

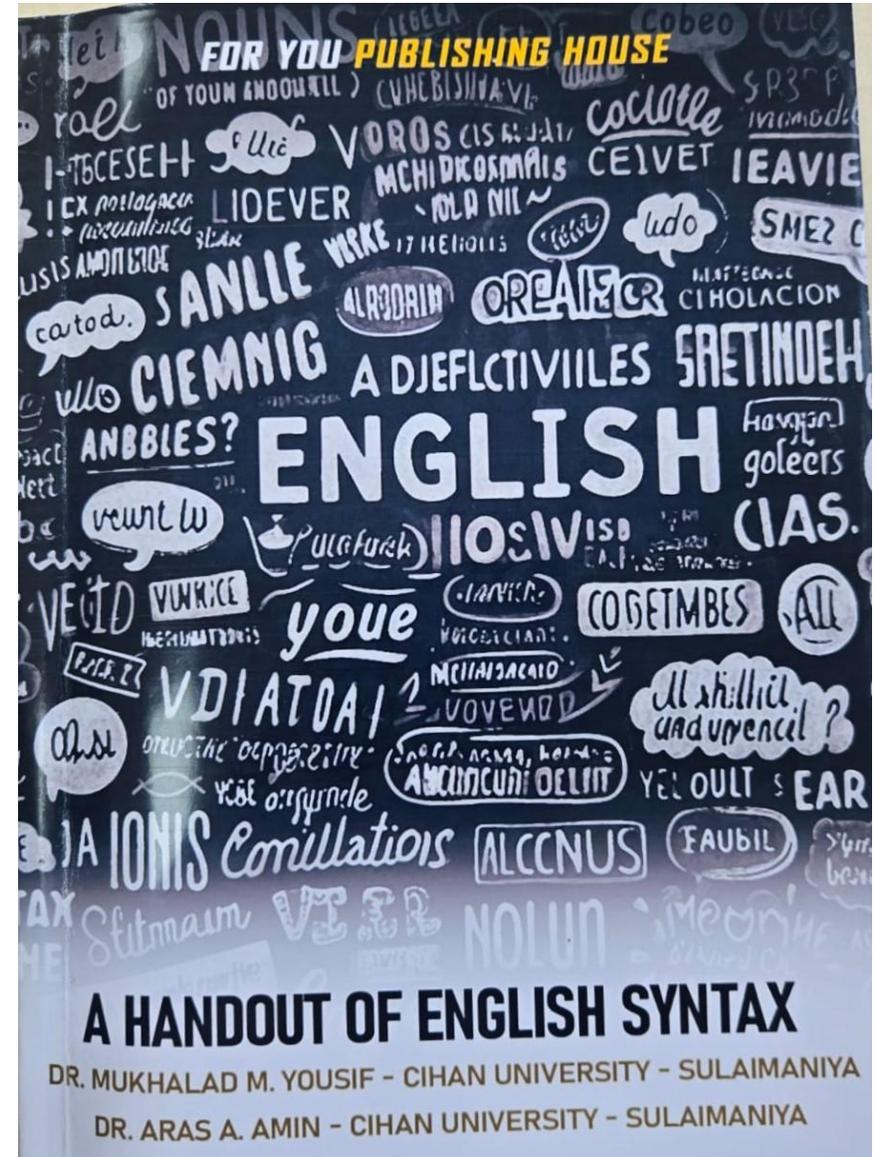
Introduction to English Syntax

Week 1: The Blueprint of Language

Dr. Pashew Nuri

Our main textbook

Make sure you each have a copy by next week.



Our 12- Week Journey: Course Overview

Week 1: Introduction to Syntax

Week 2: Noun & Verb Phrases (NP & VP)

Week 3: Adjective, Adverbial, & Prepositional Phrases

Week 4: Infinitive & Participial Phrases

Week 5: Basic Sentence Patterns (Part I)

