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Editors office address:

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Methodology for analysing cognitive-syntactic phenomena in poetic texts

Olena Pokhyliuk*

PhD in Philology, Senior Lecturer

Communal Higher Education Institution "Vinnytsia Humanities Pedagogical College"

21019, 13 Nahirna Str., Vinnytsia, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2786-4055>

Abstract. The relevance of this research stems from contemporary linguistics' growing interest in how linguistic forms and structures, particularly syntax, shape meaning in poetic texts beyond their purely grammatical function. The study's objective was to develop a methodology for analysing cognitive-syntactic phenomena in poetic texts, enabling the identification of how syntax interacts with perception, memory, and emotional resonance. The research employed methods from cognitive linguistics, componential analysis, cognitive semantics, and construction grammar, which allowed for viewing syntactic structures as encodings of subjective positions, cultural frameworks, and emotional intensities. The analysis was conducted using Carol Ann Duffy's poetry collection "The World's Wife" as an example. The obtained results convincingly demonstrate that poetic syntax extends far beyond simple stylistic embellishment. It functions as a powerful cognitive tool that actively shapes and reflects the thinking, emotions, and identity of the lyrical hero. The syntactic choices made by the author are not random but are deeply rooted in cognitive processes and serve to convey complex psychological states, internal conflicts, and socio-cultural models. Specifically, it was found that syntactic devices such as enjambment (carrying a part of a sentence over to the next line), parataxis (co-ordinating sentences without clear subordination), fragmented sentences, and the use of idioms are significant indicators of the lyrical hero's inner world. Enjambment can create a sense of tension or a flowing stream of thought; parataxis can convey disjointed perception or emotional intensity; and fragmented sentences can reflect interrupted thinking, doubts, or internal struggle. The use of idioms, in turn, can indicate belonging to a specific socio-cultural group or reflect established ways of thinking and perceiving the world. The practical value of the research lies in the development of a flexible yet rigorous methodology that can be applied to the analysis of poetic texts while considering

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*Corresponding author



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their integrity, and which allows for a better understanding of the relationship between language, thought, and emotion

Keywords: cognitive poetics; poetic syntax; componential analysis; cognitive semantics; construction grammar

Introduction

In contemporary literary scholarship, especially within the dynamic field of cognitive linguistics, there is a marked intensification of interest in how language forms and syntactic structures contribute to the construction of meaning beyond purely grammatical functions. This interest is particularly relevant in the study of poetic texts, where the boundaries between form and meaning often dissolved, and syntax becomes a conduit for perception, memory, and emotional resonance. Rather than perceiving poetic syntax as merely ornamental or stylistically deviant, modern approaches suggest that it functioned as a powerful cognitive and psychological apparatus. Works in cognitive poetics, such as those by N. Ahmad (2024), underscored that syntactic choices in poetry were intimately linked to how minds processed experience, emotion, and cultural positioning. In this view, syntax operates not only as a formal property of language but also as an instrument of thought, capable of encoding inner states, subjective shifts, and culturally determined schemata.

This interpretative strategy also requires a clearer definition of what was meant by cognitive-syntactic phenomena in poetic contexts. These are not simply aesthetic features or syntactic deviations for effect, but deep-seated formal mechanisms that reflect mental operations and cognitive-emotional processing. They included such devices as perspective shifts, metaphorical re-mapping, causal chain structures, and contrastive grammatical pairings. According to A. Bimbetov (2024), the interaction between syntactic configuration and semantic roles is particularly revealing in multi-structural poetic texts, where syntax carried the burden of

cultural logic, often implicitly reproducing or subverting dominant ideologies. Through syntax, poets coded social meanings, expressed power relations, and mediated the self's relationship with the world.

J.B.U. Kakhramonov & N. Abdurakhmon (2022) emphasised that syntax, when examined through the lens of cognitive semantics, functions as a medium for embodied meaning-making. Their research illustrated how syntactic configurations in poetic discourse reflect mental and emotional processes, with particular attention to how clause structures and syntactic variations encode shifts in perception and affective states. Similarly, N. Mykhalchuk *et al.* (2021) argued that punctuation, line breaks, and other microstructural features of poetic syntax were not merely formal devices but psychologically charged elements that contribute to meaning construction. Their study highlighted how syntactic fragmentation could signal emotional rupture or cognitive dissonance, especially in poems dealing with trauma or identity.

