



## RECONCEPTUALIZING SYNTAX: THE ROLE OF SYNTAXEMES AS MINIMAL FUNCTIONAL UNITS

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**Abstract:** *This article explores the concept of the syntaxeme as a minimal, functional syntactic unit that integrates morphological, semantic, and distributional properties. Drawing on the work of A. M. Mukhin and subsequent research, it highlights how syntaxemes transcend traditional sentence-part categorizations by emphasizing the interplay of form, meaning, and context. The article also discusses the implications of this framework for translation and cross-linguistic analysis, illustrating how both morphologically rich and analytically inclined languages encode syntactic-semantic relationships in comparable ways. Ultimately, it argues that adopting a syntaxeme-centered model facilitates a more nuanced and dynamic approach to syntactic theory.*

**Key words:** *Syntaxeme, functional syntax, morphological case forms, semantic roles, translation studies, cross-linguistic analysis, syntactic-semantic relationships.*

**Annotatsiya:** *Ushbu maqola sintaksema tushunchasini morfologik, semantik va taqsimot xususiyatlarini o'zida mujassam etgan minimal, funktsional sintaktik birlik sifatida o'rganadi. A. M. Muxin ijodi va keyingi tadqiqotlarga tayangan holda, u shakl, ma'no va kontekstning o'zaro ta'sirini ta'kidlab, sintaksemlar an'anaviy gap bo'laklari turkumlaridan qanday o'tishini ko'rsatadi. Maqolada, shuningdek, tarjima va tillararo tahlil uchun ushbu asosning ta'siri muhokama qilinadi, morfologik jihatdan boy va analitik moyil tillar sintaktik-semantik munosabatlarni taqqoslanadigan usullar bilan qanday kodlashini ko'rsatadi. Oxir oqibat, sintaksema markazlashtirilgan modelni qabul qilish sintaktik nazariyaga yanada nozik va dinamik yondashuvni osonlashtiradi, deb ta'kidlaydi.*

*Kalit so‘zlar: Sintaksema, funksional sintaksis, morfologik hol shakllari, semantik rollar, tarjimashunoslik, tillararo tahlil, sintaktik-semantik munosabatlar.*

*Аннотация: В этой статье рассматривается концепция синтаксемы как минимальной функциональной синтаксической единицы, которая объединяет морфологические, семантические и дистрибутивные свойства. Опираясь на работу А. М. Мухина и последующие исследования, она подчеркивает, как синтаксемы выходят за рамки традиционной категоризации частей предложения, подчеркивая взаимодействие формы, значения и контекста. В статье также обсуждаются последствия этой структуры для перевода и кросс-лингвистического анализа, иллюстрируя, как морфологически богатые, так и аналитически склонные языки кодируют синтаксически-семантические отношения сопоставимыми способами. В конечном счете, в ней утверждается, что принятие модели, центрированной на синтаксеме, способствует более тонкому и динамичному подходу к синтаксической теории.*

*Ключевые слова: Синтаксема, функциональный синтаксис, морфологические надежные формы, семантические роли, переводоведение, кросс-лингвистический анализ, синтаксико-семантические отношения.*

### **Introduction**

Translation as a branch of applied linguistics has different theories and approaches, suggesting many ways to interpret written and oral materials accurately. One of these theories, suggested by Professor A. M. Mukhin and his followers, studies translation units as syntactic-semantic units. As such, syntactic-semantic units – syntaxemes are the smallest functional unit of a sentence, which play a vital role in translation. In recent years, the functional approach to linguistic units has gained increasing prominence, particularly in studying syntax [5]. Linguists now consider not only the structural aspects of sentences but also their semantic properties in syntactic analysis. One concept that has emerged in contemporary

research is the syntaxeme, recognized as the smallest syntactic unit. However, a universally accepted definition has yet to be established.

Despite this lack of consensus, several fundamental characteristics of syntaxemes are generally acknowledged:

- They function as syntactic units.
- They carry semantic meaning.
- They serve as components of sentences.

Beyond its theoretical significance, the syntaxeme framework has practical applications. It may serve as a valuable tool for translating and interpreting all types of literature and speeches by providing precise structures and frames. As the elements that unite a sentence's syntactic and semantic structures, the syntactic notion and the syntaxeme must interact. A syntaxeme is characterized by three criteria-morphological, semantic, and syntactic-distinguishing it fundamentally from a traditional sentence component.

A universal syntax exists across all languages, and the concept of part-of-speech differentiation is inherently tied to the morphological characteristics of a syntaxeme. One key aspect is the nature of the object being represented, reflecting the idea that the human mind prioritizes the identification and processing of objects and their properties. In this framework, adjectives and adverbs denote the qualities of substances and processes, whereas nouns and verbs signify the substances and processes themselves. Consequently, syntaxemes can be categorized as substantive, procedural, or qualificative based on their morphological features. Substantive syntaxemes, which denote objects or substances, are primarily expressed by nouns and pronouns. Procedural syntaxemes are conveyed through verb forms, while qualificative syntaxemes are expressed by adjectives and adverbs [7, b-48].

