

## Constituency and Dependency Grammars

Modern advances of formal grammars have devised two elementary types of formal linguistic analysis. One was based on Chomsky's **phrase-structure grammars** and their close predecessor, the **immediate constituent** analysis proposed by Rulon Wells<sup>3</sup>. Both approaches treated linguistic structures as linear sequences of words made up from the vocabulary of a natural language and put forward useful methods of their hierarchical segmentation. Their chief weakness was seen in low sensitivity to the mutual subordination of constituents. This drawback was partly removed by L. Tesnière's project of [[dependency grammar | dependency grammars]]<sup>4</sup>. His verb-centred system focused on semantic actants and syntactic pairs relating heads and dependents. Their mutual advantages are elucidated by the comparison<sup>5</sup> of two ways of analysing the sentence *We are trying to understand the difference* given below.

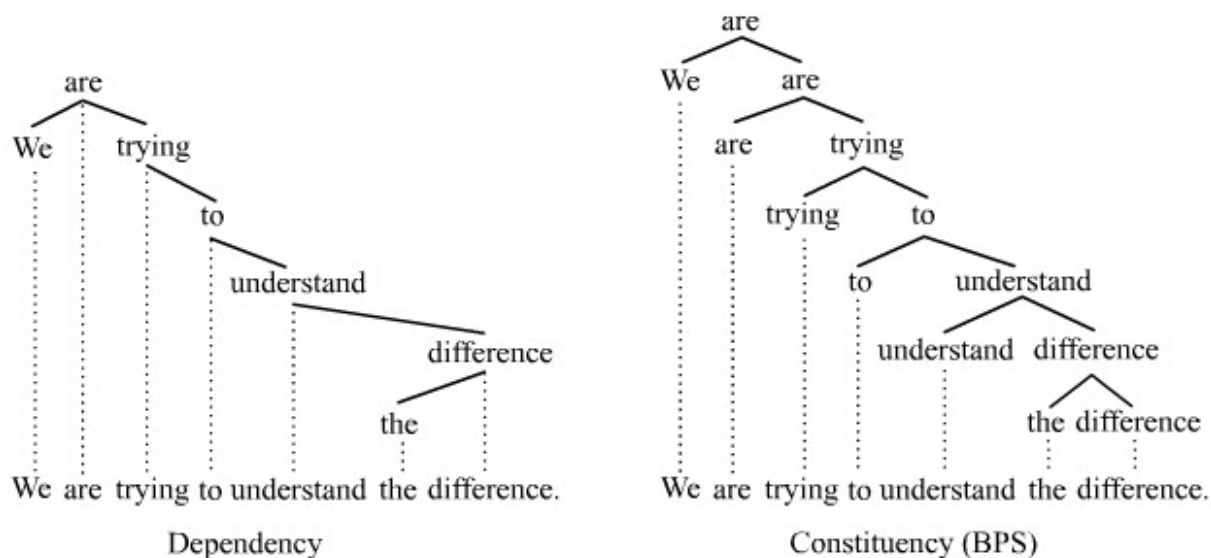


Table 1. *Dependency and constituency grammars*

The chief asset of grammatical trees is that they give a vivid illustrative representation of syntactic structures for common laic observers but this is debased by difficulties, which it brings about in automatic word processing. Hence, a convenient remedy is provided by parenthetical and fractional grammars.

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<sup>3</sup> Rulon S. Wells: Immediate Constituents. *Language*, 23, 1947: 81–117.

<sup>4</sup> L. Tesnière: *Éléments de syntaxe structurale*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1959.

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency\\_grammar#Dependency\\_vs.\\_constituency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_grammar#Dependency_vs._constituency).