Building upon these findings, N. Myronova *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that cognitive-semantic approaches to poetic syntax allows for a nuanced interpretation of conceptual layering in verse. They showed that even seemingly minor syntactic choices – such as the placement of modifiers or the use of enjambment – served as indicators of conceptual complexity and emotional intensity. Taken together, these studies support the methodological premise of this research: that poetic syntax operated as an active site of cognitive and affective engagement, where even punctuation marks and clause boundaries exerted psychological force. This

reinforced the need for an analytic framework that treats syntax not as a passive structure but as a dynamic and integral component of poetic meaning-making.

In merging cognitive linguistics with literary poetics, this study aspired to trace the linguistic contours of emotion, thought, and ideological positioning within verse. Syntax, in this sense, becomes more than grammar – it becomes grammar as an event: a live structure through which human experience unfolded. The poetic line emerged not only as a medium of expression but as a performative space where cognitive and affective dimensions of human subjectivity were enacted. Through this lens, readers were not just passive interpreters of meaning; they were cognitively engaged participants, reconstructing the emotional and psychological worlds that grammar silently but powerfully shaped.

Importantly, the aim of this research was not limited to identifying cognitive patterns in poetic texts; it also proposed a flexible methodological approach that enabled rigorous analysis of such patterns while preserving the integrity and subtlety of poetic form. This approach conceptualised the poetic line as a hybrid unit – simultaneously expressive and structural – that conveyed both emotional energy and conceptual depth.

Materials and Methods

The methodological foundation of the present study was rooted in the interdisciplinary integration of cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, componential analysis, and cognitive poetics, with the overarching goal of formulating an effective and flexible approach to the analysis of cognitive-syntactic phenomena in poetic discourse. This framework enabled a nuanced exploration of how syntax, far beyond its grammatical function, interacted with mental processes, emotional resonance, and cultural framing in the context of literary expression. The object of the research comprised the

cognitive-syntactic structures observed in poetic texts, with a specific focus on Carol Ann Duffy's collection "The World's Wife" (Duffy, 2001). This collection was selected as the central corpus for analysis not only due to its literary merit and thematic richness, but also because of its syntactic density and stylistic distinctiveness. The poems selected for close examination offered fertile ground for applying a multidimensional methodological approach. This approach combined componential analysis, cognitive semantics, and construction grammar to develop a layered understanding of poetic syntax. The poems included – "Little Red-Cap", "Pilate's Wife", "Mrs Aesop", "Queen Herod", "Medusa", and "Anne Hathaway" – were chosen for their explicit deployment of marked syntactic features such as enjambment, parataxis, sentence fragmentation, and the innovative use of idiomatic expressions. These elements made the collection a fertile ground for examining the convergence of linguistic form, cognitive function, and poetic aesthetics.

To ensure theoretical rigour and contemporary relevance, the selection of scholarly literature was conducted in alignment with the criteria of recent publication (primarily within the last five years) and thematic pertinence to the domains of cognitive linguistics, poetic syntax, and literary stylistics. The references included the works of A. Bimbetov (2024), A.S. Bozorov (2024), and Y. Qin (2023), among others, which offered valuable insights into cross-linguistic syntactic structures, metaphor theory, and cognitive narrative construction. Preference was given to peer-reviewed sources published in journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science, thereby aligning the study with current academic publishing standards and ensuring the reliability of the conceptual foundation (Myronova *et al.*, 2023).

Y. Qin (2023) with an overview of cognitive linguistics provided an essential conceptual backdrop for this study by outlining the discipline's central principles – such as the

embodiment of meaning, the experiential basis of conceptual structures, and the dynamic interplay between language and cognition. These principles informed the analysis by framing poetic syntax as a site where linguistic form interacts with embodied experience, cultural models, and mental imagery. Such a perspective reinforced the study's methodological orientation toward viewing syntax not merely as a structural feature but as a cognitive-constructive tool within poetic discourse.

