

The Major Syntactic Processes Elaborately

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

What is syntax? Discuss the major syntactic processes elaborately.

Syntax: Syntax means arranging words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. In linguistics, syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a language, usually including word order. The term syntax is also used to refer to the study of such principles and processes.

Etymological Definition: The word syntax is derived from the Greek word 'syntaxis,' which means 'ordering together' or 'together arranging.' So, it is the study of sentence building in which words and phrases are arranged together to make larger units. In brief, syntax is the study of sentence structure.

According to the Canadian linguist Henry Allan Gleason, syntax is a principle of construction and arrangement of the derivational process and inflexion of words into a variation of more significant construction.

Syntactic Processes: Syntactic processes are generally concerned with sentences and constituents. Some of the significant syntactic processes are discussed here.

Discontinuous Constituents: Discontinuous constituents are such constituents of the sentence that are separated from each other by one or more intervening constituents but are considered syntactically continuous and unitary.

For example, 'He pulled the thief down'. Here in this sentence, the phrasal verb 'pulled down' is a discontinuous constituent separated by 'the thief':

He pulled the thief down

He pulled the thief down

Recursion: Recursion is the repeated application or sequential use of a linguistic element or grammatical structure. It has also been described more simply as the ability to place one component inside another component of the same kind. A linguistic element or grammatical structure that can be used repeatedly in a sequence is said to be recursive.

For example:

- The old man
- The little old man
- The little poor old man
- The clever little poor old man, etc.

The example mentioned above being the realization of the NP NP + (S) rule can be diagrammed as follows:

NP

S

NP

S

Np

S

NP

S

NP

S

NP

S

NP

S

NP

S

Conjoining or Co-Ordination: Conjoining occurs when some elements are added to similar aspects using coordinators. For example:

- The scene of the movie was in Dhaka.
- The scene of the play was in Dhaka.
- He is poor.
- He is honest.

The above four sentences can be turned into two new sentences by the rule of conjoining.

- The scene of the movie and the play was in Dhaka city.
- He is poor but honest.

The sentence “The scene of the movie and the play was in Dhaka city” can be diagrammed as follows:

S

The scene of the movie and the play was in Dhaka city

Embedding: Embedding happens when the subordinate clause is added or embedded with the superordinate or main clause.

- The man who sat next to you is my elder brother.
- This sentence can be diagrammed in the following way:

The man is my elder brother

Who sat next to you?

Lx Notes