

## ON THE QUESTION OF THE THEORY OF SENTENCE MODELS IN ENGLISH, UZBEK, AND RUSSIAN

Zokirov Muxtorali Turdaliyevich  
Professor of Fergana State University,  
Candidate of Philological Sciences

Rasulova Azizaxon Muydinovna  
Associate professor of Fergana State University,  
Doctor of Philosophy in Philology (PhD)

### Abstract:

This article addresses the theory of sentence models in three typologically distinct languages—English, Uzbek, and Russian. Drawing on the foundational contributions of V.G. Admoni, I. Erben, and L. Tesnière, the discussion centers on various syntactic aspects that characterize sentence structure, including the structural, linear, categorical, functional, and semantic dimensions. Special attention is paid to the concept of valency as a means of determining obligatory and optional actants, as well as to the role of word order and morphological features in shaping sentence models across analytic, agglutinative, and fusional-synthetic languages. The study underscores the importance of systematically accounting for both formal and functional attributes of the sentence and highlights the regular realizations of sentence models as a key focus in modern syntactic research.

**Keywords.** Sentence models, syntactic aspects, valency, actants, word order, analytic language, agglutinative language, fusional-synthetic language, Russian, English, Uzbek.

### Introduction

The theory of sentence models has emerged as a pivotal topic in the descriptive and theoretical syntax of natural languages. Despite a rich tradition of syntactic analysis, considerable variability exists in how sentence models are formulated, particularly in light of the morphosyntactic diversity among languages. English, Uzbek, and Russian—representing analytic, agglutinative, and fusional-synthetic typologies, respectively—offer significant contrasts in morphological and syntactic structure, providing an opportunity for a comparative examination of sentence-model theories.

Building on the foundational studies by V.G. Admoni, I. Erben, and L. Tesnière, this article explores how different syntactic aspects, ranging from structural to functional, shape the form and function of sentences. Special emphasis is placed on valency-based approaches, which offer a clear mechanism for identifying the core constituents and optional elements of a sentence, thereby revealing deeper insights into the nature of syntactic variation. By examining sentence models across these three languages, we illustrate both the universal principles underlying syntactic organization and the language-specific factors that lead to unique realizations.



## Literature Review

Early explorations into sentence-structure theory underscore the importance of both content and form. Admoni proposed a concept of “score structure” to highlight the parallel unfolding of lexical and grammatical meanings within the sentence, while Erben distinguished between the sentence’s formal (external) and functional (internal) structures. Although Erben’s framework highlighted essential structural and categorical traits, it left certain areas, such as linear ordering, underexplored.

Tesnière significantly advanced the discussion by introducing four critical syntactic plans: structural, linear, categorical, and functional. He linked these to a semantic dimension, which he regarded as autonomous yet deeply intertwined with syntactic form. The interdependency between structural relations (multidimensional) and linear order (one-dimensional) typifies the antinomic relationship at the heart of syntactic organization. Tesnière’s ideas have profoundly influenced subsequent research, where the focus on valency, combinatorial syntax, and the distinction between actants and circonstants have become particularly salient.

Modern scholarship continues to investigate how sentence models can be systematically enumerated and described, with O.I. Moskalskaya’s work stressing the necessity of finite listings of syntactic structures. In all these contributions, a persistent theme is the desire to account for obligatory and optional constituents in a sentence, highlighting the role of valency as a principal determinant of syntactic organization. The comparative study of English, Uzbek, and Russian thus benefits from a well-established theoretical framework while offering fresh insights into how morphological and syntactic factors coalesce to produce language-specific models.

## Methodology

The present study adopts a valency-based approach to investigate sentence models in English, Uzbek, and Russian. Specifically, the research entails:

### 1. Identification of Valency Structures

- We analyze the valency of verbs and adjectives, classifying actants into obligatory and optional categories.
- We employ elimination tests (reduction transformations) to determine whether a sentence remains grammatically acceptable after removing potential actants.

### 2. Comparison of Word-Order Schemas

- We document the basic word orders that typify each language:
  - English (S + P + O + Adverbial)
  - Uzbek (Adverbial + S + O + P)
  - Russian (relatively free, with a default S + P + O pattern).
- Special cases, such as stylistic rearrangements, are likewise examined.

