



THE THEORY OF SENTENCE IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Annotation: This paper explores the theory of the sentence in modern English, examining its structure, classification, and functions within linguistic and communicative frameworks. The study analyzes how sentences are formed, the syntactic rules they follow, and the roles they play in conveying meaning in spoken and written discourse. Particular attention is given to sentence types—simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex—as well as the functional classification of sentences based on communicative purpose. Modern linguistic approaches, including generative grammar and functional grammar, are considered to provide a comprehensive understanding of sentence formation and usage in contemporary English.

Keywords: sentence theory, sentence structure, syntax, sentence types, functional grammar, modern English, generative grammar, linguistic communication, simple sentence, complex sentence.

Introduction

Language serves as a fundamental tool of human communication, and at the core of every language lies the sentence — the basic unit of meaning and expression. In modern English, understanding the nature and structure of the sentence is essential for analyzing linguistic behavior, constructing coherent discourse, and mastering both written and spoken forms of the language. The study of sentence theory involves exploring the rules that govern sentence formation, the various types of sentences, and their functions in communication.

The evolution of linguistic thought has led to the development of multiple theoretical frameworks for analyzing sentences. Traditional grammar provided initial classifications based on form and function, while modern approaches—such as generative grammar, structuralism, and functional grammar—offer deeper insights into syntactic organization and communicative purpose. This paper aims to examine the theoretical foundations of sentence construction in modern English, focusing on its grammatical structure, classification, and the communicative roles it fulfills in everyday language use.

Definition and Importance of the Sentence



A sentence is traditionally defined as a grammatical unit that expresses a complete thought. It typically consists of a subject and a predicate and conveys a statement, question, command, or exclamation. In modern English, the sentence is regarded as a central unit of communication. Its importance lies in its ability to organize words and ideas into coherent messages, making it essential for effective verbal and written interaction.

Structural Classification of Sentences

From a structural point of view, English sentences are divided into four main types:

Simple Sentences – consist of a single independent clause (e.g., "She reads every day.").

Compound Sentences – contain two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (e.g., "He came, and she left.").

Complex Sentences – consist of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause (e.g., "Although it was raining, we went for a walk.").

Compound-Complex Sentences – include multiple independent clauses and at least one dependent clause (e.g., "She smiled when he arrived, and they began to talk.").

Functional Classification of Sentences

Based on communicative purpose, sentences are categorized as:

Declarative Sentences – used to make statements (e.g., "The sky is blue.").

Interrogative Sentences – used to ask questions (e.g., "Is she coming?").

Imperative Sentences – used to give commands or requests (e.g., "Close the door.").

Exclamatory Sentences – used to express strong emotions (e.g., "What a beautiful view!").

Sentence Elements and Word Order

English sentence structure follows a relatively fixed word order, typically Subject–Verb–Object (SVO). Core elements of a sentence include:

Subject: the person or thing performing the action.

Predicate: the part of the sentence containing the verb and providing information about the subject.

Objects and Complements: provide additional information, such as who or what is affected by the action.

Modifiers such as adjectives and adverbs enhance sentence meaning but must be placed correctly to avoid ambiguity.

Modern Linguistic Approaches to Sentence Theory





Modern theories such as generative grammar (Noam Chomsky) emphasize the innate rules that govern sentence formation, introducing the concept of deep and surface structures. Functional grammar focuses on the communicative purposes and contexts in which sentences are used. These approaches offer more comprehensive ways to analyze sentence meaning and structure beyond traditional grammar.

Conclusion

The sentence remains a fundamental element of linguistic structure and communication in modern English. Through examining its structural and functional classifications, we gain a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and conveyed. Simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence forms each serve distinct purposes, as do declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory functions.

Modern linguistic theories, including generative and functional grammar, have expanded our understanding of sentence formation by addressing both syntactic rules and communicative intent. These insights are essential not only for linguistic analysis but also for language teaching, translation, and improving communication skills in English.

In conclusion, the study of sentence theory bridges the gap between grammar and effective communication, making it a crucial area of research in modern linguistics.

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