site:oercommons.org”

Pilot questions 2.1

1. Traditional grammar often divides a sentence into two main parts. What are they? a) Subject and predicate b) Clause and phrase c) Modifier and complement d) Object and verb
2. Which approach to sentence analysis focuses on the relationships between elements rather than prescriptive rules? a) Traditional grammar b) Structuralist grammar c) Generative grammar d) Prescriptive grammar
3. Generative grammar distinguishes between two levels of sentence representation. What are they? a) Predicate and object b) Clause and phrase c) Deep structure and surface structure d) Modifier and complement



4. Which of the following is central to generative grammar? a) Subject–predicate division b) Transformational rules c) Constituency analysis d) Prescriptive norms
5. Fill in the blank: Structuralist grammar analyses sentences by breaking them into _____.

2.2.1 Simple sentences

A **simple sentence** is a sentence that contains one independent clause. It expresses a complete thought and usually follows the subject–predicate pattern. For example, *The boy runs*.

Simple sentences are straightforward but can be expanded with modifiers to add detail.

Fill in the blank: A simple sentence contains only one _____ clause.

[Insert Figure here] Diagram showing the structure of a simple sentence with subject and predicate. *Figure 2.2 Structure of a simple sentence* AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a diagram showing subject and predicate in a simple sentence.” Search string: “simple sentence grammar diagram site:oercommons.org”

2.2.2 Compound sentences

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *or*. For example, *She reads and he writes*.

Compound sentences allow writers to connect related ideas with equal importance.

Fill in the blank: A compound sentence joins two or more independent clauses using _____ conjunctions.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing examples of compound sentences with conjunctions highlighted. *Plate 2.3 Examples of compound sentences* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing examples of compound sentences with conjunctions highlighted.” Search string: “compound sentence examples grammar site:openstax.org”

2.2.3 Complex sentences

A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Dependent clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as *because*, *although*, or *when*. For example, *He stayed at home because it was raining*.

Complex sentences show relationships of cause, condition, or time between ideas.

Fill in the blank: A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one _____ clause.

[Insert Box here] Box 2.2: Examples of complex sentences

- He stayed at home because it was raining.
- She smiled although she was tired.
- They left when the bell rang.

AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a text box listing examples of complex sentences.” Search string: “complex sentence examples grammar site:oercommons.org”



2.2.4 Compound-complex sentences

A **compound-complex sentence** combines features of both compound and complex sentences. It contains at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. For example, *She reads and he writes because they enjoy learning.*

This type of sentence allows for more nuanced expression, linking multiple ideas with varied relationships.

Fill in the blank: A compound-complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and one or more _____ clauses.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing a compound-complex sentence with independent and dependent clauses labelled. *Plate 2.4 Structure of a compound-complex sentence* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing a compound-complex sentence with independent and dependent clauses labelled.” Search string: “compound complex sentence grammar diagram site:openstax.org”

Pilot questions 2.2

1. Which of the following contains only one independent clause? a) Compound sentence b) Complex sentence c) Simple sentence d) Compound-complex sentence
2. A compound sentence is formed by joining two or more independent clauses with: a) Subordinating conjunctions b) Coordinating conjunctions c) Modifiers d) Complements
3. Which type of sentence contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause? a) Simple sentence b) Compound sentence c) Complex sentence d) Compound-complex sentence
4. A compound-complex sentence must contain: a) One independent clause and one dependent clause b) Two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause c) Two dependent clauses only d) One independent clause only
5. Fill in the blank: A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one _____ clause.

2.3 Sentence Functions in Communication

Sentences do not only differ in structure; they also serve different communicative purposes. By recognising sentence functions, you can better understand how speakers and writers convey meaning, intention, and emotion. In this Part, we will explore declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences.

2.3.1 Declarative sentences

A **declarative sentence** is used to make a statement or provide information. It ends with a full stop and is the most common type of sentence. For example, *The sun rises in the east.*

Fill in the blank: A declarative sentence is used to _____ information or make a statement.

[Insert Figure here] Diagram showing examples of declarative sentences with subject–predicate highlighted. *Figure 2.5 Declarative sentences in communication* AI prompt suggestion:



“Generate a diagram showing examples of declarative sentences with subject–predicate highlighted.” Search string: “declarative sentence examples grammar site:oercommons.org”

2.3.2 Interrogative sentences

An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. It usually begins with a question word (such as *who*, *what*, *where*) or an auxiliary verb (*is*, *do*, *can*), and it ends with a question mark. For example, *Where are you going?*

Fill in the blank: An interrogative sentence is used to _____ information.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing examples of interrogative sentences with question words highlighted. *Plate 2.6 Examples of interrogative sentences* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing examples of interrogative sentences with question words highlighted.” Search string: “interrogative sentence examples grammar site:openstax.org”

2.3.3 Imperative sentences

An **imperative sentence** gives a command, instruction, or request. It often begins with a verb and may end with a full stop or an exclamation mark. For example, *Close the door.*

Fill in the blank: An imperative sentence is used to give a _____, instruction, or request.

[Insert Box here] Box 2.3: Examples of imperative sentences

- Sit down.
- Please pass the salt.
- Do not touch that.

AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a text box listing examples of imperative sentences.” Search string: “imperative sentence examples grammar site:oercommons.org”

2.3.4 Exclamatory sentences

An **exclamatory sentence** expresses strong emotion such as surprise, joy, or anger. It ends with an exclamation mark. For example, *What a beautiful day!*

Fill in the blank: An exclamatory sentence expresses strong _____ such as surprise, joy, or anger.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing examples of exclamatory sentences with exclamation marks highlighted. *Plate 2.7 Examples of exclamatory sentences* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing examples of exclamatory sentences with exclamation marks highlighted.” Search string: “exclamatory sentence examples grammar site:oercommons.org”

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Which type of sentence is used to make a statement? a) Interrogative b) Declarative c) Imperative d) Exclamatory
2. An interrogative sentence usually begins with: a) A verb in the imperative form b) A question word or auxiliary verb c) An exclamation mark d) A subject complement
3. Which type of sentence is used to give commands or requests? a) Declarative b) Imperative c) Exclamatory d) Complex



4. An exclamatory sentence is typically marked by: a) A full stop b) A question mark c) An exclamation mark d) A comma
5. Fill in the blank: An imperative sentence is used to give a _____, instruction, or request.

2.4 Linguistic Description of Sentences

Beyond recognising sentence types and functions, linguists aim to describe sentences in terms of their internal organisation and the rules that govern them. Linguistic description provides tools for analysing how words and phrases combine, how transformations occur, and how ambiguity can arise. In this Part, we will explore constituency and phrase structure rules, transformations and movement, and structural ambiguity.

2.4.1 Constituency and phrase structure rules

Constituency refers to the way words group together into larger units, such as noun phrases or verb phrases. These constituents function as building blocks of sentences. **Phrase structure rules** are formal rules that describe how constituents combine to form sentences. For example, a simple rule might state that a sentence (S) consists of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a verb phrase (VP).

Fill in the blank: Phrase structure rules describe how _____ combine to form sentences.

[Insert Figure here] Diagram showing a tree structure of a sentence with NP and VP labelled.

Figure 2.8 Constituency and phrase structure rules AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a tree diagram showing a sentence divided into NP and VP constituents.” Search string: “phrase structure rules tree diagram site:oercommons.org”

2.4.2 Transformations and movement

Transformations are rules that allow sentences to change form while retaining meaning. A common example is the transformation from active to passive voice. **Movement** refers to shifting elements within a sentence, such as moving a question word to the front in interrogatives. For example, *You are going where* becomes *Where are you going?*

Fill in the blank: The sentence *The ball was kicked by the boy* is a _____ transformation of *The boy kicked the ball*.

[Insert Plate here] Image showing active and passive sentence transformations side by side. *Plate 2.9 Active and passive transformations* AI prompt suggestion: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations side by side.” Search string: “active passive transformation grammar site:openstax.org”

2.4.3 Ambiguity and interpretation

Ambiguity occurs when a sentence can be understood in more than one way due to its structure. For example, *Flying planes can be dangerous* may mean that planes which fly are dangerous, or that the act of flying planes is dangerous. Linguists study ambiguity to understand how interpretation depends on structure and context.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *Visiting relatives can be annoying* is an example of structural _____.

[Insert Box here] Box 2.4: Examples of structural ambiguity



- Visiting relatives can be annoying.
- Flying planes can be dangerous.
- Old men and women.

AI prompt suggestion: “Generate a text box listing examples of structural ambiguity in sentences.” Search string: “structural ambiguity examples grammar site:oercommons.org”

Pilot questions 2.4

1. Phrase structure rules describe how: a) Words are pronounced b) Constituents combine to form sentences c) Sentences express emotion d) Verbs change tense
2. Which of the following is an example of a transformation? a) Declarative sentence b) Passive voice c) Noun phrase d) Exclamatory sentence
3. Movement in generative grammar refers to: a) Changing word meanings b) Shifting elements within a sentence c) Adding modifiers d) Removing complements
4. The sentence *Flying planes can be dangerous* illustrates: a) Phrase structure rules b) Structural ambiguity c) Passive transformation d) Declarative function
5. Fill in the blank: Constituency refers to the way words group together into larger _____.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on the analysis and description of sentences, building on the foundations of grammatical units and structures introduced earlier. Its purpose has been to show how sentences can be examined from different perspectives, classified according to their patterns, and understood in terms of their communicative functions and linguistic organisation. By engaging with these topics, you have gained insight into how sentences operate both as structural units and as vehicles of meaning in communication.

We began by exploring traditional, structuralist, and generative approaches to sentence analysis, then moved on to examine sentence types and patterns, including simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex forms. Following that, we studied sentence functions in communication, focusing on declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences. Finally, we considered linguistic description, looking at constituency, phrase structure rules, transformations, and ambiguity. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to describe approaches to sentence analysis, classify sentence types, explain sentence functions, and analyse sentences using linguistic description with confidence.

Glossary of Terms

- **Ambiguity:** A situation where a sentence can be understood in more than one way because of its structure.
- **Clause:** A group of words that contains a subject and a predicate. Clauses may be independent or dependent.



- **Compound sentence:** A sentence made up of two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *or*.
- **Compound-complex sentence:** A sentence that contains at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.
- **Constituency:** The way words group together into larger units, such as noun phrases or verb phrases, which function as building blocks of sentences.
- **Declarative sentence:** A sentence used to make a statement or provide information, ending with a full stop.
- **Dependent clause:** A clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence and relies on an independent clause for meaning.
- **Exclamatory sentence:** A sentence that expresses strong emotion such as surprise, joy, or anger, ending with an exclamation mark.
- **Generative grammar:** A linguistic approach introduced by Noam Chomsky that explains how speakers can produce an infinite number of sentences using a finite set of rules.
- **Imperative sentence:** A sentence that gives a command, instruction, or request, often beginning with a verb.
- **Independent clause:** A clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence because it expresses a full thought.
- **Interrogative sentence:** A sentence that asks a question, usually beginning with a question word or auxiliary verb, and ending with a question mark.
- **Phrase structure rules:** Formal rules that describe how constituents such as noun phrases and verb phrases combine to form sentences.
- **Simple sentence:** A sentence that contains only one independent clause.
- **Structuralist grammar:** An approach to analysing language that focuses on the relationships and patterns between elements in a sentence.
- **Subject:** The grammatical function that typically indicates who or what performs the action in a sentence.
- **Traditional grammar:** A prescriptive approach to grammar based on classical languages, focusing on rules, correctness, and parts of speech.
- **Transformation:** A rule in generative grammar that changes the form of a sentence while retaining its meaning, such as converting active voice to passive voice.
- **Verb phrase (VP):** A constituent that includes the verb and any objects, complements, or modifiers associated with it.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]



Objective questions

1. Which approach to sentence analysis focuses on relationships between elements rather than prescriptive rules? a) Traditional grammar b) Structuralist grammar c) Generative grammar d) Prescriptive grammar (*Linked to SLO 2.1*)
2. A sentence that contains only one independent clause is called a: a) Compound sentence b) Complex sentence c) Simple sentence d) Compound-complex sentence (*Linked to SLO 2.2*)
3. Which type of sentence is used to ask a question? a) Declarative b) Interrogative c) Imperative d) Exclamatory (*Linked to SLO 2.3*)
4. Phrase structure rules describe how: a) Constituents combine to form sentences b) Verbs change tense c) Sentences express emotion d) Words are pronounced (*Linked to SLO 2.4*)
5. Fill in the blank: Generative grammar distinguishes between _____ structure and surface structure. (*Linked to SLO 2.4*)

Short-answer questions

6. Define a **compound sentence** and give one example. (*Linked to SLO 2.2*)
7. Explain the difference between a **declarative sentence** and an **exclamatory sentence**. (*Linked to SLO 2.3*)
8. What is meant by **transformation** in generative grammar? Provide a simple illustration. (*Linked to SLO 2.4*)
9. Describe the main focus of **traditional grammar**. (*Linked to SLO 2.1*)

Long-answer questions

10. Analyse the sentence *She reads and he writes because they enjoy learning* by identifying its type, functions, and structure. (*Linked to SLOs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4*)
11. Evaluate the importance of **sentence functions** in communication, using examples to show how they shape meaning. (*Linked to SLO 2.3*)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Structuralist grammar
2. Simple sentence
3. Interrogative
4. Constituents combine to form sentences
5. Deep structure

Short-answer questions



6. A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. Example: *She reads and he writes*.
7. A declarative sentence makes a statement (e.g., *The sky is blue*), while an exclamatory sentence expresses strong emotion (e.g., *What a beautiful day!*).
8. Transformation refers to changing the form of a sentence while retaining meaning. Example: *The boy kicked the ball* → *The ball was kicked by the boy*.
9. Traditional grammar focuses on prescriptive rules, correctness, and classifications such as parts of speech and subject–predicate division.