Week 6: Basic Sentence Patterns (Part II) + Midterm

Week 7: Phrase Structure Rules

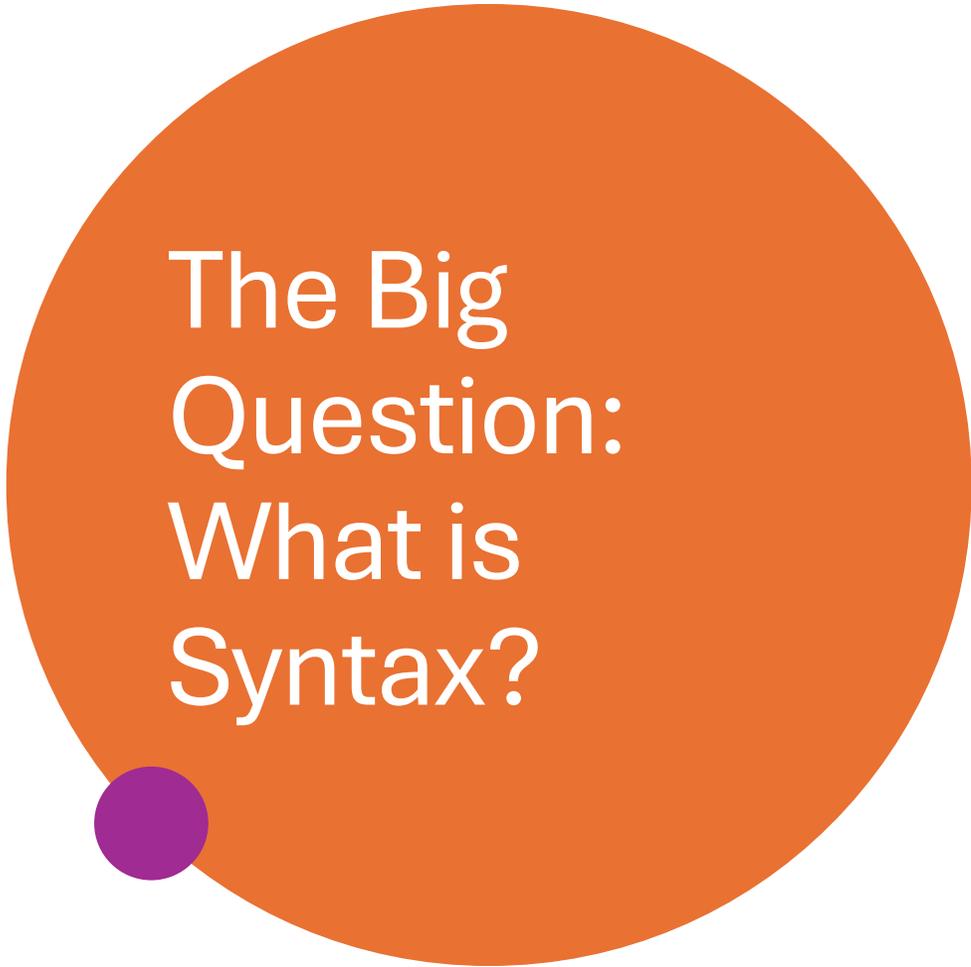
Week 8: Tree Diagrams

Week 9: Clauses (Part I)

Week 10: Clauses (Part II)

Week 11: Joining Sentences + Final Review

Week 12: Final Exam



The Big Question: What is Syntax?

In simple terms:

Syntax is the set of rules for combining words to make correct sentences.

Think of it like building a house:

- Words are the bricks (خشت).
- Syntax is the blueprint or plan (نه‌خشه).
- You need both words AND a plan to build a sentence that makes sense.

A Scholar's Definition

- *"the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages."*

Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (1957)



Why Word Order is Everything

- The dog chased the cat.
- The cat chased the dog.

Same words, completely different meaning!



Activity 1: Let's Build Sentences!

Work with your partner. Put these words in the correct order to make a good English sentence.

1. a book / reads / the student
2. is / happy / the teacher
3. 3. football / they / play
4. drives / a car / my father"

Syntax: A Translator's Most Important Tool

Why must a translator be an expert in syntax?

1. To understand the EXACT meaning.
 - Who did what to whom?
2. To create clear and correct translations.
 - A bad translation is often a syntax mistake.
3. To be a professional.
 - Correct grammar shows your skill and builds trust.

The Building Blocks of English Sentences



Subject (S): The person or thing doing the action. (The 'doer')



Verb (V): The action or state of being.



Object (O): The person or thing receiving the action.



Complement (C): Gives more information about the subject.

Activity 2: Find the Parts!

