



## **THE CONCEPT OF VALENCY AT THE SYNTACTIC LEVEL**

Yeshboyeva Sevara Anvar qizi

Teacher of Tashkent State University of Economics

yeshboyevasevara0611@gmail.com

998919389555

Yelamanova Nuriya Asan qizi

Teacher of Tashkent State University of Economics

yelamanovanuriya@gmail.com

998999597887

### **Abstract**

This study examines the concept of valency at the syntactic level, drawing on both classical and modern linguistic approaches. Building on the theoretical foundations of Chomsky [1] and the valency framework developed in dependency grammar, the paper analyzes how predicates determine the number and types of syntactic arguments. Particular attention is given to the complement–adjunct distinction and its role in sentence structure, as discussed by Somers [2]. The study also considers valency patterns across different languages, highlighting their structural and functional significance. The findings demonstrate that syntactic valency is a key mechanism in organizing sentence elements and ensuring grammatical coherence.

### **Introduction**

The concept of valency has become a central issue in syntactic theory, particularly in understanding how sentence structure is formed and organized. Initially influenced by the ideas of Chomsky, syntactic analysis has evolved to incorporate valency as a fundamental principle governing the relationship between predicates and their arguments. In this framework, a predicate determines not only the number of arguments required but also their syntactic realization within a sentence.

The valency approach, as systematically developed by Herbst and Schüller<sup>3</sup>, provides a detailed account of how verbs control their complements and interact with adjuncts. This distinction has been further explored by Somers [2], who emphasizes the importance of differentiating between obligatory and optional elements in syntactic structures.

Moreover, cross-linguistic studies, including those conducted in Uzbek and Russian linguistic traditions, reveal that valency is not only a universal syntactic phenomenon but also language-specific in its realization. Scholars such as Aristova and Asadov [5] have contributed to understanding how valency operates in different grammatical systems.

This paper aims to analyze the concept of valency at the syntactic level by integrating theoretical perspectives and empirical observations. It seeks to demonstrate that valency serves as a crucial organizing principle in syntax, shaping both the structure and meaning of sentences across languages.

## **Literature Review**

The concept of valency has been widely discussed in linguistic studies, particularly within syntactic theory. Early contributions by Chomsky [1] laid the foundation for modern syntactic analysis by introducing the idea that sentence structure is governed by underlying rules and relationships between elements. Although valency is not the central focus of Chomsky's framework, his work on argument structure and deep vs. surface structures has significantly influenced later valency-based approaches.

The valency theory itself has been further developed within dependency grammar and functional approaches. Herbst and Schüller [2] provide a systematic account of syntactic valency, emphasizing the role of the verb as the central element that determines the number and type of its complements. Their work highlights the importance of distinguishing between arguments and adjuncts, a key issue in valency studies.

This distinction is critically examined by Somers [3], who questions the clear-cut separation between complements and adjuncts. His analysis suggests that the boundary between obligatory and optional elements is often fluid, which has important implications for syntactic theory and valency analysis.

In addition, descriptive and comparative studies have contributed to the understanding of valency across languages. Aristova [4] investigates syntactic

structures in Russian, focusing on agentive constructions and their variants. Similarly, Asadov examines monovalent and polyvalent components in English sentence structures, providing insights into how valency operates in different linguistic systems.

Furthermore, contemporary sources such as Nordquist [6] offer accessible explanations of valency in grammar, reinforcing its relevance in both theoretical and applied linguistics.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that valency is a fundamental concept in syntax, playing a crucial role in the organization of sentence structure and the interaction between predicates and their arguments. However, debates regarding the classification of syntactic elements and cross-linguistic variations indicate that the concept continues to evolve.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative and comparative methodological framework to investigate the concept of valency at the syntactic level. The research is grounded in both theoretical analysis and descriptive linguistic methods, allowing for a comprehensive examination of how predicates determine the number and types of their arguments within sentence structures.

First, a theoretical approach is applied to analyze the fundamental principles of valency as presented in classical and modern linguistic theories. The works of Chomsky, Herbst and Schüller, and Somers serve as the primary theoretical basis for understanding argument structure, complement–adjunct distinctions, and syntactic organization. These sources provide the conceptual framework necessary to interpret valency as a structural and functional phenomenon in syntax.