Long-answer questions

10. *Basic response:*

- Type: Compound-complex sentence (two independent clauses and one dependent clause).
- Functions: Declarative, providing information.
- Structure: Independent clauses (*She reads* and *he writes*) joined by *and*, with dependent clause (*because they enjoy learning*).

Value-added response:

- Constituency: NP (*She*), VP (*reads*), NP (*he*), VP (*writes*), dependent clause (*because they enjoy learning*).
- Dependency: “enjoy” governs “learning”; “because” links dependent clause to main clause.
- Interpretation: Shows cause-effect relationship, combining coordination and subordination.

11. *Basic response:* Sentence functions are important because they show whether a sentence is making a statement, asking a question, giving a command, or expressing emotion.

Value-added response: Sentence functions shape communication by signalling intention and guiding interpretation. For example, declaratives provide information, interrogatives request knowledge, imperatives direct action, and exclamatories convey emotion. Recognising these functions helps in discourse analysis, teaching language, and improving clarity in writing and speech.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Pilot questions 2.1

1. Subject and predicate
2. Structuralist grammar
3. Deep structure and surface structure
4. Transformational rules



5. Constituents

Pilot questions 2.2

1. Simple sentence
2. Coordinating conjunctions
3. Complex sentence
4. Two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause
5. Dependent

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Declarative
2. A question word or auxiliary verb
3. Imperative
4. An exclamation mark
5. Command

Pilot questions 2.4

1. Constituents combine to form sentences
2. Passive voice
3. Shifting elements within a sentence
4. Structural ambiguity
5. Larger units

References and Attributions [Series 2]

The following references and attributions cover the sources and illustration prompts used throughout **Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

General References

- OpenStax. (n.d.). *English grammar resources*. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org>
- OER Commons. (n.d.). *Grammar and language learning materials*. Retrieved from <https://oercommons.org>
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Illustrations

Figure 2.1 Subject–predicate division in traditional grammar



- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (subject–predicate diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing subject–predicate division in a sentence.”

Plate 2.2 Constituency analysis in structuralist grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of constituency analysis).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a sentence broken into noun phrase and verb phrase constituents.”

Box 2.1 Key features of generative grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (generative grammar overview).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing key features of generative grammar.”

Figure 2.2 Structure of a simple sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (simple sentence diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing subject and predicate in a simple sentence.”

Plate 2.3 Examples of compound sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (compound sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of compound sentences with conjunctions highlighted.”

Box 2.2 Examples of complex sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (complex sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of complex sentences.”

Plate 2.4 Structure of a compound-complex sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (compound-complex sentence diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a compound-complex sentence with independent and dependent clauses labelled.”

Figure 2.5 Declarative sentences in communication

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (declarative sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing examples of declarative sentences with subject–predicate highlighted.”

Plate 2.6 Examples of interrogative sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (interrogative sentence examples).



- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of interrogative sentences with question words highlighted.”

Box 2.3 Examples of imperative sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (imperative sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of imperative sentences.”

Plate 2.7 Examples of exclamatory sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (exclamatory sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of exclamatory sentences with exclamation marks highlighted.”

Figure 2.8 Constituency and phrase structure rules

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (phrase structure rules tree diagram).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a tree diagram showing a sentence divided into NP and VP constituents.”

Plate 2.9 Active and passive transformations

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (active and passive transformation examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations side by side.”

Box 2.4 Examples of structural ambiguity

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (structural ambiguity examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of structural ambiguity in sentences.”

Course code: LIN 203

Course title: Grammar

Course credit load: 3 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures

Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description

Series 3: Functions and Rules in Grammar



Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description

Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages

Proposed Outline for Series 3

Part .1 Functions of Grammar in Communication

- 3.1.1 Informative function
- 3.1.2 Interrogative function
- 3.1.3 Directive function
- 3.1.4 Expressive function

Part .2 Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules

- 3.2.1 Prescriptive rules: norms and correctness
- 3.2.2 Descriptive rules: usage and variation
- 3.2.3 Tensions between prescription and description

Part .3 Transformations and Well-formedness

- 3.3.1 Active and passive transformations
- 3.3.2 Question formation and movement
- 3.3.3 Well-formed vs ill-formed sentences

Part .4 Application of Rules in Sentence Analysis

- 3.4.1 Identifying rule-governed structures
- 3.4.2 Analysing errors and deviations
- 3.4.3 Evaluating communicative effectiveness

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** explain the communicative functions of grammar, including informative, interrogative, directive, and expressive uses,
- **SLO 3.2** distinguish between prescriptive and descriptive rules in grammar, highlighting their applications and limitations,
- **SLO 3.3** apply transformational rules to sentences, such as active–passive changes and question formation,
- **SLO 3.4** evaluate sentence well-formedness by identifying rule-governed structures, errors, and deviations in communication.

3.1.1 Informative function



The **informative function** of grammar refers to the use of sentences to provide information or state facts. Declarative sentences are the most common form used here. For example, *The earth revolves around the sun.*

This function is central to everyday communication, as it allows speakers and writers to share knowledge and describe reality.

Fill in the blank: The informative function of grammar is mainly realised through _____ sentences.

DECLARATIVE SENTENCES: GIVING INFORMATION

Statements of Fact, Observations, & Knowledge

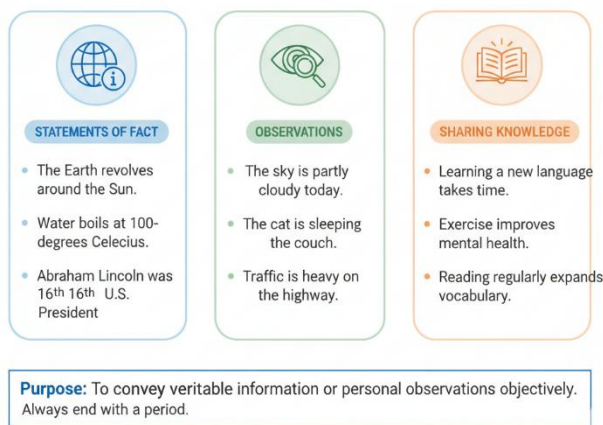


Figure 3.1 Informative function of grammar

3.1.2 Interrogative function

The **interrogative function** of grammar is used to request information. It is realised through interrogative sentences, which typically begin with a question word (*who, what, where*) or an auxiliary verb (*is, do, can*). For example, *Where are you going?*

This function is essential for interaction, as it enables speakers to seek clarification, confirmation, or new knowledge.

Fill in the blank: The interrogative function of grammar is realised through sentences that end with a _____ mark.



Which bike is yours? modifying the noun 'bike'		The options are understood /known to the parties involved.
WHICH	used to find/ask something out of a number of given options	1. Which house was yours? 2. Which project was selected? They all looked good to me.
WHAT	used to refer to an object out of a comparatively large number of possibilities	1. What company does he work for? 2. What song does he like to listen to the most?
WHOSE	used to refer to someone that the object it modifies belongs to	1. Whose car is it? 2. Whose dog is she playing with?

Plate 3.2 Interrogative function of grammar

3.1.3 Directive function

The **directive function** of grammar refers to the use of sentences to give commands, instructions, or requests. Imperative sentences are the main form used here. For example, *Close the door* or *Please sit down*.

This function is important in contexts where action is required, such as teaching, giving directions, or managing tasks.

Fill in the blank: The directive function of grammar is realised through _____ sentences.

Function	Example Sentence	Tone/Context
Command	"Stand up."	Authoritative or instructional.
Request	"Please pass the salt."	Polite and social.
Warning/Prohibition	"Do not touch that."	Urgent or safety-oriented.

Box 3.1: Examples of directive sentences

3.1.4 Expressive function

The **expressive function** of grammar is used to convey emotions, attitudes, or feelings. Exclamatory sentences are the most common form here. For example, *What a wonderful surprise!*

This function adds emotional depth to communication, allowing speakers to express joy, anger, surprise, or other strong feelings.

Fill in the blank: The expressive function of grammar is realised through sentences that typically end with an _____ mark.





Plate 3.3 Expressive function of grammar

Pilot questions 3.1

1. Which function of grammar is realised through declarative sentences? a) Interrogative b) Directive c) Informative d) Expressive
2. The interrogative function of grammar is used to: a) Provide information b) Request information c) Express emotions d) Give commands
3. Which type of sentence is central to the directive function of grammar? a) Declarative b) Interrogative c) Imperative d) Exclamatory
4. The expressive function of grammar is typically realised through: a) Declarative sentences b) Exclamatory sentences c) Imperative sentences d) Interrogative sentences
5. Fill in the blank: The directive function of grammar is realised through _____ sentences.

3.2 Prescriptive and Descriptive Rules

Grammar is not only about how sentences function but also about the rules that govern their use. These rules can be viewed from two perspectives: **prescriptive rules**, which emphasise correctness and norms, and **descriptive rules**, which focus on actual usage and variation. In this Part, we will explore both perspectives and examine the tensions that sometimes arise between them.

3.2.1 Prescriptive rules: norms and correctness

Prescriptive rules are rules that dictate how language *should* be used. They are based on established norms of correctness, often influenced by tradition, education, and authority. For example, prescriptive grammar may insist that sentences should not end with a preposition or that double negatives are incorrect.

Prescriptive rules are valuable in formal contexts, such as academic writing or professional communication, where clarity and adherence to standards are expected.

Fill in the blank: Prescriptive rules emphasise _____ and norms in language use.



PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR RULES: EXAMPLES

The “Shoulds” and Should Nots” of Standard English

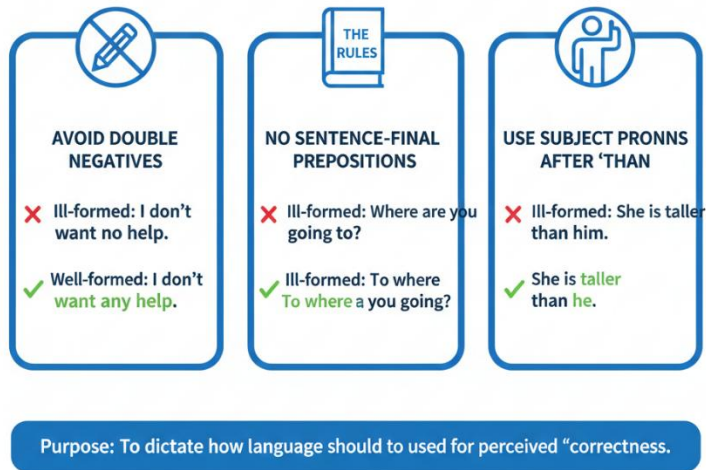


Figure 3.4 Prescriptive rules in grammar

3.2.2 Descriptive rules: usage and variation

Descriptive rules are rules that explain how language is actually used by speakers and writers. They do not judge correctness but instead describe patterns and variations. For example, descriptive grammar recognises that many speakers use double negatives to emphasise meaning, even if prescriptive rules label them incorrect.

Descriptive rules are important for linguists because they provide insight into how language evolves and adapts in real contexts.

Fill in the blank: Descriptive rules focus on actual _____ and variation in language.



Parts of Speech

Nouns I like butterflies.	Adverbs I carefully planned the wedding.
Pronouns I like chocolate cake.	Prepositions We're going to meet at 5 o'clock.
Verbs I decided to go to the party.	Conjunctions She is brave and confident.
Adjectives She is a creative student.	Interjections Hey! Where are you going?

