

## DERIVATION OF RELATIVE CLAUSES AS COMPLEX SYNTACTIC CONSTRUCTIONS

Xamrayeva Zebiniso Xaydar qizi

Associate Professor, PhD. Samarkand State Institute of

Foreign Languages Uzbekistan, Samarkand

zebinisoxamrayeva25@gmail.com

### Abstract:

The derivation of relative clauses constitutes a fundamental aspect of complex syntactic constructions, as relative clauses enable speakers to encode additional descriptive, restrictive, and explanatory information within a single nominal unit. This literature review examines major theoretical approaches to the derivation of relative clauses with particular reference to English and Uzbek. Drawing on generative, functional, cognitive, and typological frameworks, the study synthesizes existing research on syntactic embedding, movement, morphological marking, and the syntax–semantics interface. The review highlights how English primarily relies on relative pronouns and complementizers in the derivation of relative clauses, whereas Uzbek employs participial and non-finite verb forms as key derivational mechanisms. By comparing these two typologically distinct languages, the article demonstrates both universal principles of clause embedding and language-specific strategies of syntactic derivation. The analysis also considers semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive factors influencing relative clause formation and interpretation. The review concludes that the derivation of relative clauses is a multifaceted process shaped by the interaction of syntactic structure, semantic relations, and morphosyntactic resources, and it underscores the importance of cross-linguistic perspectives for a comprehensive understanding of complex syntactic constructions.

**Keywords:** Relative clauses, complex syntactic constructions, syntactic derivation, clause embedding, syntax–semantics interface, participial constructions, relative pronouns, English and Uzbek comparison, cross-linguistic syntax, complex sentences.

Complex syntactic constructions represent one of the most advanced levels of grammatical organization in human language, allowing speakers to combine multiple propositions within a single syntactic unit. Among these constructions, relative clauses occupy a central position due to their role in modifying nominal elements and establishing hierarchical relationships between clauses. The study of relative clauses has long attracted the attention of linguists, as their formation involves intricate interactions between syntax, semantics, and discourse. In many linguistic theories, relative clauses are regarded as prototypical examples of clause embedding

and syntactic dependency, making them a crucial object of investigation in the study of complex sentence derivation.

In theoretical linguistics, the derivation of relative clauses has been extensively discussed within the framework of transformational-generative grammar, where relative clauses are derived through movement operations and abstract syntactic representations. At the same time, alternative approaches such as functional grammar, cognitive linguistics, and constraint-based models have emphasized the importance of semantic relations, communicative functions, and usage-based patterns in explaining relative clause formation. These diverse perspectives demonstrate that the derivation of relative clauses cannot be fully explained by purely formal mechanisms but must be examined as an interface phenomenon involving meaning and cognition.

From a typological perspective, languages differ significantly in the strategies they employ to derive relative clauses. English, as an analytic language, primarily uses relative pronouns and complementizers, whereas Uzbek, a morphologically rich Turkic language, relies on participial constructions and non-finite verb forms. These structural differences provide valuable insight into how universal syntactic principles are realized through language-specific derivational mechanisms. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek relative clauses thus offers an opportunity to explore both shared and divergent features of complex syntactic construction across languages.

Relative clauses are widely recognized as a central type of complex syntactic construction, serving the dual function of embedding additional information about a noun while maintaining a hierarchical syntactic structure. From a theoretical standpoint, relative clauses are of significant interest because they exhibit interactions between syntax and semantics, clause embedding, and derivational mechanisms that vary across languages. In transformational-generative grammar, relative clauses are analyzed as derived from underlying structures via movement operations, where a constituent originating as a thematic argument within the embedded clause moves to a relative clause position, leaving a trace that establishes syntactic dependency (Chomsky, 1981; Radford, 2004).

For example, in English, the sentence **The book that I read was interesting** involves movement of the object the book from its original position in the embedded clause I read the book to the specifier position of the relative clause, marked by the complementizer that. This derivational process demonstrates the dependency between the relative pronoun and its antecedent, illustrating the hierarchical nature of complex syntactic constructions.

Constraint-based and functional approaches provide alternative accounts that emphasize the role of lexical and semantic relations rather than formal movement. In Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) and Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), relative clauses are derived through feature sharing and unification between the head noun and the embedded clause (Pollard & Sag, 1994; Bresnan, 2001). In such models, the relative pronoun functions

as a co-referential operator linking the noun to its descriptive clause without requiring transformational movement. This perspective is particularly relevant for typologically diverse languages such as Uzbek, where relative clauses are often formed using participial or converbal constructions rather than explicit complementizers.