The research methodology unfolded across three interrelated stages, each addressing a specific dimension of cognitive-syntactic analysis. The initial phase involved structural-syntactic analysis aimed at identifying syntactic configurations and patterns within the poetic texts. This included an examination of clause complexity, syntactic segmentation, and the various forms of syntactic linkage such as co-ordination and subordination. Special attention was given to stylistic devices that bore on the organisation of syntax and its aesthetic function. At this stage, componential analysis served as a key methodological tool (Geeraerts, 2006; Nida, 2015), allowing for the categorisation of semantic roles and the clarification of how syntactic structures supported meaning construction in poetic discourse.

The second phase moved into the domain of cognitive-semantic analysis, informed by the theoretical contributions of E.J. Cho (2017), P. Stockwell (2019), and I.E. Grachova & A.V. Mosiichuk (2018). This stage sought to trace the interplay between syntactic form and cognitive processes such as perception, memory structuring, emotional encoding, and the construction of identity within the text. Semantic segmentation techniques were employed to reveal underlying metaphorical frameworks and culturally embedded expressions that shaped the reader's interpretative engagement. This cognitive-semantic layer enabled the decoding of subtle mental models embedded in the syntactic architecture of the poems.

The third and final phase centred on pragmatic-contextual analysis. Here, the aim was to investigate how syntactic structures function in relation to broader textual and cultural contexts, particularly through mechanisms such as intertextuality, irony, and socio-historical allusion. This phase drew on the principles of construction grammar as articulated by T. Hoffmann (2022), with emphasis on the transformation and re-contextualisation of fixed syntactic constructions – especially idioms, proverbs, and formulaic sequences – within the poetic fabric. Such transformations were not only stylistic but also cognitive in nature, reshaping inherited linguistic forms to express subjective experience and critique cultural paradigms. Throughout the entire analytic process, a descriptive-analytical approach was maintained, with a conscious effort to avoid speculative assertions about authorial intention. The focus remained on the structural and functional roles of syntactic features within the broader cognitive-poetic framework.

Results and Discussion

In the analysis of Carol Ann Duffy's "The World's Wife", it became increasingly apparent that syntactic structures in poetry should not have been perceived as passive containers of meaning, but rather as dynamic mechanisms for cognitive and emotional representation. Syntax in this context actively participate in shaping poetic consciousness, mediating the interplay between internal psychological states and external linguistic form. Each syntactic gesture – whether a pause, a break, a repetition, or a subversion of grammatical norms – reflects how emotional, ideological, and cognitive tensions were organised and conveyed. This was especially evident in C.A. Duffy's poetic reconstructions of female subjectivities, where traditional narratives were deconstructed not only through content but also through form (Chafe, 1999; Janigová, 2024).

The analytical process proceeded through three main stages: first, the identification of salient syntactic features such as deviation from normative sentence structures, use of parataxis and enjambment, clause fragmentation, and idiomatic density; second, the mapping of these structures onto cognitive categories including perception, emotional resonance, and memory; and finally, the interpretation of their function within broader sociocultural and ideological frames, following the work of scholars such as T. Hoffmann (2022) and E.J. Cho (2017). This methodology facilitated a deeper exploration of how poetic syntax encoded character psychology and narrative positioning. For instance, in “Little Red-Cap”, C.A. Duffy’s use of enjambment and abrupt syntactic breaks reflected not just poetic rhythm but the psychological fragmentation of the speaker. The non-linear unfolding of clauses echoed a cognitive state of confusion, transition, and eventual empowerment. Here, syntactic dislocation became a mimetic device for charting the protagonist’s movement from innocence to self-awareness (Duffy, 2001). This observation aligns with R. Bradford (2005) view that poetic syntax, particularly in postmodern works, often mirrored internal psychic rhythms rather than adhering to chronological or narrative logic.

