

Chapter 1 introduces the study of syntax as a cognitive science, focusing on how humans subconsciously understand and produce sentences. It distinguishes between Language (the human capacity for language) and language (specific languages like English). The chapter emphasizes generative grammar, Chomsky's theory that posits a subconscious set of procedures generating sentences, modeled through formal grammatical rules unlike prescriptive grammar rules. These rules dictate word order and other structural aspects. Understanding the chapter requires mastering concepts like the difference between competence and performance, arguments for Universal Grammar, and the logical problem of language acquisition, along with different types of data gathering (corpora and linguistic judgments) and levels of adequacy (observational, descriptive, and explanatory). The text also touches upon related fields like phonetics, phonology, morphology, and semantics, situating syntax within the broader context of linguistic study.