### 3. Analysis of Optional and Obligatory Elements

- Using examples from authentic texts and constructed sentences, we explore how optional actants yield different “realizations” within a given model.
- We distinguish between contextually/situationally conditioned ellipsis and ungrammatical omissions.



#### 4. Examination of Morphological Markers

- For Russian, we investigate how case morphology influences sentence structure and allows for greater word-order flexibility.
- For English, the role of fixed word order and function words is assessed.
- For Uzbek, the function of agglutinative suffixes is explored in shaping sentence construction.

#### 5. Synthesis of Syntactic Aspects

- We integrate structural, linear, categorical, functional, and semantic (where relevant) aspects in a comprehensive model, showing how these dimensions operate in tandem to yield diverse sentence types.

By triangulating data from these three typologically different languages, the study aims to illustrate universal syntactic principles alongside language-specific constraints.

#### The Main Part

The issue of the syntactic aspects of the sentence, which ensure the syntactic diversity of utterances, has been repeatedly addressed by numerous syntacticians, but it has been most thoroughly examined in the works of V.G. Admoni, I. Erben, and L. Tesnière. In V.G. Admoni's studies, this issue was discussed in terms of both content and form. Admoni put forward the idea that the semantic content of the sentence is not unidimensional but "constitutes a whole series of parallel unfolding and synthesizing lines formed by a range of parallel and overlapping lexical and grammatical meanings." He proposes calling this structure, as it is realized in speech, a "score structure." Admoni also refers to the "score structure" of the sentence within the speech chain more broadly as the "multilinearity of the speech chain" [Admoni V.G., 1973], connecting it with the overarching principle of the "multidimensionality of grammatical phenomena."

Admoni's subsequent research on the "aspects of the sentence" extended these ideas. He identifies seven aspects: the logical-grammatical aspect, the modal aspect, the completeness of the sentence, the position of the sentence within extended discourse, the speaker's cognitive orientation, the communicative function of the sentence, and its degree of emotionality. While these aspects capture important characteristics of the sentence, they primarily describe the sentence from the perspective of its actual realization in speech, rather than from the standpoint of its underlying model or formula. Nevertheless, any sentence can be assessed by aspects that do not depend on its specific model and have a more general nature. Certain aspects, such as the combinatorial (and particularly hierarchical), as well as the linear and categorial aspects, remained beyond the scope of Admoni's analysis.

I. Erben proposed a simpler system of syntactic aspects of the sentence by distinguishing, in each sentence, a **formal (external) structure** and a **functional (internal) structure**. From the perspective of the formal structure, a sentence is characterized as a construction in which **main and dependent** parts can be identified, along with various types of **lexical groups**. From the perspective of the functional structure, a sentence can be characterized by the **syntactic functions** of parts of speech, lexical groups, and subordinate clauses. At this level, one also takes into account the **function** of the entire sentence within larger linguistic contexts, as well as



**functional interactions** among parts of speech, various types of syntactic formations, and **formal-grammatical categories**.

Erben's system thus reflects two major aspects of the sentence—**formal** and **functional**—but these aspects are not entirely equivalent in scope. Indeed, the formal aspect includes **structural** and **categorical** characteristics, whereas the functional aspect is formulated through the single concept of **syntactic function**. Moreover, Erben does not single out another important aspect of the sentence, namely the **linear** aspect.

The most comprehensive system of sentence aspects has been described by **L. Tesnière**, who distinguishes the **semantic aspect (or plan)** from the syntactic aspects, viewing it as “the direct reality of thought.” In Tesnière's view, this plan is closely connected to logic and psychology but remains independent of grammar, being external to it. It interacts in a complex manner with all of the syntactic plans—primarily the **structural** one—while remaining autonomous in relation to them.

Tesnière identifies **four aspects (orders/plans): structural, linear, categorical, and functional**. The **structural** aspect reflects the system of syntactic relations within a sentence, which may be represented as a kind of **network** with a **hierarchical** structure. This aspect interacts very closely with the semantic plan; indeed, separating the two is possible only in theory, since in practice they operate in parallel, given that “there is no structural relation without a semantic one.”

