

## "PERIOD" AS A COMPLEX SYNTACTIC CONSTRUCTION AND ITS STRUCTURAL CONSISTENCY

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### *Abstract:*

The "period" as a syntactic construction has been a fundamental area of study in linguistic research. Traditionally, it is defined as a complex syntactic unit that consists of multiple clauses, often with intricate interrelations in meaning and structure. This paper investigates the traditional definition of the period, emphasizing its structural coherence through coordination, subordination, parallelism, and logical progression. Various examples from literary texts, including works by Charles Dickens, Edward Gibbon, and Henry James, illustrate how periodic sentences enhance expressiveness, coherence, and logical structuring of information. The study highlights the significance of periodic constructions in classical rhetoric and modern literary discourse, reinforcing their role in achieving stylistic elegance and clarity.

*Keywords:* period, complex syntactic construction, structural coherence, coordination, subordination, parallelism, periodic sentence, rhetoric, literary discourse.

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### Introduction

The "period" as a syntactic construction has been a fundamental subject of study in linguistic research. Traditionally, it is defined as a complex syntactic unit that consists of multiple clauses, often with intricate interrelations in meaning and structure. The period is particularly significant in classical rhetoric and written discourse, where it serves to enhance expressiveness, coherence, and logical structuring of information. This paper investigates the traditional definition of the period, its structural consistency, and its manifestations in literature to scientifically substantiate its importance.

#### Traditional Definition of the "Period"

The term "period" originates from classical rhetoric, where it was employed to describe lengthy, well-balanced sentences that provide a complete thought. Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*, 1st century AD) describes the period as "a sentence rounded off and complete in itself" [5; p. 87]. The structure of a period typically consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses, all contributing to a unified syntactic and semantic whole.

Traditional grammar views the period as a long, well-structured sentence that achieves stylistic elegance and logical organization. According to Jespersen "a period is a composite sentence in which the interdependent clauses contribute to a harmonious and well-balanced unity" [4; p. 213]. Such a construction is frequently used in literary and rhetorical texts to present complex ideas with clarity and emphasis.

#### Structural Consistency of the Period

The period maintains structural consistency through various linguistic mechanisms:

1. **Coordination and Subordination.** A period relies on a balance between main and subordinate clauses. It often employs conjunctions (e.g., "although," "whereas," "since") and relative pronouns to maintain cohesion.
2. **Parallelism.** The use of parallel structures enhances readability and rhythmic flow, ensuring that all components contribute to the overall meaning.
3. **Logical Progression.** Periodic sentences frequently follow a cause-effect or argument-conclusion pattern, ensuring clarity and coherence.

For example, in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, the famous opening sentence exemplifies a well-structured period:

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"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..." [1]

Here, Dickens employs parallelism and antithesis to create a period that juxtaposes contrasting ideas while maintaining a coherent structure.

#### Examples from Literature

The periodic sentence is widely used in classical and modern literature to achieve rhetorical effectiveness. For instance, in Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, we find:

"If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." [2]

This example illustrates how a periodic sentence defers the main idea to the end, thereby increasing suspense and impact.

Similarly, in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* lengthy periodic constructions are employed to explore complex psychological insights:

"She had an immense curiosity about life, and was constantly staring and wondering at it, sometimes with sudden breathless conclusions that were as quickly modified, or contradicted, or overthrown." [3]

Such sentences showcase the structural consistency of the period by maintaining a unified thought through multiple subclauses.

#### Conclusion

The period, as a complex syntactic construction, is an essential element of written discourse, enabling authors to convey intricate ideas with coherence and stylistic elegance. Its structural consistency is maintained through coordination, subordination, parallelism, and logical progression. As evidenced by literary examples, the periodic sentence remains a powerful tool for rhetorical and stylistic expression.

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