Plate 3.5 Descriptive rules in grammar

3.2.3 Tensions between prescription and description

There is often tension between prescriptive and descriptive rules. Prescriptive grammar seeks to maintain standards, while descriptive grammar acknowledges natural usage. For instance, prescriptive rules may reject split infinitives (*to boldly go*), but descriptive grammar notes that such forms are widely accepted in modern English.

Understanding this tension helps learners balance correctness with communicative effectiveness.

Fill in the blank: The phrase *to boldly go* illustrates the tension between prescriptive rules and _____ grammar.

Prescriptive "Violation"	The Formal Rule (Prescriptive)	The Natural Usage (Descriptive)
"Who are you talking to?"	Don't end with a preposition. It should be "To whom are you talking?"	Ending with a preposition is standard in natural English and often sounds less "stiff."
"I don't know nothing."	Avoid double negatives. Two negatives mathematically create a positive.	In many dialects, double negatives function as negative concord , used for emphasis.
"To boldly go..."	Don't split infinitives. The adverb should not go between "to" and "go."	Splitting the infinitive often provides better rhythm and clarity in a sentence.

Box 3.2: Examples of tension between prescriptive and descriptive rules

Pilot questions 3.2



1. Which type of grammar rule emphasises correctness and norms? a) Prescriptive b) Descriptive c) Structuralist d) Generative
2. Descriptive rules focus on: a) Correctness b) Usage and variation c) Authority d) Tradition
3. Which of the following is an example of tension between prescriptive and descriptive rules? a) Subject–predicate division b) Splitting infinitives c) Constituency analysis d) Passive transformation
4. Prescriptive rules are most valuable in: a) Everyday speech b) Informal conversation c) Academic writing d) Linguistic description
5. Fill in the blank: Descriptive rules focus on actual _____ and variation in language.

3.3 Transformations and Well-formedness

Grammar rules not only describe how sentences are built but also explain how they can change form while retaining meaning. These changes are called **transformations**, and they are central to generative grammar. At the same time, grammar helps us judge whether a sentence is **well-formed** (acceptable according to rules) or **ill-formed** (unacceptable or incorrect). In this Part, we will explore active and passive transformations, question formation and movement, and the distinction between well-formed and ill-formed sentences.

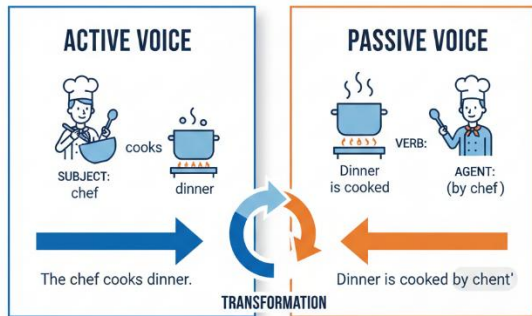
3.3.1 Active and passive transformations

An **active sentence** is one in which the subject performs the action, such as *The boy kicked the ball*. A **passive sentence** shifts focus to the object, as in *The ball was kicked by the boy*. Both sentences convey the same meaning but differ in structure.

Transformations like these allow speakers to highlight different parts of a sentence depending on context.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *The ball was kicked by the boy* is a _____ transformation of *The boy kicked the ball*.





Object becomes Subject

Verb changes to 'Past Participle'.
Subject becomes optional
as prepositional phrase.

Plate 3.6 Active and passive transformations

3.3.2 Question formation and movement

Question formation often involves **movement**, where elements of a sentence are shifted to create interrogatives. For example, *You are going where* becomes *Where are you going?*. This movement places the question word at the front and adjusts word order.

Such transformations are rule-governed and show how grammar structures communication beyond simple statements.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *Where are you going?*, the word *where* has been moved to the _____ of the sentence.



QUESTION FORMATION: WH-MOVEMENT

Moving the Question Word to the Front

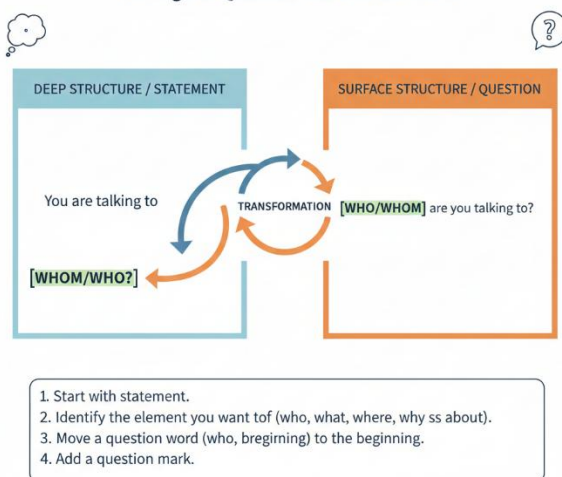


Figure 3.7 Question formation and movement

3.3.3 Well-formed vs ill-formed sentences

A **well-formed sentence** follows grammatical rules and is acceptable to native speakers. For example, *She is reading a book*. An **ill-formed sentence** breaks rules and sounds incorrect, such as *She reading book*.

Judging well-formedness helps learners identify errors and improve clarity in communication.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *She reading book* is considered _____ because it breaks grammatical rules.

Status	Sentence	Grammatical Issue
Well-Formed	She is reading a book.	Correct use of present continuous tense and articles.
Ill-Formed	She reading book.*	Missing Auxiliary & Article: Lacks the verb "is" and the determiner "a."
Well-Formed	They have finished their work.	Correct present perfect construction.
Ill-Formed	They finished has work.*	Syntax/Agreement Error: Incorrect word order and auxiliary verb choice.



Box 3.3: Examples of well-formed and ill-formed sentences

Pilot questions 3.3

1. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Declarative b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Imperative
2. In question formation, what is often moved to the front of the sentence? a) The subject b) The verb c) The question word d) The predicate
3. Which of the following is an example of a well-formed sentence? a) She reading book b) They finished has work c) She is reading a book d) He going school
4. Active and passive sentences differ in: a) Meaning b) Structure c) Emotion d) Function
5. Fill in the blank: A sentence that breaks grammatical rules is considered _____.

3.4 Application of Rules in Sentence Analysis

Grammar rules are not abstract principles; they are tools that can be applied to real sentences to evaluate correctness, clarity, and effectiveness. In this Part, we will practise applying prescriptive and descriptive rules, transformations, and well-formedness criteria to sentence analysis. This will help you develop practical skills for identifying rule-governed structures, spotting errors, and assessing communicative impact.

3.4.1 Identifying rule-governed structures

A **rule-governed structure** is a sentence or phrase that follows established grammatical rules. For example, *She has finished her work* is rule-governed because it correctly applies tense and agreement. Recognising these structures helps learners distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable forms.

Fill in the blank: A sentence that follows established grammatical rules is called a _____ structure.



Rule-Governed Structures: Subject–Verb Agreement

Examples of on the mons

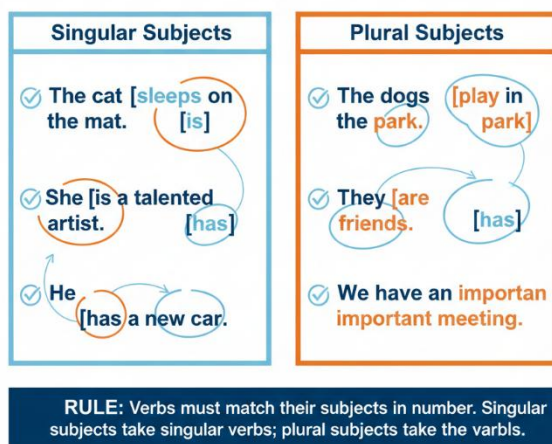


Figure 3.8 Rule-governed structures in grammar

3.4.2 Analysing errors and deviations

Errors occur when sentences break grammatical rules, while **deviations** may reflect informal or creative usage. For example, *He don't like it* is an error in subject–verb agreement, while *To boldly go* is a deviation from prescriptive rules but widely accepted in descriptive grammar. Analysing these cases helps learners understand both correctness and flexibility in language use.

Fill in the blank: The phrase *He don't like it* is an example of a grammatical _____.

Category	Example	Explanation
Error	He don't like it.	Subject-Verb Agreement: In standard English, the third-person singular "he" requires "doesn't."
Error	She reading book.	Missing Components: Lacks the auxiliary verb ("is") and the determiner ("a").
Deviation	To boldly go...	Split Infinitive: Placing an adverb between "to" and the verb. This is a stylistic choice common in modern English.
Deviation	Who are you talking to?	Sentence-Final Preposition: Placing the preposition at the end rather than using the formal "To whom..."

Box 3.4: Examples of errors and deviations



3.4.3 Evaluating communicative effectiveness

Communicative effectiveness refers to how well a sentence achieves its purpose in context. A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it is unclear or awkward. For example, *The report which was written by the committee that met last week was submitted yesterday* is correct but overly complex. Evaluating effectiveness involves balancing correctness with clarity and impact.

Fill in the blank: A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it lacks _____ or clarity.

**GRAMMAR ISN'T ENOUGH:
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Sentences that are "correct" but unclear or confusing

 AMBIGUITY	 WORDINESS	 OVER-COMPLEXITY
1. The package is on the table by the window that is broken. by window that broken.	2. In spite of the fact that he was late, he was late, he managed to arrive before the meeting meeting concluded.	3. The project, which originally scheduled completion month but experienced unforeseen delays due supply chain issues, is now back on track.
Is the window or table broken?	Better: "Although he was late...."	Too many clauses overwhelm main point.

Grammar rules + Clarity, Conciseness, & Context = Effective Communication.

Plate 3.9 Evaluating communicative effectiveness

Pilot questions 3.4

1. A sentence that follows grammatical rules is called a: a) Deviation b) Rule-governed structure c) Error d) Transformation
2. Which of the following is an example of a grammatical error? a) To boldly go b) He don't like it c) Ending with a preposition d) Splitting infinitives
3. Deviations from prescriptive rules may still be accepted in: a) Descriptive grammar b) Prescriptive grammar c) Structuralist grammar d) Traditional grammar
4. Communicative effectiveness refers to: a) Correctness only b) Clarity and impact in context c) Sentence length d) Word pronunciation
5. Fill in the blank: A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it lacks _____ or clarity.

Series Summary



This Series has examined the functions and rules of grammar, showing how they shape communication and guide sentence construction. Its purpose has been to highlight grammar not only as a set of rules for correctness but also as a framework for meaning, interaction, and effectiveness. By engaging with this Series, you have seen how grammar operates in practice and why it matters for both clarity and impact in communication.

We began by exploring the communicative functions of grammar, focusing on informative, interrogative, directive, and expressive uses. Then we considered prescriptive and descriptive rules, looking at how norms of correctness interact with actual usage. Following that, we studied transformations and well-formedness, including active and passive changes, question formation, and the distinction between well-formed and ill-formed sentences. Finally, we applied these rules in sentence analysis, identifying rule-governed structures, analysing errors and deviations, and evaluating communicative effectiveness. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to explain grammar functions, distinguish between prescriptive and descriptive rules, apply transformations, and evaluate well-formedness with confidence.

Glossary of Terms

- **Active sentence:** A sentence in which the subject performs the action, for example, *The boy kicked the ball.*
- **Descriptive rules:** Rules that explain how language is actually used by speakers and writers, focusing on patterns and variation rather than correctness.
- **Directive function:** The use of grammar to give commands, instructions, or requests, usually realised through imperative sentences.
- **Error:** A sentence or phrase that breaks grammatical rules, such as *He don't like it.*
- **Expressive function:** The use of grammar to convey emotions, attitudes, or feelings, often realised through exclamatory sentences.
- **Ill-formed sentence:** A sentence that does not follow grammatical rules and is considered unacceptable, for example, *She reading book.*
- **Imperative sentence:** A sentence used to give a command, instruction, or request, such as *Close the door.*
- **Informative function:** The use of grammar to provide information or state facts, usually realised through declarative sentences.
- **Interrogative function:** The use of grammar to request information, realised through interrogative sentences that end with a question mark.
- **Passive sentence:** A sentence in which the focus is shifted to the object, for example, *The ball was kicked by the boy.*
- **Prescriptive rules:** Rules that dictate how language *should* be used, emphasising correctness and norms.
- **Rule-governed structure:** A sentence or phrase that follows established grammatical rules, such as *She has finished her work.*
- **Transformation:** A grammatical process that changes the form of a sentence while retaining its meaning, such as converting active voice to passive voice.