The **linear** aspect reflects the **linear organization** of the sentence—traditionally referred to in linguistics as **word order**. According to Tesnière, the structural and linear aspects occupy a **central** position in syntax: “All structural syntax rests on the relationships between the structural and the linear orders.” In Tesnière's view, the core of this relationship lies in the fact that **linear order** is **one-dimensional**, whereas **structural order** is **multidimensional**. This gives rise to an **antinomy** between the two orders, which must be resolved by means of speech. Such resolution is achieved in the linearized sentence through the use of so-called **syntactic breaks**, i.e., **non-contiguous syntactic connections**.

In addition to these **structural** and **linear** aspects, Tesnière also identifies the **categorical** and **functional** aspects. The **categorical** aspect reflects the **part-of-speech** nature of the syntactic units forming a sentence, while the **functional** aspect characterizes these units in terms of the **syntactic functions** they perform. These two aspects (categorical and functional) interact just as closely as do the structural and linear orders.

Thus, L. Tesnière succeeds in capturing all the fundamental aspects essential for characterizing the sentence: on the one hand, the semantic or content-based (semantic) aspect, and on the other hand, the formal-syntactic aspects (structural, linear, categorical, and functional). All these aspects are important for describing the sentence both at the level of its abstract schema and at the level of its concrete lexico-phonetic realization. However, for phonetically realized sentences, not only these aspects but also the **intonational** aspect proves crucial. Intonation interacts closely, on the one hand, with a **communicative** aspect—unnoted by Tesnière—which reflects the way semantic information is partitioned within the sentence, and on the other hand, with the **functional** aspect.

Each of these aspects is studied by specialized branches of semantics and syntax. For instance, the syntactic aspects are examined in subdivisions of syntax such as **categorical syntax** (syntax of parts of speech), **functional syntax** (syntax of sentence elements), **combinatorial syntax**



(syntax of syntactic links), **linear syntax** (syntax of word order), and **intonational syntax** (syntax of the melodic organization of the sentence). All these aspects characterize the sentence as an isolated linguistic or speech unit in terms of its surface-syntactic features and therefore may be ascribed to that part of syntactic science known as **microsyntax**. The aspects under discussion are closely interrelated and mutually complementary.

In recent decades, the theory of **sentence models** has become one of the central topics of descriptive and theoretical syntax of natural languages. A defining feature of any sentence is that the language provides specific **structural patterns (models)** for it, and these patterns can be completely enumerated and described (7). The **structural pattern (schema) of a sentence** is an abstract template according to which one can construct a minimal, independent, and self-contained message (8). A description that takes the concept of the sentence model as its starting point is referred to as a **system-based description** (9). According to O.I. Moskalskaya, the **sentence model** is the fundamental unit and the initial level of structural description at the sentence level, allowing one to represent the full diversity of actual sentences in a given natural language as a finite list of syntactic structures (9).

In the system-based description of sentence syntax containing an adjective functioning as a predicative, the overall scope is determined by **expanding** the structural minimum—whether by adding optional actants, introducing **semi-copular** verbs, substituting a syntactic position (slot) of a model component with a lexical group or a whole subordinate clause, modifying the degree of the adjectival form, or removing lexical restrictions under given contextual and situational conditions. All such modifications of the sentence model are referred to—following N.Yu. Shvedova—as **regular realizations** of the sentence model (10). In this respect, it is essential to differentiate between **contextually and situationally conditioned** regular realizations of the sentence model and those that are **not** so conditioned. The system of regular realizations forms part of the **structural scheme (model)** of the sentence as one of its permanent and primary grammatical characteristics (10).

Most researchers construct sentence models based on the **valency** of verbs or adjectives, i.e., following modern structural criteria. Even though, in recent decades, the theory of sentence models has emerged as one of the principal topics of descriptive and theoretical syntax of natural languages, there remain substantial discrepancies in the practical description of these models, particularly with regard to **methodology**. In our view, the most accurate approach to constructing a sentence model takes into account the **valency of the main parts of speech**, on the basis of which one determines the number of **obligatory** (those constituting the structural minimum of the sentence) and **optional** actants (those that yield variations within the structural schema of the sentence and serve as a distinctive feature of the sentence model). The more optional elements a sentence model contains, the greater the number of **regular realizations** possible within that model (9). By contrast, a model in which all constituents are obligatory admits no quantitative variations (11).