A syntaxeme's syntactic position and function are intrinsically linked to its inherent syntactic characteristics. It may serve as a dependent component, a subject, or a predicate, and it is also capable of formalizing secondary predicative relations.

It is advisable to move beyond the conventional categorization of subjects and predicates, which traditionally reduces analysis to mere sentence parts, and instead examine the syntaxeme's position as an integral aspect of the overall sentence structure. This structure encompasses dependent components as well as primary and secondary predicative relations [6, b-78]. Consequently, one may systematically analyze the syntaxes that establish primary predicative relations (encompassing both the predicative feature and its bearer) alongside those that configure secondary predicative relations and the corresponding dependent elements. In this way, the syntactic organization of compound sentences, simple sentences with compound structures, and simple sentences is comprehensively reflected in these characteristics.

A. M. Mukhin states that "the concept of the syntaxeme, understood as an elementary (indivisible) functional syntactic unit-invariant with a limited number of variants in language, originally emerged from the analysis of case forms of nouns and pronouns." This development was facilitated by "the accumulated linguistic experience of identifying the syntactic meanings of case forms of nouns and pronouns, an approach that was not observed in the study of prepositional phrases or verb forms, let alone adjectival or adverbial forms." However, Mukhin acknowledges that "the notion of syntactic meaning in case forms proved to be too narrow and imprecise to serve as a foundation for examining syntaxemes as oppositional categories." As a result, this perspective "was replaced by the concept of a differential syntactic-semantic feature." He further asserts that "the significance of a single syntactic meaning was found to be insufficient, necessitating the distinction of two or more substantive (differentiating) syntactic-semantic features for each syntaxeme" [5, b-20].

The present discussion centers on the syntaxeme as a minimal, functional syntactic unit that integrates morphological, semantic, and distributional properties. Traditional grammatical analysis has often relied on discrete categories such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives to describe syntactic relationships. However, the

syntaxeme framework challenges this compartmentalization by positing that linguistic meaning emerges from the dynamic interplay of form and context.

A key point in this analysis is that morphological case forms-historically examined in languages with rich inflectional systems-carry essential syntactic information. For instance, earlier studies that equated specific case endings directly with syntactic roles (e.g., possession or agency) often encountered limitations when a single form served multiple functions. By expanding the focus from mere morphology to include distributional and lexical semantics, the syntaxeme concept offers a more nuanced understanding. For example, whereas the genitive case in a language like Russian might traditionally be interpreted as denoting possession (as in “the architect’s blueprint”), a broader analysis reveals its capacity to also express association or origin when contextual factors are considered [7, b-13].

The syntaxeme is defined by three interrelated criteria: its morphological structure, its semantic content, and its syntactic role within the sentence. This tripartite characterization allows for a refined distinction between what are conventionally termed “sentence parts” and the more precise functional units that the syntaxeme represents. Instead of rigidly categorizing elements as subjects or objects, the syntaxeme approach emphasizes how a single element may contribute multiple layers of meaning depending on its placement and the accompanying lexical context. Consider, for instance, a sentence where the possessive marker not only signals ownership but also implies a relational or attributive nuance, as in “the researcher’s insight reshaped the debate”. Here, the marker transcends a simple ownership function, hinting at a more complex syntactic-semantic network.

Furthermore, the discussion extends to cross-linguistic observations, demonstrating that the underlying principles of the syntaxeme are not confined to languages with overt case markers. In English, for example, the possessive construction-whether expressed through the clitic “’s” as in “the artist’s vision” or via prepositional phrases like “the vision of the artist”-serves a similar function. These alternative constructions underscore the universality of the functional

syntactic-semantic relationship, despite the surface-level differences in morphological expression.

By integrating morphology, semantics, and distribution, the syntaxeme model facilitates a comprehensive and flexible approach to analyzing language. This model not only captures the inherent complexity of syntactic relationships but also provides a robust framework for comparative linguistic analysis. The ability to delineate multiple, overlapping features within a single syntactic unit enables researchers to account for subtle distinctions that are often overlooked in traditional analyses.

In summary, the discussion affirms that a shift toward a functional syntactic model, with the syntaxeme at its core, significantly enhances our understanding of language structure. This approach encourages a move beyond static, categorical descriptions toward a dynamic analysis that reflects the multifaceted nature of syntactic meaning.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the syntaxeme framework represents a significant advance in our understanding of how language structures meaning. By uniting morphological, semantic, and distributional criteria, syntaxemes capture a level of syntactic organization that traditional grammatical categories often overlook. This comprehensive perspective not only offers clearer insights into the complexities of case forms and syntactic relations but also enriches the analysis of translation, where fidelity to both structure and meaning is paramount. Adopting a syntaxeme-centered model encourages linguists and translators alike to view language as a dynamic system, wherein the interplay of form and function continuously shapes and reshapes meaning across diverse linguistic contexts.

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