- **Well-formed sentence:** A sentence that follows grammatical rules and is acceptable to native speakers, for example, *She is reading a book.*

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Which function of grammar is realised through declarative sentences? a) Informative b) Interrogative c) Directive d) Expressive (*Linked to SLO 3.1*)
2. Prescriptive rules in grammar emphasise: a) Usage and variation b) Correctness and norms c) Emotional expression d) Sentence functions (*Linked to SLO 3.2*)
3. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Active b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Exclamatory (*Linked to SLO 3.3*)
4. A sentence that follows grammatical rules and is acceptable to native speakers is called: a) Ill-formed sentence b) Rule-governed structure c) Transformation d) Expressive function (*Linked to SLO 3.4*)
5. Fill in the blank: The phrase *To boldly go* illustrates tension between prescriptive rules and _____ grammar. (*Linked to SLO 3.2*)

Short-answer questions

6. Define the **directive function** of grammar and give one example. (*Linked to SLO 3.1*)
7. Explain the difference between **prescriptive rules** and **descriptive rules**. (*Linked to SLO 3.2*)
8. What is meant by a **transformation** in grammar? Provide a simple illustration. (*Linked to SLO 3.3*)
9. Describe what makes a sentence **well-formed**. (*Linked to SLO 3.4*)

Long-answer questions

10. Analyse the sentence *The report was written by the committee* by identifying its transformation, function, and well-formedness. (*Linked to SLOs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4*)
11. Evaluate the importance of distinguishing between prescriptive and descriptive rules in grammar, using examples to support your explanation. (*Linked to SLO 3.2*)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Informative
2. Correctness and norms
3. Passive
4. Rule-governed structure
5. Descriptive



Short-answer questions

6. The directive function uses grammar to give commands, instructions, or requests. Example: *Close the door.*
7. Prescriptive rules dictate how language *should* be used, emphasising correctness. Descriptive rules explain how language is actually used, focusing on patterns and variation.
8. A transformation changes the form of a sentence while retaining meaning. Example: *The boy kicked the ball* → *The ball was kicked by the boy.*
9. A well-formed sentence follows grammatical rules and is acceptable to native speakers. Example: *She is reading a book.*

Long-answer questions

10. *Basic response:*

- Transformation: Passive form of *The committee wrote the report.*
- Function: Informative, as it provides information.
- Well-formedness: Correct and acceptable according to grammatical rules.

Value-added response:

- Transformation highlights the object (*report*) rather than the subject (*committee*).
- Function demonstrates how passive voice shifts focus in communication.
- Well-formedness confirmed by proper tense, agreement, and structure.
- Broader implication: Passive voice is often used in formal contexts to emphasise results rather than agents.

11. *Basic response:* Distinguishing between prescriptive and descriptive rules is important because prescriptive rules emphasise correctness, while descriptive rules explain actual usage.

Value-added response: Prescriptive rules are useful in formal contexts such as academic writing, ensuring clarity and standards. Descriptive rules provide insight into how language evolves and adapts in everyday speech. For example, prescriptive grammar may reject double negatives, but descriptive grammar recognises their use for emphasis. Understanding both perspectives allows learners to balance correctness with communicative effectiveness and appreciate language diversity.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Pilot questions 3.1

1. Informative
2. Request information
3. Imperative
4. Exclamatory
5. Imperative



Pilot questions 3.2

1. Prescriptive
2. Usage and variation
3. Splitting infinitives
4. Academic writing
5. Usage

Pilot questions 3.3

1. Passive
2. The front
3. She is reading a book
4. Structure
5. Ill-formed

Pilot questions 3.4

1. Rule-governed structure
2. He don't like it
3. Descriptive grammar
4. Clarity and impact in context
5. Effectiveness

References and Attributions [Series 3]

The following references and attributions cover the sources and illustration prompts used throughout **Series 3: Functions and Rules of Grammar**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

General References

- OpenStax. (n.d.). *English grammar resources*. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org>
- OER Commons. (n.d.). *Grammar and language learning materials*. Retrieved from <https://oercommons.org>
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Illustrations

Figure 3.1 Informative function of grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of declarative sentences).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing declarative sentences used to provide information.”

Plate 3.2 Interrogative function of grammar



- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of interrogative sentences).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of interrogative sentences with question words highlighted.”

Box 3.1 Examples of directive sentences

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (imperative sentence examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of directive sentences.”

Plate 3.3 Expressive function of grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of exclamatory sentences).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of exclamatory sentences with exclamation marks highlighted.”

Figure 3.4 Prescriptive rules in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (prescriptive grammar examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing examples of prescriptive grammar rules such as avoiding double negatives.”

Plate 3.5 Descriptive rules in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of descriptive grammar in everyday speech).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of descriptive grammar in everyday speech.”

Box 3.2 Examples of tension between prescriptive and descriptive rules

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of prescriptive vs descriptive grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of tension between prescriptive and descriptive grammar rules.”

Plate 3.6 Active and passive transformations

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (active and passive transformation examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations side by side.”

Figure 3.7 Question formation and movement

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (question formation diagrams).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing movement of a question word to the front of a sentence.”

Box 3.3 Examples of well-formed and ill-formed sentences



- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of well-formed vs ill-formed sentences).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of well-formed and ill-formed sentences.”

Figure 3.8 Rule-governed structures in grammar

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of subject–verb agreement).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing examples of rule-governed structures with subject–verb agreement highlighted.”

Box 3.4 Examples of errors and deviations

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of grammar errors and deviations).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of grammatical errors and deviations.”

Plate 3.9 Evaluating communicative effectiveness

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of communicative effectiveness in grammar).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of sentences that are grammatically correct but unclear or ineffective.”

Course code: LIN 203

Course title: Grammar

Course credit load: 3 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures

Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description

Series 3: Functions and Rules in Grammar

Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description

Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages

Proposed Outline for Series 4

Part .1 Constituency and Phrase Structure



- 4.1.1 Constituents and their identification
- 4.1.2 Phrase structure rules
- 4.1.3 Tree diagrams and hierarchical organisation

Part .2 Immediate Constituent Analysis

- 4.2.1 The concept of immediate constituents
- 4.2.2 Binary division of sentences
- 4.2.3 Applications in syntactic description

Part .3 Transformational Techniques

- 4.3.1 Movement rules (e.g., question formation)
- 4.3.2 Active and passive transformations
- 4.3.3 Structural ambiguity and transformations

Part .4 Practical Applications of Syntactic Techniques

- 4.4.1 Analysing sample sentences
- 4.4.2 Identifying errors and deviations
- 4.4.3 Evaluating syntactic effectiveness

Introduction

In the last Series, we examined the functions and rules of grammar, focusing on how sentences convey meaning, follow norms, and undergo transformations. Building on that foundation, this Series turns to the techniques used in syntactic description. Syntax is the study of how words combine to form phrases and sentences, and syntactic description provides the tools to analyse these structures systematically. By learning these techniques, you will be able to represent sentence organisation visually, identify constituents, and apply transformations with precision.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to key techniques in syntactic description and to equip you with the skills needed to analyse sentence structures using constituency, immediate constituent analysis, transformational methods, and practical applications.

We shall commence this Series by exploring constituency and phrase structure, where you will learn how to identify constituents, apply phrase structure rules, and represent sentences using tree diagrams. Next, we will move on to immediate constituent analysis, examining binary divisions and their applications in syntactic description. Following that, we will study transformational techniques, including movement rules, active and passive transformations, and structural ambiguity. Finally, we will wrap up by applying these techniques to real sentence analysis, where you will practise identifying errors, evaluating syntactic effectiveness, and consolidating your analytical skills. This progression will ensure that you gain both theoretical insight and practical competence in syntactic description.



Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** identify constituents within sentences and explain their role in phrase structure,
- **SLO 4.2** apply phrase structure rules to construct and represent sentences,
- **SLO 4.3** demonstrate sentence organisation using tree diagrams to show hierarchical relationships,
- **SLO 4.4** define the concept of immediate constituents and illustrate binary division in sentence analysis,
- **SLO 4.5** analyse sentences using immediate constituent techniques for syntactic description,
- **SLO 4.6** apply transformational techniques such as movement rules and active–passive changes to sentences,
- **SLO 4.7** evaluate structural ambiguity by examining how transformations affect sentence meaning, and
- **SLO 4.8** conduct practical syntactic analysis by identifying errors, deviations, and assessing sentence effectiveness.

4.1 Constituency and Phrase Structure

Syntax is concerned with how words combine to form larger units such as phrases and sentences. One of the most important techniques in syntactic description is the analysis of **constituency**, which refers to the grouping of words into meaningful units. These units are governed by **phrase structure rules**, which explain how phrases and sentences are organised. In this Part, we will explore how constituents are identified, how phrase structure rules operate, and how tree diagrams represent hierarchical organisation.

4.1.1 Constituents and their identification

A **constituent** is a group of words that functions as a single unit within a sentence. For example, in the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, the phrase *the boy* is a constituent functioning as the subject, while *the ball* is a constituent functioning as the object. Constituents can be identified through tests such as substitution, movement, and coordination.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, the phrase *the ball* functions as the

_____.



SENTENCE CONSTITUENTS: SUBJECT & OBJECT PHRASES

Building Blocks of a Simple Sentence

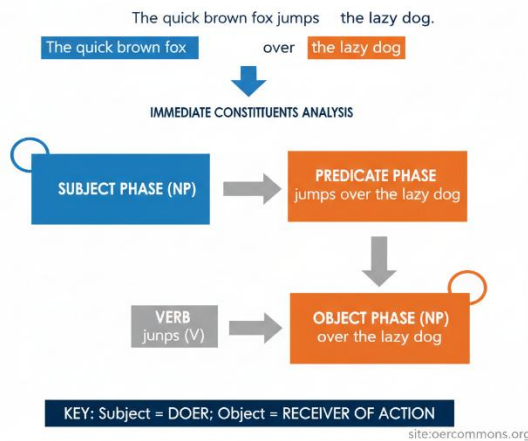


Figure 4.1 Constituents in a sentence

4.1.2 Phrase structure rules

Phrase structure rules are formal rules that describe how constituents combine to form phrases and sentences. For example, a simple rule might state that a sentence (S) consists of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a verb phrase (VP). These rules provide a systematic way of representing sentence organisation.

Fill in the blank: A phrase structure rule may state that a sentence (S) consists of an _____ followed by a verb phrase (VP).

Rule	Definition	Example Breakdown
S → NP VP	A Sentence consists of a Noun Phrase followed by a Verb Phrase.	<i>[The cat] [chased the mouse].</i>
NP → (Det) N	A Noun Phrase consists of an optional Determiner and a Noun.	<i>[The] [cat] or just [Cats].</i>
VP → V (NP)	A Verb Phrase consists of a Verb and an optional Noun Phrase.	<i>[chased] [the mouse] or just [slept].</i>
PP → P NP	A Prepositional Phrase consists of a Preposition and a Noun Phrase.	<i>[on] [the mat]</i>

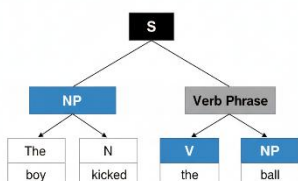
Box 4.1: Examples of phrase structure rules

4.1.3 Tree diagrams and hierarchical organisation



A **tree diagram** is a visual representation of phrase structure rules, showing how constituents are organised hierarchically. For example, the sentence *The boy kicked the ball* can be represented as a tree with S at the top, branching into NP and VP, and further into smaller constituents. Tree diagrams make it easier to see the relationships between parts of a sentence.

Fill in the blank: A tree diagram represents the _____ organisation of constituents in a sentence.



Tree Structure: "The boy kicked the ball" - A Generative Grammar Analysis

Figure 4.2 Tree diagram of a sentence

Pilot questions 4.1

- Which of the following is a constituent in the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*? a) The boy b) Kicked c) The ball d) Both a and c
- Phrase structure rules describe: a) How words are pronounced b) How constituents combine to form phrases and sentences c) How sentences convey meaning d) How verbs change tense
- Which of the following is a correct phrase structure rule? a) $S \rightarrow VP + NP$ b) $NP \rightarrow Det + N$ c) $VP \rightarrow NP + V$ d) $N \rightarrow S + VP$
- A tree diagram is used to: a) Show sentence meaning b) Represent hierarchical organisation of constituents c) Correct grammatical errors d) Illustrate tense changes
- Fill in the blank: A sentence (S) consists of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a _____ phrase (VP).

4.2 Immediate Constituent Analysis

One of the most influential techniques in syntactic description is **immediate constituent analysis**. This method breaks sentences down into their smallest meaningful parts, showing how words and phrases combine step by step. By examining immediate constituents, we can see the binary divisions that reveal the internal organisation of sentences.