In “Pilate’s Wife”, on the other hand, the syntax took on a different function. The use of short, declarative sentences conveyed a muted, almost repressed emotional state. Trauma was not described overtly but was encoded in the sparseness and abruptness of the lineation. The syntax itself becomes the site of affective rupture, enacting what E.J. Cho (2017) referred to as a “semantic saturation via pronominal modulation”, whereby emotional intensity was indexed through syntactic restraint rather than expressive elaboration. “Mrs Aesop” represented a shift toward ironic detachment. Here, syntactic repetition and structurally rigid phrasing functioned as tools of satire. C.A. Duffy mobilised symmetrical constructions and a barrage

of idioms to parody didactic speech patterns. The flattening of once-authoritative expressions, such as “Slow but certain, Mrs Aesop, wins the race”, produced a cognitive dissonance that exposed the emptiness of traditional moral discourse. As T. Hoffmann (2022) noted, such manipulation of fixed expressions within a poetic framework allowed the speaker to rupture established linguistic norms and repurpose them for subversive ends.

The poem “Queen Herod” exemplified how hypotactic constructions – layered, clause-rich sentence structures – could embody maternal vigilance and defensive cognition. Here, the syntax curved and coiled in tandem with the speaker’s anxious projections, simulating the mental mechanics of someone attempting to decipher signs and threats in her environment. As D. Geeraerts (2006) suggested, syntax in such instances functioned as a scaffold for cognitive mapping, encoding thought processes that were affectively charged and ideologically situated. According to S.I. Shodieva (2021), a key concept of cognitive linguistics is that language serves as a window into the mind, revealing how humans categorise, conceptualise, and structure their experiences. This view aligns with the analysis, as the syntax in C.A. Duffy’s poetry reflects the speaker’s specific cognitive processes and mental states.

A particularly rich site of syntactic complexity was “Medusa”, where cumulative and fragmented clauses not only described mental disintegration but performed it. The language disassembled in rhythm with the speaker’s deteriorating psyche. This observation supported the hypothesis presented by I.E. Grachova & A.V. Mosiichuk (2018), who argued that poetic syntax often operated as a mirror of psychological breakdown, especially in texts that grappled with themes of identity dissolution and emotional overload. Idiomatic constructions throughout “The World’s Wife” also played a vital role in both cultural critique and cognitive representation. In “Mrs Aesop”, idioms were

recycled and hollowed out through structural repetition, enacting what E.A. Nida (2015) referred to as “semantic erosion”. These idioms, stripped of their original force, were transformed into instruments of parody and resistance. This strategy aligned with T. Hoffmann (2022) assertion that idioms, when manipulated creatively, exposed and destabilised embedded cultural hierarchies.

In contrast, “Anne Hathaway” showcased syntax as a vehicle for sensuality and mnemonic intimacy. The use of extended participial phrases and rich metaphorical layering created a syntactic flow that mirrored the rhythm of longing and remembrance. Here, the grammar did not merely describe love – it performed it, enacting what J.B.U. Kakhramonov & N. Abdurakhmon (2022) described as the “cognitive-semantic embodiment of emotion”. The work of A.J. Mukhammadiyarov (2025) further emphasised this idea of embodied meaning shaped by language, particularly by addressing how language expresses deep mental and emotional states through its syntactic and discursive features.

The analysis of “Mrs Midas” reinforced this interplay of syntax and cognition. Conditional constructions and syntactic elongation echoed the speaker’s oscillation between disbelief and grief. The repetition of “If only he had...” clauses simulated the recursive nature of trauma processing and emotional estrangement, which is consistent with cognitive models of emotional recall and detachment (Tzeng *et al.*, 1987). Across the corpus, the recurrence of syntactic features such as enjambment, parataxis, and clause fragmentation suggested a consistent linguistic strategy. These devices functioned as cognitive markers, encoding emotional states such as anxiety, desire, defiance, and grief. Furthermore, the analysis of semantic clusters through componential analysis revealed strong alignments between lexical choices and syntactic structure. For example, in “Little Red-Cap”, words associated with violence and

transformation – “axe”, “lair”, “shreds” – were embedded within disjointed syntactic patterns that reinforced a theme of psychological rupture (Geeraerts, 2006; Bozorov, 2024).

