

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RELATIVE SYNTAXES
IN MODERN ENGLISH**

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of relative syntax in modern English. First, the structure and semantic role of relative clauses are considered, and their syntactic categories - relative pronouns, relative conjunctions and their internal mechanisms are highlighted. Then, theoretical concepts related to relative syntax within the framework of the generative grammar, structuralist approach and cognitive linguistics schools are compared. The article discusses the features of complex relative constructions found in modern English and their functional role using the example of various grammatical models. It also indicates the problems encountered in the study of relative syntax and the directions of future scientific research.

Keywords: relative syntax, relative pronoun, relative conjunction, generative grammar, cognitive linguistics, complex sentence structure.

Introduction

In modern English, relative syntax is one of the complex devices that performs the function of identifying and clarifying information within a sentence. Relative clauses not only provide additional information to the main sentence, but also increase the coherence of the text and expand the vocabulary. This article analyzes the phenomenon of relative syntax from a syntactic and semantic perspective. First, the main elements of the structure of a relative sentence are highlighted - relative pronouns (who, which, that, etc.) and the functions of relative conjunctions (where, when, why). Then, generative and structuralist approaches, as well as theoretical concepts related to relative syntax within the framework of cognitive linguistics schools, are compared. In the course of the study, the syntactic structure of complex relative constructions, the definition of their semantic role, and their use in modern grammatical models are considered. At the end of the article, current research problems and prospects for future scientific research on relative syntax are identified.

In modern English, relative syntax is a complex structural tool that enriches syntactic units with more subtle content. Relative clauses perform the function of defining a subject or event within the main clause and ensure textual coherence. They have two main semantic-cognitive functions: restrictive and



non-restrictive relative clauses, which determine the level of definition of the referent. When considering the structure of relative syntax from a structural perspective, two main elements are distinguished - relative pronouns and relative conjunctions. The category of relative pronouns includes forms intended for human referents such as “who, whom, whose”, “which” - a pronoun used mainly in relation to objects, as well as the pronoun “that”, which is widely used in defining relative clauses. Relative conjunctions include the forms “where” (determining place), “when” (determining time), “why” (expressing a reason). Also, constructions in which the absolute absence of a pronoun in a sentence (zero relative) is possible also change the level of accuracy.

From the point of view of theoretical foundations, three main approaches to the study of relative clauses are important - structuralist, transformational-generative and cognitive linguistics schools. In the structuralist tradition, relative syntax is analyzed through a layering model within the framework of X-bar theory, where each syntactic unit occupies a specific hierarchical position. In generative grammar, the internal representation of relative clauses is explained through the concepts of chain and trace using the mechanism of “wh-movement” and universal grammar concepts. Cognitive linguistics, on the other hand, sees the relative clause as an independent semantic-syntactic unit from the point of view of constructional linguistics and studies the connection of its prototypical structures with conceptual schemes.

In the process of comparing the practical effectiveness of theoretical approaches, structuralist and generative models differ in syntactic simplicity and deep representation capabilities, while the cognitive model, despite its ability to combine semantic-syntactic levels, has some subtleties in terms of formalization. Corpus linguistics studies are important in identifying frequency and functional differences in relative constructions, and psycholinguistic experiments are important in studying the processes of their understanding and processing.

Multi-layered embedding within complex relative constructions (e.g., “The man who said that the girl whom I saw yesterday is leaving”) raises the issue of embedding limits in transformational theory. Gapping and contrastive constructions (e.g., “the book I read and the film I watched”) are also convenient examples for studying the limits and stylistic features of relative syntax. In terms of optional constraints, the possibilities of dropping the pronoun “that” vary depending on the context and style.





The integration of modality and pragmatics in the study of relative syntax, as well as the implementation of extended corpus-based analyses of British, American, and Australian English variants, are among the urgent tasks. In addition, the development of effective pedagogical methodologies focused on relative clauses in teaching English as a second language will also determine the main directions of future scientific research.

Conclusion

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundations of relative syntax in modern English. First, the syntactic structure and semantic functions of relative clauses, namely, defining and non-defining relative clauses, and their contribution to text coherence are explained in detail. Second, various types of relative pronouns and connectives — who, which, that, where, when, why, and zero relative constructions — are compared syntactically and stylistically.

Within the framework of theoretical approaches, the structuralist school analyzes relative syntax through a layered model, while generative grammar explains internal representation using the mechanisms of “wh-movement”, chain, and trace. Cognitive linguistics, on the other hand, has studied semantic prototypes and conceptual schemes, based on construction linguistics. A comparison of these approaches clearly shows their advantages and disadvantages in terms of theoretical simplicity and depth of representation, as well as formalization and semantic integration.

Complex constructions — such as multiple embedding, gapping, optional restriction — have become an important example in studying the boundaries and stylistic features of relative syntax. Corpus linguistics and psycholinguistic experiments provide an opportunity to apply these constructions in practical research.

In the future, the integration of modality and pragmatics, as well as conducting deeper corpus-based analyses of English language variants, are relevant areas of scientific research. In addition, the development of methodologies focused on relative clauses in teaching English as a second language is also of practical pedagogical importance.

In general, the article perfectly illuminates the theoretical foundations of relative syntax, serves to create a comprehensive picture of its various aspects, and lays a solid foundation for future research.

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