4.2.1 The concept of immediate constituents

Immediate constituents are the basic units into which a sentence can be divided at each stage of analysis. For example, the sentence *The boy kicked the ball* can first be divided into two



constituents: *The boy* (noun phrase) and *kicked the ball* (verb phrase). Each of these can then be further divided into smaller constituents.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*, the phrase *The boy* is an immediate _____.

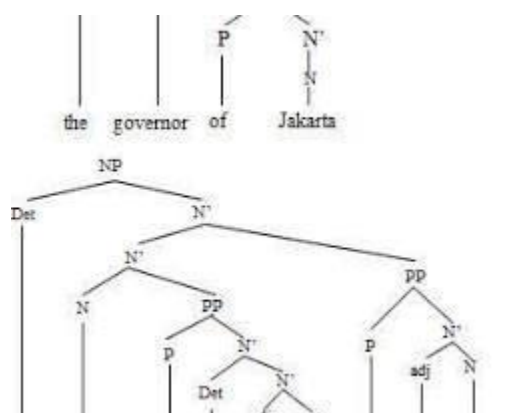


Figure 4.3 Immediate constituents in a sentence

4.2.2 Binary division of sentences

Immediate constituent analysis works through **binary division**, meaning that at each stage, a sentence is divided into two parts. For example, *The boy kicked the ball* divides into NP and VP. The NP divides into *Det* + *N* (*The* + *boy*), while the VP divides into *V* + *NP* (*kicked* + *the ball*). This step-by-step division continues until only single words remain.

Fill in the blank: Immediate constituent analysis divides sentences into _____ parts at each stage.

Level of Division	Phrase Structure Rule	Example Breakdown
First Division	$S \rightarrow NP + VP$	<i>[The student] + [passed the exam]</i>
Noun Phrase (NP)	$NP \rightarrow Det + N$	<i>[The] + [student]</i>
Verb Phrase (VP)	$VP \rightarrow V + NP$	<i>[passed] + [the exam]</i>
Prepositional Phrase	$PP \rightarrow P + NP$	<i>[in] + [the classroom]</i>

Box 4.2: Binary division in immediate constituent analysis

4.2.3 Applications in syntactic description

Immediate constituent analysis is useful for showing how sentences are structured and for identifying errors. For example, if a sentence does not divide neatly into constituents, it may be

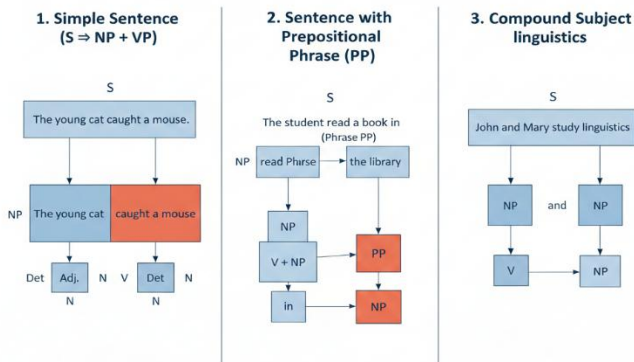


ill-formed. This technique also helps linguists compare sentence structures across languages, as binary division is a universal principle.

Fill in the blank: Immediate constituent analysis is useful for identifying _____ in sentence structure.

IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS: APPLICATIONS

Revealing the Hidden Structure of Sentences



KEY: ICA breaks sentences into two meaningful parts at each level.

site: oercommons.org

Plate 4.4 Applications of immediate constituent analysis

Pilot questions 4.2

- Immediate constituents are: a) The smallest meaningful units at each stage of sentence division b) The largest units in a sentence c) Only verbs and nouns d) Rules for tense changes
- Immediate constituent analysis divides sentences into: a) Three parts b) Two parts c) Four parts d) Many random parts
- Which of the following is a correct binary division? a) $S \rightarrow NP + VP$ b) $NP \rightarrow V + NP$ c) $VP \rightarrow Det + N$ d) $N \rightarrow S + VP$
- Immediate constituent analysis is useful for: a) Identifying sentence meaning b) Identifying errors in sentence structure c) Changing tense d) Correcting spelling mistakes
- Fill in the blank: Immediate constituent analysis divides sentences into _____ parts at each stage.

4.3 Transformational Techniques

Transformational techniques in syntax show how sentences can change form while retaining meaning. These transformations reveal the flexibility of language and help us understand how



different structures are related. In this Part, we will explore movement rules, active and passive transformations, and structural ambiguity.

4.3.1 Movement rules (e.g., question formation)

Movement rules are transformations that shift elements of a sentence to create new structures. For example, in question formation, the word order changes: *You are going where* becomes *Where are you going?*. This involves moving the question word to the front and adjusting the auxiliary verb.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *Where are you going?*, the word *where* has been moved to the _____ of the sentence.

SYNTACTIC MOVEMENT: WH-QUESTION FORMATION

Illustrating the "Wh-Movement" Rule in English Syntax

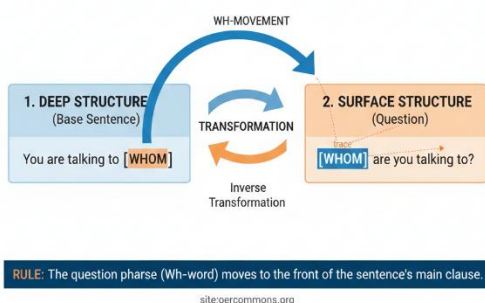


Figure 4.5 Movement rules in question formation

4.3.2 Active and passive transformations

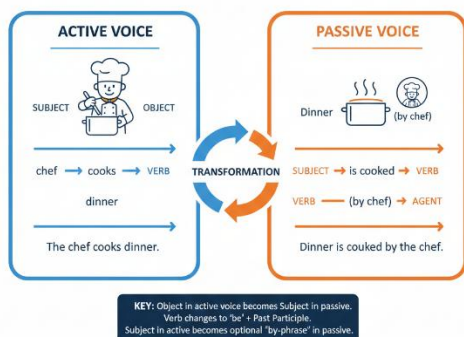
An **active sentence** presents the subject as performing the action, while a **passive sentence** shifts focus to the object. For example:

- Active: *The teacher explained the lesson.*
- Passive: *The lesson was explained by the teacher.*

Both sentences convey the same meaning but differ in structure. Passive transformations are often used to emphasise the action or the object rather than the subject.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *The lesson was explained by the teacher* is the _____ form of *The teacher explained the lesson*.





SYNTAX TRANSFORMATION: ACTIVE → PASSIVE VOICE

site:openstax.org

Plate 4.6 Active and passive transformations

4.3.3 Structural ambiguity and transformations

Structural ambiguity occurs when a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way due to its structure. For example, *Visiting relatives can be annoying* could mean that relatives who visit are annoying, or that the act of visiting relatives is annoying. Transformational analysis helps reveal these multiple interpretations by showing how different structures are possible.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *Visiting relatives can be annoying* illustrates _____ ambiguity.

Sentence	Meaning A (Structure 1)	Meaning B (Structure 2)
"Flying planes can be dangerous."	The act of piloting a plane is a dangerous activity.	Planes that are currently in the air are dangerous objects.
"Old men and women."	Only the men are old; the women could be any age.	Both the men and the women are old.
"Visiting relatives can be annoying."	The act of you going to see your relatives is annoying.	The relatives who come to visit you are annoying people.

Box 4.3: Examples of structural ambiguity

Pilot questions 4.3

1. Movement rules in syntax are used to: a) Change tense b) Shift elements in a sentence c) Correct spelling d) Add punctuation



2. Which of the following is a passive sentence? a) The teacher explained the lesson. b) The lesson was explained by the teacher. c) The teacher is explaining. d) The lesson explains itself.
3. Structural ambiguity occurs when: a) A sentence has more than one possible interpretation b) A sentence is grammatically incorrect c) A sentence is too long d) A sentence lacks punctuation
4. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Active b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Exclamatory
5. Fill in the blank: The sentence *Visiting relatives can be annoying* illustrates _____ ambiguity.

4.4 Practical Applications of Syntactic Techniques

Having studied constituency, immediate constituent analysis, and transformational techniques, it is now time to apply these tools to real sentences. This Part focuses on how syntactic techniques can be used in practice to analyse sentence structures, identify errors and deviations, and evaluate communicative effectiveness.

4.4.1 Analysing sample sentences

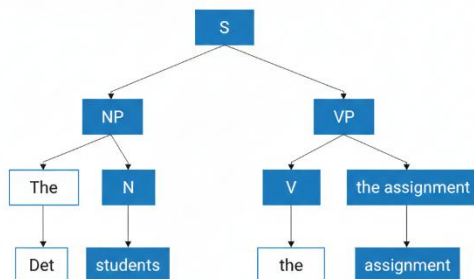
Applying syntactic techniques begins with breaking down sentences into their constituents and representing them with phrase structure rules or tree diagrams. For example, the sentence *The students completed the assignment* can be analysed as $S \rightarrow NP + VP$, where NP = *The students* and VP = *completed the assignment*.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *The students completed the assignment*, the phrase *The students* functions as the _____.

SYNCACTIC ANALYSIS:

"The students completed the assignment."

A Visual Guide to Sentence Structure



KEY: S=Sentence, NP=Noun Phrase, VP=Determiner, N=Noun

site: oercommons.org

Figure 4.7 Analysing a sample sentence



4.4.2 Identifying errors and deviations

Errors occur when sentences break grammatical rules, while **deviations** may reflect informal or creative usage. For example, *She going school* is an error because it lacks proper tense marking, while *To boldly go* is a deviation from prescriptive rules but widely accepted in descriptive grammar. Analysing errors and deviations helps learners improve accuracy and appreciate flexibility in language use.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *She going school* is considered a grammatical _____.

Category	Example	Linguistic Explanation
Error	She going school.*	Missing Auxiliary & Preposition: Lacks the verb "is" and the directional preposition "to."
Error	He don't like it.*	Subject-Verb Agreement: In standard English, the third-person singular "he" requires the auxiliary "doesn't."
Deviation	To boldly go...	Split Infinitive: Placing an adverb between "to" and the verb. Strictly avoided in formal Latin-based grammar, but common in English.
Deviation	Who are you talking to?	Stranded Preposition: Ending a sentence with a preposition rather than using the formal "To whom are you talking?"

Box 4.4: Examples of errors and deviations

4.4.3 Evaluating syntactic effectiveness

Syntactic effectiveness refers to how well a sentence achieves clarity and impact in communication. A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it is overly complex or awkward. For example, *The report which was written by the committee that met last week was submitted yesterday* is correct but difficult to process. Evaluating effectiveness involves balancing correctness with clarity and readability.

Fill in the blank: A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it lacks _____ and clarity.



SYNTACTIC EFFECTIVENESS: EXAMPLES

Grammatically Correct, but Structurally Weak Sentences

AMBIGUITY	WORDINESS	OVER-COMPLEXITY
She saw the man with binoculars. with the binoculars Meaning A binoculars to man. She man was holding to see binoculars.	Due to the fact that it was raining, the event was postponed. Due to the that raining. More Effective: its raining, the event postponed.	The report, which the submitted late by research team and contained several errors, necessitating a revise and resubmit, has finally been seen approved after numerous delays. More Effective: - The report was late contained errors, and needed revisions. - It has finally is approved.

KEY: Syntax isn't just correctness; it's about clarity, conciseness, and impact

site:openstax.org

Plate 4.8 Evaluating syntactic effectiveness

Pilot questions 4.4

- In the sentence *The students completed the assignment*, the phrase *The students* is: a) A verb phrase b) A noun phrase c) An error d) A deviation
- Which of the following is a grammatical error? a) She going school b) To boldly go c) Ending with a preposition d) Splitting infinitives
- Deviations from prescriptive rules may still be accepted in: a) Descriptive grammar b) Prescriptive grammar c) Traditional grammar d) Structuralist grammar
- Syntactic effectiveness refers to: a) Correctness only b) Clarity and impact in communication c) Sentence length d) Word pronunciation
- Fill in the blank: A sentence may be grammatically correct but ineffective if it lacks _____ and clarity.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on techniques in syntactic description, showing how sentences can be broken down, represented, and transformed to reveal their internal organisation. Its purpose has been to equip you with practical tools for analysing syntax, building on your earlier study of grammar functions and rules, and highlighting the relevance of syntactic techniques to clear and effective communication.