These findings validated the use of a replicable, interdisciplinary methodology for analysing poetic syntax. By integrating tools from cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, and poetics, this study proposed a model that read syntax as a site of cognitive and ideological signification. As A. Bimbetov (2024) argued, the interpretive weight of a poetic text often hinged not only on what was said but on how it was grammatically structured. Syntax, in this sense, has become a performative act—an articulation of inner thought, emotional resonance, and social criticism, which is consistent with N. Allsopp (2020) research on how poetry acts as a means of expressing ideological and sovereign ideas, especially in times of social upheaval. This stage was also informed by P. Stockwell (2019) comprehensive framework of cognitive poetics, which integrates cognitive linguistics with literary stylistics to account for how textual structures shape readerly perception, empathy, and conceptual mapping. The author emphasised that syntactic form, rhythm, and structural pauses are not passive carriers of meaning but active cognitive devices that engage memory, emotion, and interpretive processes. This theoretical orientation reinforced the study’s focus on syntax as a dynamic participant in meaning-making, rather than as a purely formal or ornamental feature.

A pertinent and particularly evocative example of this phenomenon was found in the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy, whose celebrated collection “The World’s Wife” (Duffy, 2001) served as a compelling case study for exploring the intersection of cognitive structure and poetic form. In these texts, C.A. Duffy reimaged mythological, literary, and historical women, offering a stage on which personal identity and collective memory were linguistically reconstructed. Her poetic speakers did not merely

narrate; they embodied modes of perception and affective consciousness through syntax. The opening of “Little Red-Cap”, for instance – “At childhood’s end, the houses petered out” – exemplified this convergence of physical and psychological movement. The use of syntactic elongation, enjambment, and phrasal cadence did not merely describe a moment; it dramatised the liminal space between childhood and adult awareness, registering a shift in cognition and mood through grammatical rhythm (Bradford, 2005).

This interpretive lens calls for an analytic orientation that perceived how syntax mirrored cognitive dynamics and gave structure to inner states. In “Pilate’s Wife”, C.A. Duffy employed elliptical clauses, temporal shifts, and syntactic fragmentation to render a speaker who was psychically disoriented, suspended between guilt, prescience, and political passivity. A sequence such as “Then he was gone... The night before his trial, I dreamt of him” resists chronological sequencing, choosing instead to map affective logic – the interplay of memory, trauma, and symbolic foresight. Here, syntax is not a neutral medium; it simulated the fragmented temporality and emotional entanglement of the speaker’s cognition (Cho, 2017). This aligns with broader frameworks in cognitive poetics, which argued that linguistic form in poetry enacted thought rather than simply expressed it (Grachova & Mosiichuk, 2018).

Underlying this analysis was the conviction that poetic syntax should have been studied not in isolation, but through a dialogic model that fused insights from cognitive linguistics, stylistics, and interpretative literary theory. Such an interdisciplinary method revealed how grammar, at the micro level of clauses and sentence patterns, could articulate subjectivity, cultural belonging, and emotional turbulence. Scholars such as E.J. Cho (2017) and T. Hoffmann (2022) foregrounded the role of syntax as a representational schema – a scaffold for mental modelling that allowed poetic voices to

shift stance, modulate focus, and narrate from within a fractured or layered consciousness. In C.A. Duffy’s “Medusa”, for example, the deliberate repetition of syntactic frames – “I glanced at... I looked at... I stared at” – became a grammatical manifestation of the speaker’s descent into paranoid disintegration and alienation. The formal recurrence operates as a psychological spiral, turning language into a mirror of obsessive cognition (Duffy, 2001).

In conclusion, cognitive-syntactic analysis of “The World’s Wife” revealed that deviations from normative syntax in poetry were far from incidental. Rather, they were deliberate stylistic strategies that enabled the poet to construct alternative modes of seeing, feeling, and knowing. The linguistic architecture of C.A. Duffy’s poems thus functions as a map of inner life, capturing the affective and ideological currents that shaped female subjectivity. This method, while applied here to English-language poetry, has the potential for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural adaptation, offering scholars a robust framework for exploring the cognitive dimensions of poetic language.

Ultimately, C.A. Duffy’s poetry was intended not only to be read but also to be apprehended aurally through the mind’s ear, wherein its rhythms and disruptions reflected the psychological landscapes it portrayed. The syntax did not merely accompany the voice; it constituted the voice itself and functions as a critical vehicle for meaning.