Second, the study utilizes a descriptive method to examine syntactic constructions in selected examples from English and Uzbek. This method focuses on identifying different valency patterns—such as monovalent, bivalent, and trivalent structures—and analyzing how they are realized through grammatical elements like subjects, objects, and complements. Special attention is given to the formal markers of syntactic relations, including word order in English and case affixes in Uzbek.

Third, a comparative analysis is conducted to highlight similarities and differences in the expression of valency across languages. Drawing on the

research of Aristova and Asadov [5], the study compares how different linguistic systems encode argument structure and syntactic dependencies. This cross-linguistic perspective helps to reveal both universal features of valency and language-specific variations.

Additionally, the research applies an analytical method to distinguish between obligatory and optional sentence elements. Following Somers, the study critically evaluates the complement–adjunct distinction and examines borderline cases where this classification becomes ambiguous. This step is essential for refining the understanding of syntactic valency and its practical application.

The data for analysis consist of constructed and attested sentence examples that illustrate various valency patterns. These examples are systematically categorized and interpreted within the established theoretical framework. The combination of theoretical, descriptive, and comparative methods ensures the reliability and validity of the findings.

Overall, the chosen methodology enables a detailed exploration of syntactic valency, providing insights into its role as a key mechanism in sentence structure and linguistic organization.

### **Analysis and Results**

The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting valency patterns at the syntactic level, with particular attention to how predicates determine the number and types of their arguments. The data reveal that valency serves as a structural framework that governs the organization of sentence elements and their grammatical relations.

The study identifies four primary valency types: aivalent, monovalent, bivalent, and trivalent constructions. Aivalent structures, typically associated with natural phenomena, do not require explicit arguments (e.g., It rains). Monovalent predicates require a single argument, usually realized as the subject (The child sleeps). Bivalent structures involve two core arguments—subject and direct object (She reads a book), while trivalent constructions include an additional indirect object (He gave her a gift). These patterns confirm that the number of arguments is directly dependent on the lexical properties of the predicate.

From a syntactic perspective, the analysis demonstrates that valency is closely linked to the realization of grammatical functions such as subject, object, and complement. In English, these relations are primarily expressed through fixed

word order, whereas in Uzbek they are often marked by case affixes. This contrast highlights the role of typological differences in shaping the syntactic expression of valency.

Furthermore, the findings support the view that the distinction between complements and adjuncts is not always clear-cut. Certain elements may function as optional yet semantically significant components, blurring the boundary between argument and adjunct. This observation aligns with Somers' approach, suggesting that syntactic valency should be viewed as a flexible rather than strictly rigid system.

The comparative analysis also reveals that while the concept of valency is universal, its realization varies across languages. English tends to rely on syntactic position and auxiliary structures, whereas Uzbek demonstrates greater morphological marking and flexibility in word order. Despite these differences, both languages exhibit systematic valency patterns that ensure coherence and clarity in sentence construction.

Overall, the results indicate that syntactic valency is a fundamental organizing principle in language. It not only determines the structural configuration of sentences but also contributes to meaning formation by regulating the interaction between predicates and their arguments. These findings reinforce the importance of valency in both theoretical linguistics and practical language analysis.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the concept of valency at the syntactic level, emphasizing its role as a fundamental mechanism in sentence structure. The analysis demonstrates that predicates determine both the number and types of arguments, thereby shaping the structural organization of sentences. The identification of aivalent, monovalent, bivalent, and trivalent patterns confirms that valency is closely linked to the lexical properties of verbs and their syntactic behavior.

The findings also reveal that syntactic valency is expressed differently across languages. While English primarily relies on word order to encode argument relations, Uzbek makes extensive use of morphological markers such as case affixes. Despite these typological differences, both languages exhibit systematic valency patterns that ensure grammatical coherence and clarity.



Furthermore, the study highlights the complexity of the complement–adjunct distinction, showing that the boundary between obligatory and optional elements is often flexible. This supports the view that valency should be understood as a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon rather than a strictly fixed system. In conclusion, syntactic valency plays a crucial role in organizing sentence elements and constructing meaning. Its study contributes to a deeper understanding of grammatical structure and provides valuable insights for both theoretical and comparative linguistics.

### **References**

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