We began by examining constituency and phrase structure, learning how to identify constituents, apply phrase structure rules, and represent sentences with tree diagrams. Then we moved on to immediate constituent analysis, exploring binary division and its applications in syntactic description. Following that, we studied transformational techniques, including movement rules,



active and passive changes, and structural ambiguity. Finally, we applied these techniques to real sentence analysis, identifying errors, recognising deviations, and evaluating syntactic effectiveness. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to identify constituents, apply phrase structure rules, demonstrate sentence organisation with tree diagrams, analyse sentences using immediate constituent techniques, apply transformations, evaluate ambiguity, and conduct practical syntactic analysis with confidence.

Glossary of Terms

- **Active sentence:** A sentence in which the subject performs the action, for example, *The teacher explained the lesson.*
- **Ambiguity (structural):** A situation where a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way because of its structure, such as *Visiting relatives can be annoying.*
- **Constituent:** A group of words that functions as a single unit within a sentence, such as *the boy* or *the ball*.
- **Deviation:** A sentence form that departs from prescriptive rules but may still be acceptable in descriptive grammar, for example, *To boldly go.*
- **Error:** A sentence or phrase that breaks grammatical rules, such as *She going school.*
- **Immediate constituent analysis:** A technique that divides a sentence step by step into its smallest meaningful parts, usually through binary division.
- **Movement rules:** Transformations that shift elements of a sentence to create new structures, such as moving a question word to the front in *Where are you going?*
- **Noun phrase (NP):** A constituent built around a noun, often including a determiner, for example, *The students.*
- **Passive sentence:** A sentence in which the focus is shifted to the object, for example, *The lesson was explained by the teacher.*
- **Phrase structure rules:** Formal rules that describe how constituents combine to form phrases and sentences, such as $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.
- **Syntactic effectiveness:** The clarity and impact of a sentence in communication, balancing correctness with readability.
- **Transformation:** A grammatical process that changes the form of a sentence while retaining its meaning, such as converting active voice to passive voice.
- **Tree diagram:** A visual representation of phrase structure rules, showing how constituents are organised hierarchically in a sentence.
- **Verb phrase (VP):** A constituent built around a verb, often including an object, for example, *completed the assignment.*

Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions



1. Which of the following is a constituent in the sentence *The boy kicked the ball*? a) The boy b) Kicked c) The ball d) Both a and c (*Linked to SLO 4.1*)
2. Phrase structure rules describe: a) How words are pronounced b) How constituents combine to form phrases and sentences c) How sentences convey meaning d) How verbs change tense (*Linked to SLO 4.2*)
3. A tree diagram is used to: a) Show sentence meaning b) Represent hierarchical organisation of constituents c) Correct grammatical errors d) Illustrate tense changes (*Linked to SLO 4.3*)
4. Immediate constituent analysis divides sentences into: a) Three parts b) Two parts c) Four parts d) Random parts (*Linked to SLO 4.4*)
5. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Active b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Exclamatory (*Linked to SLO 4.6*)

Short-answer questions

6. Define a **constituent** and give one example. (*Linked to SLO 4.1*)
7. Write one phrase structure rule for a sentence and explain its meaning. (*Linked to SLO 4.2*)
8. What is the purpose of a **tree diagram** in syntactic description? (*Linked to SLO 4.3*)
9. Explain what is meant by **structural ambiguity** and provide an example. (*Linked to SLO 4.7*)
10. Describe what is meant by **syntactic effectiveness**. (*Linked to SLO 4.8*)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the sentence *The students completed the assignment* by identifying its constituents, phrase structure rules, and tree diagram representation. (*Linked to SLOs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3*)
12. Evaluate the usefulness of immediate constituent analysis in syntactic description, highlighting its strengths and limitations. (*Linked to SLOs 4.4, 4.5*)
13. Discuss how transformational techniques such as movement rules and passive transformations contribute to understanding sentence structure and meaning. (*Linked to SLOs 4.6, 4.7*)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. d) Both a and c
2. b) How constituents combine to form phrases and sentences
3. b) Represent hierarchical organisation of constituents
4. b) Two parts
5. b) Passive

Short-answer questions

6. A constituent is a group of words functioning as a single unit in a sentence. Example: *The boy*.



7. Rule: $S \rightarrow NP + VP$. This means a sentence consists of a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase.
8. A tree diagram shows the hierarchical organisation of constituents in a sentence.
9. Structural ambiguity occurs when a sentence can be interpreted in more than one way.
Example: *Visiting relatives can be annoying*.
10. Syntactic effectiveness refers to how well a sentence achieves clarity and impact in communication.

Long-answer questions

11. *Basic response:*

- Constituents: NP = *The students*, VP = *completed the assignment*.
- Phrase structure rule: $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.
- Tree diagram: S branches into NP (*The students*) and VP (*completed the assignment*).

Value-added response:

- Constituents identified correctly, with NP further divided into Det + N (*The + students*) and VP into V + NP (*completed + the assignment*).
- Phrase structure rules show hierarchical organisation.
- Tree diagram illustrates relationships clearly.
- Broader implication: This analysis demonstrates how syntactic description provides systematic representation of sentence structure.

12. *Basic response:* Immediate constituent analysis divides sentences into binary parts, showing their organisation.

Value-added response:

- Strengths: Provides clarity, universality across languages, and helps identify errors.
- Limitations: May oversimplify complex structures and does not always capture meaning.
- Broader implication: While useful for structural analysis, it must be complemented by other techniques for full syntactic description.

13. *Basic response:* Transformational techniques show how sentences change form, such as movement in questions or passive transformations.

Value-added response:

- Movement rules highlight how interrogatives are formed by shifting elements.
- Passive transformations shift focus from subject to object, useful in formal contexts.
- Structural ambiguity can be revealed through transformations.
- Broader implication: These techniques enrich understanding of syntax by linking form and meaning, and by showing flexibility in sentence construction.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Pilot questions 4.1

1. Both a and c
2. How constituents combine to form phrases and sentences
3. $NP \rightarrow Det + N$
4. Represent hierarchical organisation of constituents
5. Verb

Pilot questions 4.2

1. The smallest meaningful units at each stage of sentence division
2. Two parts
3. $S \rightarrow NP + VP$
4. Identifying errors in sentence structure
5. Two

Pilot questions 4.3

1. Shift elements in a sentence
2. The lesson was explained by the teacher
3. A sentence has more than one possible interpretation
4. Passive
5. Structural

Pilot questions 4.4

1. A noun phrase
2. She going school
3. Descriptive grammar
4. Clarity and impact in communication
5. Effectiveness

References and Attributions [Series 4]

The following references and attributions cover the sources and illustration prompts used throughout **Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

General References

- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- OpenStax. (n.d.). *English grammar and syntax resources*. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org>



- OER Commons. (n.d.). *Syntax and grammar learning materials*. Retrieved from <https://oercommons.org>

Illustrations

Figure 4.1 Constituents in a sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of subject and object constituents).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing constituents in a sentence, highlighting subject and object phrases.”

Box 4.1 Examples of phrase structure rules

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of phrase structure rules).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of phrase structure rules in syntax.”

Figure 4.2 Tree diagram of a sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (tree diagram examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a tree diagram showing hierarchical organisation of constituents in the sentence ‘The boy kicked the ball’.”

Figure 4.3 Immediate constituents in a sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (binary division examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing binary division of a sentence into NP and VP constituents.”

Box 4.2 Binary division in immediate constituent analysis

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of binary division).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing binary divisions in immediate constituent analysis.”

Plate 4.4 Applications of immediate constituent analysis

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (applications of constituent analysis).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of immediate constituent analysis applied to different sentences.”

Figure 4.5 Movement rules in question formation

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (question formation diagrams).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing movement of a question word to the front of a sentence.”

Plate 4.6 Active and passive transformations

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of active and passive transformations).



- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations side by side.”

Box 4.3 Examples of structural ambiguity

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of ambiguous sentences).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of structural ambiguity in sentences.”

Figure 4.7 Analysing a sample sentence

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (syntactic analysis examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing syntactic analysis of the sentence ‘The students completed the assignment’.”

Box 4.4 Examples of errors and deviations

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of grammar errors and deviations).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of grammatical errors and deviations.”

Plate 4.8 Evaluating syntactic effectiveness

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of syntactic effectiveness).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of sentences that are grammatically correct but syntactically ineffective.”

Course code: LIN 203

Course title: Grammar

Course credit load: 3 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Grammatical Units and Structures

Series 2: Sentence Analysis and Linguistic Description

Series 3: Functions and Rules in Grammar

Series 4: Techniques in Syntactic Description

Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages

Proposed Outline for Series 5

Part .1 Introduction to Grammatical Sketches



- 5.1.1 Definition and purpose of grammatical sketches
- 5.1.2 Role in linguistic description and documentation
- 5.1.3 Key components of a grammatical sketch

Part .2 Phonology and Morphology in Sketches

- 5.2.1 Representing sound systems (phonology)
- 5.2.2 Describing word formation (morphology)
- 5.2.3 Examples from different languages

Part .3 Syntax and Sentence Patterns

- 5.3.1 Basic word order and sentence types
- 5.3.2 Constituent structure and phrase rules
- 5.3.3 Transformations and variations across languages

Part .4 Practical Steps in Developing Sketches

- 5.4.1 Collecting and organising linguistic data
- 5.4.2 Writing descriptive sections (phonology, morphology, syntax)
- 5.4.3 Evaluating clarity and completeness of sketches

Part .5 Applications of Grammatical Sketches

- 5.5.1 Use in language teaching and learning
- 5.5.2 Role in comparative linguistics
- 5.5.3 Contribution to language preservation and revitalisation

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored techniques in syntactic description, focusing on how sentences can be broken down, represented, and transformed to reveal their internal organisation. Building on that foundation, this Series turns to the development of **grammatical sketches**, which are concise descriptions of the grammar of a language. Grammatical sketches are widely used in linguistic documentation, comparative studies, and language preservation, making them an essential skill for anyone studying or working with languages.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the principles and practices of creating grammatical sketches and to equip you with the ability to describe the phonology, morphology, and syntax of a language in a clear and systematic way.

We shall commence this Series by examining what grammatical sketches are, their purpose, and the key components that make them effective. Next, we will explore how phonology and morphology are represented, looking at sound systems and word formation with examples from different languages. Following that, we will move on to syntax and sentence patterns, considering



word order, constituent structure, and transformations. Afterwards, we will focus on the practical steps involved in developing sketches, including collecting data, writing descriptive sections, and evaluating clarity. Finally, we will wrap up by discussing the applications of grammatical sketches in teaching, comparative linguistics, and language preservation, ensuring you can connect theory with real-world practice.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define what a grammatical sketch is and explain its purpose in linguistic description,
- **SLO 5.2** identify and describe the key components of a grammatical sketch,
- **SLO 5.3** analyse and represent the phonological system of a language within a sketch,
- **SLO 5.4** demonstrate how to describe morphological processes such as word formation,
- **SLO 5.5** apply syntactic techniques to outline basic word order and sentence patterns,
- **SLO 5.6** construct phrase structure representations and transformations for inclusion in a sketch,
- **SLO 5.7** organise linguistic data systematically to develop clear descriptive sections,
- **SLO 5.8** evaluate the clarity and completeness of a grammatical sketch, and
- **SLO 5.9** explain how grammatical sketches can be applied in teaching, comparative linguistics, and language preservation.

5.1 Introduction to Grammatical Sketches

A **grammatical sketch** is a concise description of the grammar of a language, usually covering its sound system, word formation processes, and sentence structures. Linguists use grammatical sketches to document languages, compare structures across different languages, and support teaching and preservation efforts. Unlike full grammars, sketches are shorter and more focused, making them practical tools for both academic and applied contexts.

Fill in the blank: A grammatical sketch is a concise _____ of the grammar of a language.

5.1.1 Definition and purpose of grammatical sketches

Grammatical sketches provide a structured overview of a language's grammar. Their **purpose** is to capture the essential features of a language without going into exhaustive detail. They are especially useful for languages with limited documentation, as they allow linguists to record key aspects quickly and systematically.

Fill in the blank: The main purpose of a grammatical sketch is to capture the _____ features of a language.



Purpose	Description
Concise Documentation	Provides a structural "snapshot" of a language, detailing its phonology, morphology, and syntax in a brief format.
Comparative Linguistics	Offers a standardized way for researchers to compare different languages and identify patterns, origins, and typological features.
Teaching and Learning	Serves as a streamlined reference for educators and students to grasp the fundamental rules without getting lost in exhaustive detail.
Preservation and Revitalisation	Acts as a critical record for endangered languages, providing the foundational data necessary for creating community learning materials.