Conclusions

This research investigated the cognitive-syntactic mechanisms that underpinned poetic discourse, with a focus on the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy, particularly the author’s collection “The World’s Wife”. The analysis demonstrated that poetic syntax serves as both a cognitive and emotional medium, reflecting the mental states, identity formation, and sociocultural positioning of the lyrical subject. Syntactic features such as enjambment, parataxis, and

fragmentation function not merely as stylistic devices but as integral components of the cognitive structure of the poetic voice. In this context, poems like “Little Red-Cap” and “Medusa” revealed a psychological dimension encoded in syntactic form as well as in thematic content, highlighting the interrelation of emotion, cognition, and linguistic organisation.

The methodological approach, which synthesised tools from cognitive linguistics, componential analysis, and construction grammar, proved effective in elucidating how poetic syntax encapsulated perceptual shifts, emotional intensity, and cultural meaning. The results suggested that cognitive-syntactic analysis possessed broad applicability across languages and literary traditions, offering valuable insights for comparative studies of poetic form in diverse linguistic contexts.

By providing a systematic yet adaptable framework for interpreting poetic language,

this study advanced understanding of syntax as a dynamic vehicle of meaning-making in poetry. Future research might extend this model to cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analyses, including the study of non-Western poetic traditions and translated works. Furthermore, the application of cognitive-syntactic analysis in educational settings presented a promising direction for enhancing literary interpretation skills and fostering greater awareness of the interplay between linguistic form and conceptual content.

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Методика аналізу когнітивно-синтаксичних явищ у поетичних текстах

Олена Похилук

Кандидат філологічних наук, старший викладач

Комунальний заклад вищої освіти

«Вінницький гуманітарно-педагогічний коледж»

21019, вул. Нагірна, 13, м. Вінниця, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2786-4055>

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростаючим інтересом сучасної лінгвістики до того, як мовні форми та структури, зокрема синтаксис, формують значення в поетичних текстах, виходячи за межі їхньої граматичної функції. Метою роботи була розробка методики аналізу когнітивно-синтаксичних явищ у поетичних текстах, що дозволяє виявляти, як синтаксис взаємодіє зі сприйняттям, пам'яттю та емоційним резонансом. У дослідженні використано методи когнітивної лінгвістики, компонентного аналізу, когнітивної семантики та конструктивної граматики, що дозволили розглянути синтаксичні структури як кодування суб'єктивних позицій, культурних рамок та емоційних інтенсивностей. Аналіз проводився на прикладі збірки віршів Керол Енн Даффі «The World's Wife». Отримані результати дослідження демонструють, що поетичний синтаксис виходить далеко за межі простої стилістичної прикраси. Він є потужним когнітивним інструментом, який активно формує та відображає мислення, емоції та ідентичність ліричного героя. Синтаксичні рішення, які обирає автор, не є випадковими, а глибоко вкорінені в когнітивних процесах і слугують для передачі складних психологічних станів, внутрішніх конфліктів та соціокультурних моделей. Зокрема, виявлено, що такі синтаксичні прийоми, як анжамбеман (перенесення частини речення на наступний рядок), паратаксис (сурядне поєднання речень без чіткого підпорядкування), фрагментовані речення та використання ідіом, є значущими показниками внутрішнього світу ліричного героя. Анжамбеман може створювати відчуття напруження або плинності думки, паратаксис – передавати розрізненість сприйняття або емоційну інтенсивність, а фрагментовані речення – відображати перерваність мислення, сумніви чи внутрішню боротьбу. Використання ідіом, своєю чергою, може вказувати на приналежність до певної соціокультурної групи або відображати усталені способи мислення та сприйняття світу. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у розробці гнучкої, але водночас суворої методології, яка може бути застосована до аналізу поетичних текстів з урахуванням їх цілісності та дозволяє краще зрозуміти взаємозв'язок між мовою, думкою та емоціями

Ключові слова: когнітивна поетика; поетичний синтаксис; компонентний аналіз; когнітивна семантика; конструктивна граMATика

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