In describing sentence models, we draw upon **syntactic, semantic, and logical valency**.

The primary method for identifying obligatory actants is the **elimination method**, i.e., a **reduction transformation** of the sentence to arrive at a minimal, grammatically valid utterance. The **boundary** of the sentence's **structural minimum** is defined by **grammaticality**: if, upon eliminating an actant, the sentence becomes ungrammatical, that actant is obligatory.





Conversely, if an actant is linked by its valency to another part of speech but can be omitted without making the sentence ungrammatical, then it is optional.

For example, in **adjectival gradation**, an additional syntactic position appears, which is filled by an obligatory actant. However, it is possible to omit an obligatory actant if it is **contextually or situationally** conditioned—i.e., in the case of **ellipsis**. Ellipsis differs from an ungrammatical sentence in that it allows only one specific word or word combination to serve as the actant, and this follows from the situation itself. In this instance, we speak of **contextually/ situationally conditioned regular realizations** of a sentence model.

One of the most challenging issues in sentence-member theory is **distinguishing** between **syntactic actants** and **circonstants** (complements and adverbials). Actants are identified by **structural** criteria, whereas circonstants are identified by **semantic** criteria, i.e., the presence of syntactic actants in a sentence is determined by the **valency** of the predicate, while the relationship of circonstants to the predicate is **optional**.

The languages under consideration—English, Uzbek, and Russian—belong to different morphological types. In these languages, the linguistic resources that express grammatical relationships take various forms. In English, due to the limited morphological means available for indicating subject–object relationships, function words and fixed word order are most characteristic. In contrast, Kyrgyz primarily makes use of affixal morphemes for expressing grammatical relationships, with other grammatical devices being employed comparatively rarely. As for Russian, which belongs to the group of languages with a highly developed system of inflection, prepositions are a typical feature. In all of these cases, the totality of grammatical resources functions as a coherent system of syntactic relations, attesting to the systemic integrity and interdependence of hierarchical linguistic elements. However, word order varies across these languages.

In English, an analytic language, a strictly fixed word order is required, typically following the pattern:

S + P + O (direct–indirect) + Adverbial

(Subject + Predicate + Object [direct–indirect] + Adverbial)

The Uzbek language, which is agglutinative, also exhibits a relatively fixed word order. However, it differs from English and generally follows this model:

Adverbial + Subject + Object (indirect–direct) + Predicate

Turning to the Russian language, which is a fusional-synthetic language, we find a relatively free word order, with a predominant (basic) variant. Since nominal case morphemes establish syntactic relationships regardless of word position in the sentence, the basic model for Russian can be represented as:

S + P + O (Subject + Predicate + Object)

Nevertheless, in particular stylistic contexts, Russian allows other, relatively infrequent word-order permutations. These alternative models include:

O + P + S

O + S + P

P + O + S



## Conclusion

This comparative investigation into sentence-model theories in English, Uzbek, and Russian highlights the nuanced interplay between morphological typology and syntactic architecture. English's analytic nature relies heavily on fixed word order and function words to express grammatical relationships. Uzbek, with its agglutinative structure, similarly exhibits a relatively fixed word order, though distinct from English in its adverbial–subject–object–predicate sequence. Russian, by contrast, leverages a robust system of inflectional morphology, allowing a more flexible but still structurally coherent range of word-order permutations.

Crucially, the concept of valency emerges as the cornerstone for identifying and classifying actants, thus revealing the core and peripheral elements in sentence construction. Further, the integration of structural, linear, categorical, and functional aspects, as initially conceived by Admoni, Erben, and especially Tesnière, remains central to a comprehensive syntactic analysis. By acknowledging the importance of contextual factors—such as ellipsis and stylistic variation—this study affirms that sentence models must be viewed both as abstract schemas and as context-sensitive, dynamically realized structures.

In sum, the multifaceted nature of sentence models underscores the complexity inherent in syntactic description. A valency-based methodology, coupled with the recognition of parallel and overlapping aspects of sentence organization, promises a more unified understanding of how languages shape and realize their syntactic resources. These findings provide a foundation for future research on cross-linguistic variation and the ongoing refinement of syntactic theory.

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