Box 5.1: Key purposes of grammatical sketches

5.1.2 Role in linguistic description and documentation

In linguistic description, grammatical sketches serve as a starting point for deeper analysis. They highlight the phonology, morphology, and syntax of a language, offering a snapshot of how the language works. In documentation, sketches are vital for endangered languages, where time and resources may not allow for full grammars.

Fill in the blank: Grammatical sketches are especially important for documenting _____ languages.



Plate 5.1 Role of grammatical sketches in documentation



5.1.3 Key components of a grammatical sketch

A grammatical sketch typically includes three **components**:

- **Phonology**: The sound system of the language, including vowels, consonants, and tone.
- **Morphology**: The structure of words and processes of word formation.
- **Syntax**: The arrangement of words into phrases and sentences, including word order and transformations.

Fill in the blank: The three key components of a grammatical sketch are phonology, morphology, and _____.

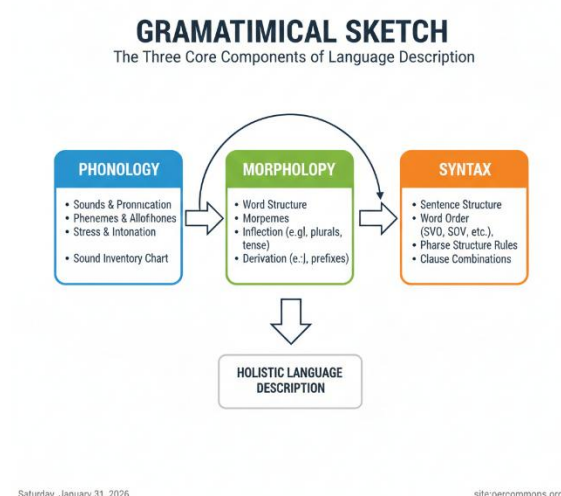


Figure 5.2 Components of a grammatical sketch

Pilot questions 5.1

1. A grammatical sketch is: a) A full grammar of a language b) A concise description of a language's grammar c) A dictionary of words d) A translation guide
2. Which of the following is a purpose of grammatical sketches? a) To provide exhaustive detail of a language b) To capture essential features quickly c) To replace dictionaries d) To translate texts
3. Grammatical sketches are especially important for: a) Endangered languages b) Well-documented languages c) Artificial languages only d) Languages with many speakers
4. Which of the following is a key component of a grammatical sketch? a) Semantics b) Phonology c) Orthography d) Pragmatics
5. Fill in the blank: The three key components of a grammatical sketch are phonology, morphology, and _____.

5.2 Phonology and Morphology in Sketches



5.2.1 Representing sound systems (phonology)

Fill in the blank: Phonology is the study of the _____ system of a language.



Figure 5.3 Phoneme chart in phonology

5.2.2 Describing word formation (morphology)

Fill in the blank: Morphology is the study of word _____ and formation.



Process	Definition	Example	Linguistic Result
Inflection	Adding an affix to a word to express grammatical categories like tense, number, or gender.	cat + -s = cats	Changes grammatical form, but stays the same part of speech.
Inflection	Modifying a verb to indicate when an action occurred.	walk + -ed = walked	The base meaning remains; only the "time" of the action changes.
Derivation	Adding an affix to a word to create a new word, often changing its part of speech.	happy + -ness = happiness	Changes an adjective (happy) into a noun (happiness).
Derivation	Creating a noun that describes a person who performs an action.	teach + -er = teacher	Changes a verb (teach) into a noun (teacher).

Box 5.2: Examples of morphological processes

5.2.3 Examples from different languages

Different languages highlight the diversity of phonology and morphology. For instance, Swahili uses extensive affixation to mark tense and subject agreement, while Turkish is known for its agglutinative morphology, where multiple suffixes attach to a root. Phonologically, languages like Yoruba use tone to distinguish meaning, while Hawaiian has a relatively small set of consonants compared to English.

Fill in the blank: Turkish is known for its _____ morphology, where multiple suffixes attach to a root.



Plate 5.2 Examples of agglutinative morphology



Pilot questions 5.2

1. Phonology refers to: a) The study of meaning b) The study of sound systems c) The study of word order d) The study of writing systems
2. Which of the following is an example of inflection? a) Teacher b) Cats c) Happiness d) Teaching
3. Morphology studies: a) Word structure and formation b) Sentence meaning c) Sound patterns only d) Writing systems
4. Which language is known for its agglutinative morphology? a) English b) Turkish c) French d) Mandarin
5. Fill in the blank: Yoruba uses _____ to distinguish meaning in words.

5.3 Syntax and Sentence Patterns

Syntax is the study of how words combine to form phrases and sentences. In a grammatical sketch, syntax is crucial because it shows the typical sentence patterns of a language and how meaning is conveyed through structure. By examining word order, constituent structure, and transformations, we gain insight into the organisation of sentences across languages.

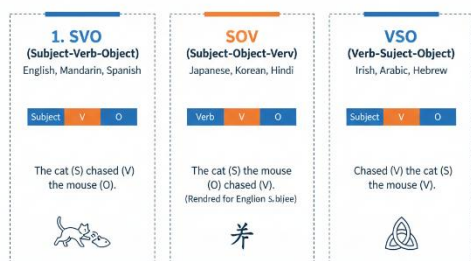
5.3.1 Basic word order and sentence types

Word order refers to the arrangement of subjects, verbs, and objects in a sentence. For example, English typically follows an SVO (Subject–Verb–Object) order: *The boy kicked the ball*. Other languages may use SOV (Subject–Object–Verb), VSO (Verb–Subject–Object), or other variations. Sentence types include declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, and exclamatives, each serving different communicative functions.

Fill in the blank: English typically follows the _____ word order pattern.

SYNTACTIC TYPOLOGY: WORD ORDER PATTERNS

SVO, SOV, and VSO Structures with Examples



Saturday, January 31, 2026

site:oercommons.org

Figure 5.4 Word order patterns in syntax



3.2 Constituent structure and phrase rules

Constituent structure refers to how words group together into phrases, such as noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP). In grammatical sketches, phrase structure rules are used to represent these groupings systematically. For example, $NP \rightarrow \text{Det} + N$, and $VP \rightarrow V + NP$. These rules help to show how sentences are built from smaller units.

Fill in the blank: A noun phrase (NP) can be represented by the rule $NP \rightarrow \underline{\hspace{2cm}} + N$.

Rule Label	Formula	Example
Sentence (S)	$S \rightarrow NP + VP$	<i>[The chef] + [prepares the meal]</i>
Noun Phrase (NP)	$NP \rightarrow (\text{Det}) + (\text{Adj}) + N$	<i>[The] + [talented] + [chef]</i>
Verb Phrase (VP)	$VP \rightarrow V + (\text{NP}) + (\text{PP})$	<i>[prepares] + [the meal] + [in the kitchen]</i>
Prepositional Phrase (PP)	$PP \rightarrow P + NP$	<i>[in] + [the kitchen]</i>

Box 5.3: Examples of phrase structure rules

5.3.3 Transformations and variations across languages

Transformations are changes in sentence structure that preserve meaning, such as converting active sentences to passive or forming questions. Variations across languages show how different grammatical systems handle transformations. For example, English uses auxiliary movement in questions (*Are you coming?*), while other languages may use particles or word endings.

Fill in the blank: The sentence *The ball was kicked by the boy* is a _____ transformation of *The boy kicked the ball*.

The diagram shows two examples of the transformation from active to passive voice. Each example consists of a sentence with labels above it and an explanatory note below it.

Example 1:

Labels: subject (The bridge), verb in the passive voice (was destroyed), the "actor" (by engineers).

Sentence: **The bridge was destroyed by engineers.**

Note: The subject did not do the action of the verb. (The action of the verb was done to the subject.)

Example 2:

Labels: subject (The cows), verb in the passive voice (will be milked), after tea.

Sentence: **The cows will be milked after tea.**

Note: The subject will not do the action of the verb. (The action of the verb will be done to the subject.)



Plate 5.3 Transformations across languages

Pilot questions 5.3

1. Which word order pattern does English typically follow? a) SVO b) SOV c) VSO d) OSV
2. Which of the following is a sentence type? a) Declarative b) Interrogative c) Imperative d) All of the above
3. Phrase structure rules are used to: a) Show how words group into phrases b) Correct spelling errors c) Translate sentences d) Mark tense changes
4. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Active b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Exclamative
5. Fill in the blank: A noun phrase (NP) can be represented by the rule $NP \rightarrow \underline{\hspace{2cm}} + N$.

5.4 Practical Steps in Developing Sketches

Creating a grammatical sketch involves more than simply listing features of a language. It requires careful organisation of data, clear descriptive writing, and critical evaluation of the final product. This Part will guide you through the practical steps needed to move from raw linguistic data to a coherent grammatical sketch.

5.4.1 Collecting and organising linguistic data

The first step in developing a grammatical sketch is **data collection**. This may involve working with native speakers, recording spoken language, or consulting existing texts. Once collected, the data must be organised systematically, often by categorising examples under phonology, morphology, and syntax. Proper organisation ensures that the sketch is both clear and accessible.



Plate 5.4 Collecting linguistic data

5.4.2 Writing descriptive sections (phonology, morphology, syntax)

Once data is organised, the next step is to write clear **descriptive sections**. Each section should focus on one component of the grammar:



- **Phonology:** Describe the sound system, including vowels, consonants, and tone.
- **Morphology:** Outline word formation processes, such as inflection and derivation.
- **Syntax:** Present sentence patterns, phrase structure rules, and transformations.

Fill in the blank: The descriptive section on morphology should outline processes such as inflection and _____.

Section	Key Components to Document
Phonology	* Phoneme Inventory: Consonants and vowels. * Phonotactics: Rules for syllable structure (e.g., CV, CVC). * Prosody: Stress patterns, pitch-accent, or tone systems.
Morphology	* Word Formation: Compounding and incorporation. * Inflection: Changes for tense, number, case, or gender. * Derivation: Processes that change a word's category (e.g., verb to noun).
Syntax	* Constituent Order: Basic word order (e.g., SOV, SVO).



Section	Key Components to Document
	* Phrase Structure: How Noun Phrases (NP) and Verb Phrases (VP) are built. * Clause Types: Declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives.

Box 5.4: Checklist for descriptive sections in a grammatical sketch

5.4.3 Evaluating clarity and completeness of sketches

The final step is **evaluation**. A grammatical sketch should be clear, concise, and complete enough to give a reliable overview of the language. Evaluation involves checking whether examples are sufficient, whether explanations are easy to follow, and whether all major components are covered. Peer review or feedback from native speakers can also strengthen the sketch.

Fill in the blank: A grammatical sketch should be clear, concise, and _____ enough to give a reliable overview.

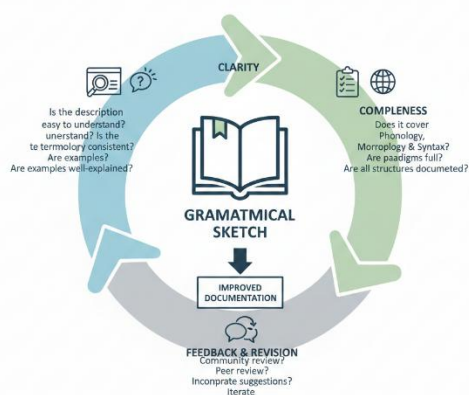


Figure 5.5 Evaluating a grammatical sketch

Pilot questions 5.4



1. What is the first step in developing a grammatical sketch? a) Writing descriptive sections b) Collecting linguistic data c) Evaluating clarity d) Translating texts
2. Which of the following should be included in the phonology section of a sketch? a) Word order b) Inventory of sounds c) Inflectional processes d) Sentence types
3. The descriptive section on morphology should outline: a) Word formation processes b) Sentence meaning c) Sound patterns only d) Writing systems
4. Evaluating a grammatical sketch involves checking for: a) Clarity, completeness, and feedback b) Translation accuracy c) Orthographic rules only d) Vocabulary lists
5. Fill in the blank: A grammatical sketch should be clear, concise, and _____ enough to give a reliable overview.

5.5 Applications of Grammatical Sketches

Grammatical sketches are not only academic exercises but also practical tools with wide-ranging applications. They help linguists, educators, and communities to understand, teach, and preserve languages. By applying sketches in different contexts, we see their value beyond description, as they contribute to comparative studies, language learning, and revitalisation efforts.

5.5.1 Use in language teaching and learning

In language teaching, grammatical sketches provide learners with a concise overview of how a language works. Teachers can use sketches to highlight key features such as sound systems, word formation, and sentence patterns. Learners benefit from clear summaries that make complex grammar more accessible.

Fill in the blank: Grammatical sketches provide learners with a concise _____ of how a language works.