Read the sentences. Find the Subject (S), Verb (V), and Object (O).

1. She loves coffee.
2. The man drives a car.
3. The students write a report.

Sentence Structure Analysis

Our Toolkit: Three Levels of Analysis

- Now that we know the basics, let's learn how linguists analyze sentences.
- The textbook tells us we can look at any sentence in three main ways, or on three **levels**.
- Think of these as three questions you can ask about any word or group of words:
 - **Form Level:** What is it? (Is it a noun? A verb? A phrase?)
 - **Function Level:** What is its job? (Is it the subject? The object?)
 - **Position Level:** Where is it? (Is it at the beginning, middle, or end?)

Level 1: Form (Part A: The Words)

- "Form" is the basic grammatical category of a single word.
- These are the main word forms we must know. They are our basic building blocks.
 - **Noun (N):** A person, place, or thing (e.g., *student, university, book*)
 - **Verb (V):** An action or state (e.g., *read, is, write*)
 - **Adjective (adj):** Describes a noun (e.g., *good, big, happy*)
 - **Adverb (adv):** Describes a verb (e.g., *quickly, well*)
 - **Preposition (Prep):** Shows a relationship (e.g., *in, on, at*)
 - **Determiner (Det):** Introduces a noun (e.g., *a, the, my*)

Level 1: Form (Part B: The Phrases)

- A **phrase** is a group of words that works together as a single unit.
- The phrase is named after the most important word in it (the "head" word).
- These are the basic phrases we will study in this course:
 - **Noun Phrase (NP):** *the tall student, a very good book*
 - **Verb Phrase (VP):** *is reading, wrote a long letter*
 - **Adjective Phrase (AP):** *very happy, sad about the news*
 - **Prepositional Phrase (PP):** *in the class, at the university*
- *(We will study these in detail in Weeks 2, 3, and 4!)*

Activity 3: Identify the Form!

- **Instructions:** Look at the bolded word in each sentence. What is its form? (Noun, Verb, or Adjective?)
- Work with a partner!
 - The university is **big**.
 - She **speaks** English well.
 - The **teacher** is in the class.

Activity 3: Answers

- The university is **big**.
 - **Form: Adjective (adj)** - It describes the university.
- She **speaks** English well.
 - **Form: Verb (V)** - It is the action.
- The **teacher** is in the class.
 - **Form: Noun (N)** - It is a person.

Level 2: Function (What is its job?)

- "Function" is the **role** or **job** that a word or phrase does in the sentence.
- The most basic functions are the ones we learned earlier:
 - **Subject (S)**: The 'doer' of the action.
 - **Object (O)**: The 'receiver' of the action.
 - **Subject Complement (Cs)**: Gives more information about the subject.
- **Look how Form and Function work together:**
 - Sentence: **The student reads a book.**
 - **"The student"** -> Form: Noun Phrase (NP) | Function: Subject (S)
 - **"a book"** -> Form: Noun Phrase (NP) | Function: Object (O)

Think-Pair-Share Activity

- **Look at these two sentences:**
 - **The big dog** is friendly.
 - I see **the big dog**.
- **Discuss with your partner:**
 - Look at the phrase "The big dog".
 - Is the **FORM** the same in both sentences?
 - Is the **FUNCTION** (the job) the same in both sentences? Why?
- *(Answer: The form (NP) is the same, but the function is different. In sentence 1, it is the Subject. In sentence 2, it is the Object.)*



Level 3: Position (Where is it?)

- "Position" means **where** a word or phrase is in the sentence.
- In English, position is very important and can change the function or meaning.
- **Example with the word "fast":**
 - He drives a **fast** car.
 - Position: Before a noun ('car').
 - Here, 'fast' is an **adjective**.
 - He drives **fast**.
 - Position: After a verb ('drives').
 - Here, 'fast' is an **adverb**.

Other examples

- Hard
- Late
- Close
- High
- Sharp

How The Three Levels Work Together

- The textbook gives us some important rules about how form, function, and position are related.
 - **Rule 1:** A word's **Form** is usually fixed. ("brave" is always an adjective).
 - **Rule 2:** Every form in a sentence must have a **Function**. (It must have a job).
 - **Rule 3:** The **Position** of a form helps us understand its **Function** and the sentence's meaning.



Quiz time