For instance, in Uzbek, the relative clause equivalent of **The book that I read** would be expressed as **Men o‘qigan kitob**, literally I read-ing book, where the participial form o‘qigan conveys subordination and adjectival modification of the head noun kitob. This example highlights that derivation in Uzbek relies more on morphological processes and functional marking rather than syntactic movement, illustrating cross-linguistic variation in the formation of relative clauses (Karahan, 1999; Turobov, 2023).

Semantic and discourse factors play a crucial role in the derivation and interpretation of relative clauses. Relative clauses not only provide additional descriptive information but also signal the relationship between the antecedent and the embedded event in terms of temporality, causality, or specificity (Comrie, 1989; Langacker, 1987).

In English, restrictive relative clauses, such as **The students who studied hard passed the exam**, restrict the reference of the antecedent noun, while non-restrictive relative clauses, such as **My brother, who lives in London, is a teacher**, provide supplementary information. In Uzbek, similar distinctions are conveyed morphologically and through word order. For example, **Men o‘qigan kitob, juda qiziqarli edi** (The book that I read was very interesting) illustrates the restrictive function through the participial form o‘qigan, while the addition of pauses or intonation in speech can convey non-restrictive meaning. These semantic and pragmatic considerations are integral to derivational processes because they guide the choice of syntactic construction and clause marking (Diessel, 2004).

Acquisition studies further support the interplay between derivation and semantics. Children acquiring English relative clauses initially produce simpler embedded structures, often relying on canonical word order before mastering movement and wh-pronoun dependencies. Diessel (2004) observes that temporal and causal clauses emerge earlier than relative clauses in language development, reflecting the cognitive complexity involved in deriving and interpreting relational dependencies. In Uzbek-speaking children, the acquisition of participial relative clauses follows a similar trajectory, with morphological marking emerging before more syntactically explicit subordination strategies. These findings indicate that derivational processes are constrained by both cognitive and linguistic factors, including the availability of morphological resources and the salience of semantic relations.

Typological and cross-linguistic studies highlight that the derivation of relative clauses is shaped by language-specific resources. In languages with rich morphology, such as Uzbek, non-finite verb forms and participles facilitate the derivation of relative clauses, while in more analytic languages like English, complementizers and relative pronouns serve as the primary mechanism of embedding (Dryer, 2005). Despite these differences, both languages

demonstrate hierarchical syntactic structures in which the relative clause modifies a nominal head, illustrating a universal principle of clause embedding in complex syntactic constructions. Functionalist perspectives stress that regardless of structural differences, the semantic integration between head noun and clause remains the driving force behind derivation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Furthermore, recent research has emphasized the role of processing and comprehension in derivation. Psycholinguistic studies suggest that deeply embedded relative clauses impose a higher cognitive load, as reflected in increased processing times and working memory demands (Gibson, 1998). Such findings have implications for derivational theory, as they suggest that the complexity of relative clause formation is not only a syntactic issue but also a cognitive phenomenon. In teaching and applied linguistics, awareness of these derivational constraints informs the design of second language instruction, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts where learners from morphologically rich languages like Uzbek may transfer participial strategies to English (Ellis, 2006).

In sum, the derivation of relative clauses as complex syntactic constructions encompasses multiple interrelated dimensions, including syntactic hierarchy, morphological marking, semantic integration, cognitive processing, and cross-linguistic variation. English and Uzbek provide complementary evidence of how derivational mechanisms operate differently depending on the language's morphosyntactic resources, while still adhering to universal principles of embedding and modification. Generative, constraint-based, functional, and cognitive approaches collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of relative clause derivation, demonstrating the interplay between form, meaning, and discourse function. Future research should continue to integrate typological and psycholinguistic perspectives to elucidate how derivational processes are realized across languages and modalities.

## References

1. Bresnan, J. (2001). *Lexical-Functional Syntax*. Oxford: Blackwell.
2. Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.
3. Comrie, B. (1989). *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
4. Diessel, H. (2004). *The Acquisition of Complex Sentences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Dryer, M. S. (2005). Clause combining in typological perspective. In T. Shopen (Ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (pp. 336–385). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 83–107.
7. Gibson, E. (1998). Linguistic complexity: Locality of syntactic dependencies. *Cognition*, 68(1), 1–76.

7. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.). London: Routledge.
8. Karahan, L. (1999). Türkçede söz dizimi. Cümle tahlilleri. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi.
9. Pollard, C., & Sag, I. A. (1994). Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Radford, A. (2004). Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Turobov, A. (2023). Kichik sintaksisi muammolari. Samarqand: SamSIFL Press.