Plate 5.5 Grammatical sketches in language teaching

5.5.2 Role in comparative linguistics



In comparative linguistics, grammatical sketches allow researchers to compare languages quickly and systematically. By examining phonology, morphology, and syntax across languages, scholars can identify similarities and differences. This helps in classifying languages into families and understanding how they evolve.

Fill in the blank: Grammatical sketches help linguists classify languages into _____ and understand their evolution.

Application	Description
Phonological Comparison	Mapping consonant/vowel inventories and tonal systems to identify sound correspondences across related languages.
Morphological Analysis	Identifying shared affixes, inflectional paradigms, and word-formation strategies to determine genetic relationships.
Syntactic Classification	Categorizing languages based on word order (SVO vs. SOV) and alignment (Nominative-Accusative vs. Ergative-Absolutive).
Historical Reconstruction	Using the "Comparative Method" to reconstruct proto-languages by tracing changes in documented grammatical features.
Areal Linguistics	Detecting "Sprachbund" effects—features shared by geographically neighboring languages regardless of their origin.

Box 5.5: Applications in comparative linguistics

5.5.3 Contribution to language preservation and revitalisation

Grammatical sketches are vital in documenting endangered languages. They provide communities with resources to preserve their linguistic heritage and support revitalisation programmes. A sketch can serve as a foundation for creating teaching materials, dictionaries, or even full grammars in the future.

Fill in the blank: Grammatical sketches are vital in documenting _____ languages.



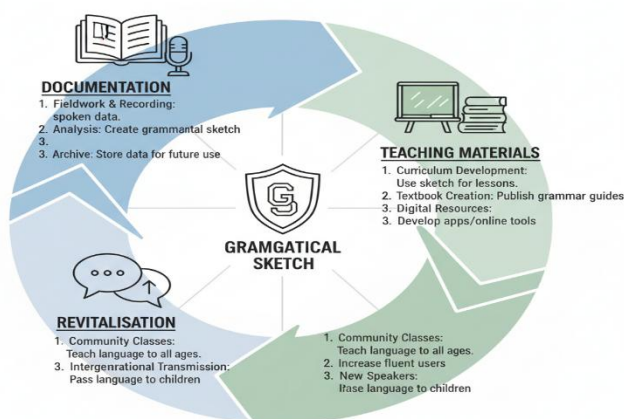


Figure 5.6 Grammatical sketches and language preservation

Pilot questions 5.5

1. Grammatical sketches are useful in language teaching because they: a) Provide concise overviews of grammar b) Replace dictionaries c) Focus only on vocabulary d) Ignore sentence patterns
2. In comparative linguistics, grammatical sketches help: a) Classify languages into families b) Translate texts c) Correct spelling errors d) Teach pronunciation only
3. Grammatical sketches contribute to language preservation by: a) Documenting endangered languages b) Ignoring community input c) Focusing only on writing systems d) Eliminating oral traditions
4. Which of the following is an application of grammatical sketches in comparative linguistics? a) Supporting historical linguistics research b) Creating dictionaries only c) Teaching pronunciation only d) Ignoring syntax
5. Fill in the blank: Grammatical sketches are vital in documenting _____ languages.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on the development of grammatical sketches, which are concise descriptions of a language's grammar used in linguistic documentation, teaching, and preservation. Its purpose has been to show you how to capture the essential features of a language in a structured way, building on your earlier study of syntactic techniques and preparing you to apply grammar analysis in practical contexts.

We began by introducing grammatical sketches, their definition, purpose, and key components. Then we examined phonology and morphology, looking at sound systems and word formation processes with examples from different languages. Following that, we explored syntax and sentence patterns, including word order, constituent structure, and transformations. We continued



with practical steps in developing sketches, such as collecting data, writing descriptive sections, and evaluating clarity. Finally, we considered applications of grammatical sketches in teaching, comparative linguistics, and language preservation. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define and describe grammatical sketches, analyse phonology and morphology, apply syntactic techniques, organise linguistic data, evaluate sketches, and explain their applications confidently.

Glossary of Terms

- **Agglutinative morphology:** A type of word formation where multiple suffixes are attached to a root, each carrying a specific meaning, as seen in languages like Turkish.
- **Constituent structure:** The way words group together into larger units such as phrases (e.g., noun phrases or verb phrases) within a sentence.
- **Declarative sentence:** A sentence type used to make a statement, for example, *The boy kicked the ball.*
- **Derivation:** A morphological process that creates new words from existing ones, such as *teacher* from *teach*.
- **Grammatical sketch:** A concise description of the grammar of a language, usually covering phonology, morphology, and syntax.
- **Inflection:** A morphological process that changes the form of a word to express grammatical features such as tense, number, or case, for example, *cats* (plural of *cat*).
- **Morphology:** The study of word structure and formation, including processes like inflection and derivation.
- **Noun phrase (NP):** A phrase built around a noun, often including a determiner, for example, *The students.*
- **Passive transformation:** A change in sentence structure that shifts focus from the subject to the object, for example, *The ball was kicked by the boy.*
- **Phonology:** The study of the sound system of a language, including vowels, consonants, stress, and tone.
- **Phrase structure rules:** Formal rules that describe how words and phrases combine to form sentences, such as $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.
- **Syntax:** The study of how words are arranged to form phrases and sentences, including word order and transformations.
- **Tone:** A phonological feature where pitch is used to distinguish meaning between words, common in languages such as Yoruba.
- **Verb phrase (VP):** A phrase built around a verb, often including an object, for example, *completed the assignment.*
- **Word order:** The typical arrangement of subjects, verbs, and objects in a sentence, such as SVO (Subject–Verb–Object) in English.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]



Objective questions

1. A grammatical sketch is: a) A dictionary of words b) A concise description of a language's grammar c) A translation guide d) A full grammar of a language (*Linked to SLO 5.1*)
2. Which of the following is a key component of a grammatical sketch? a) Semantics b) Phonology c) Orthography d) Pragmatics (*Linked to SLO 5.2*)
3. Which language is known for its agglutinative morphology? a) English b) Turkish c) French d) Mandarin (*Linked to SLO 5.4*)
4. English typically follows which word order pattern? a) SOV b) VSO c) SVO d) OSV (*Linked to SLO 5.5*)
5. Which transformation shifts focus from the subject to the object? a) Active b) Passive c) Interrogative d) Exclamative (*Linked to SLO 5.6*)

Short-answer questions

6. Define a grammatical sketch and explain its purpose. (*Linked to SLO 5.1*)
7. Identify one feature that should be included in the phonology section of a grammatical sketch. (*Linked to SLO 5.3*)
8. Give one example of inflection in English morphology. (*Linked to SLO 5.4*)
9. Write one phrase structure rule and explain what it represents. (*Linked to SLO 5.5*)
10. Explain how grammatical sketches can contribute to language preservation. (*Linked to SLO 5.9*)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the sentence *The students completed the assignment* by identifying its constituents, phrase structure rules, and possible transformations. (*Linked to SLOs 5.5, 5.6*)
12. Evaluate the practical steps involved in developing a grammatical sketch, highlighting the importance of data collection, descriptive writing, and evaluation. (*Linked to SLOs 5.7, 5.8*)
13. Discuss the applications of grammatical sketches in teaching, comparative linguistics, and language preservation, providing examples where possible. (*Linked to SLO 5.9*)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

1. b) A concise description of a language's grammar
2. b) Phonology
3. b) Turkish
4. c) SVO
5. b) Passive

Short-answer questions

6. A grammatical sketch is a concise description of a language's grammar. Its purpose is to capture essential features for documentation, teaching, and comparison.



7. One feature is the inventory of sounds, such as vowels and consonants.
8. Example: *cats* (plural of *cat*).
9. Rule: $S \rightarrow NP + VP$. This represents that a sentence consists of a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase.
10. Grammatical sketches contribute to language preservation by documenting endangered languages and providing resources for revitalisation.

Long-answer questions

11. *Basic response:*

- Constituents: NP = *The students*, VP = *completed the assignment*.
- Phrase structure rule: $S \rightarrow NP + VP$.
- Transformation: Passive form = *The assignment was completed by the students*.

Value-added response:

- Constituents further divided: NP = Det + N (*The + students*), VP = V + NP (*completed + the assignment*).
- Phrase structure rules show hierarchical organisation.
- Transformations demonstrate flexibility in sentence structure.
- Broader implication: This analysis shows how syntax and transformations enrich grammatical sketches.

12. *Basic response:*

- Steps: Collect data, write descriptive sections, evaluate clarity and completeness.

Value-added response:

- Data collection ensures authentic examples.
- Descriptive writing must be systematic, covering phonology, morphology, and syntax.
- Evaluation involves clarity, completeness, and feedback from peers or native speakers.
- Broader implication: These steps ensure sketches are reliable tools for linguistic documentation and teaching.

13. *Basic response:*

- Applications: Teaching (concise grammar overview), comparative linguistics (classification), preservation (documentation of endangered languages).

Value-added response:

- Teaching: Sketches simplify grammar for learners.
- Comparative linguistics: Sketches allow systematic comparison across languages, supporting historical linguistics.



- Preservation: Sketches provide communities with resources for revitalisation and future grammar development.
- Broader implication: Grammatical sketches bridge academic research and practical language use, making them versatile tools.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 5]

Pilot questions 5.1

1. b) A concise description of a language's grammar
2. b) To capture essential features quickly
3. a) Endangered languages
4. b) Phonology
5. Syntax

Pilot questions 5.2

1. b) The study of sound systems
2. b) Cats
3. a) Word structure and formation
4. b) Turkish
5. Tone

Pilot questions 5.3

1. a) SVO
2. d) All of the above
3. a) Show how words group into phrases
4. b) Passive
5. Det

Pilot questions 5.4

1. b) Collecting linguistic data
2. b) Inventory of sounds
3. a) Word formation processes
4. a) Clarity, completeness, and feedback
5. Complete

Pilot questions 5.5

1. a) Provide concise overviews of grammar
2. a) Classify languages into families
3. a) Documenting endangered languages
4. a) Supporting historical linguistics research
5. Endangered



References and Attributions [Series 5]

The following references and attributions cover the sources and illustration prompts used throughout **Series 5: Developing Grammatical Sketches of Languages**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

General References

- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- OpenStax. (n.d.). *English grammar and syntax resources*. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org>
- OER Commons. (n.d.). *Language documentation and grammar resources*. Retrieved from <https://oercommons.org>

Illustrations

Box 5.1 Key purposes of grammatical sketches

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of language documentation purposes).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing the key purposes of grammatical sketches.”

Plate 5.1 Role of grammatical sketches in documentation

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (language documentation examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a linguist working with speakers of an endangered language to document grammar.”

Figure 5.2 Components of a grammatical sketch

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (overview of phonology, morphology, syntax).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the three main components of a grammatical sketch: phonology, morphology, syntax.”

Figure 5.3 Phoneme chart in phonology

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (phoneme chart examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing a phoneme chart with vowels and consonants.”

Box 5.2 Examples of morphological processes

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of inflection and derivation).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of morphological processes including inflection and derivation.”



Plate 5.2 Examples of agglutinative morphology

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (examples of Turkish morphology).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing examples of agglutinative morphology in Turkish with multiple suffixes attached to a root.”

Figure 5.4 Word order patterns in syntax

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of sentence word order).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing SVO, SOV, and VSO word order patterns with examples.”

Box 5.3 Examples of phrase structure rules

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (phrase structure rule examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing examples of phrase structure rules in syntax.”

Plate 5.3 Transformations across languages

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of active and passive transformations).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing active and passive sentence transformations in English and French.”

Plate 5.4 Collecting linguistic data

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (field linguistics examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a linguist recording spoken language with native speakers.”

Box 5.4 Checklist for descriptive sections in a grammatical sketch

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of descriptive grammar sections).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing a checklist for descriptive sections in a grammatical sketch.”

Figure 5.5 Evaluating a grammatical sketch

- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (evaluation process examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the evaluation process of a grammatical sketch with clarity, completeness, and feedback.”

Plate 5.5 Grammatical sketches in language teaching

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of grammar teaching).
- AI-generated prompt: “Create an image showing a teacher using a grammatical sketch to explain sentence patterns to students.”

Box 5.5 Applications in comparative linguistics



- Attribution: Adapted from OER Commons (comparative linguistics examples).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing applications of grammatical sketches in comparative linguistics.”

Figure 5.6 Grammatical sketches and language preservation

- Attribution: Adapted from OpenStax (examples of language preservation).
- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the role of grammatical sketches in language preservation, from documentation to revitalisation.”

