

4.6 The H.264 Syntax

H.264 provides a clearly defined format or **syntax** for representing compressed video and related information. Figure 4.19 shows an overview of the structure of the H.264 syntax.

At the top level, an H.264 **sequence** consists of a series of ‘packets’ or Network Adaptation Layer Units, NAL Units or NALUs. These can include **parameter sets** containing key parameters that are used by the decoder to correctly decode the video data and **slices**, which are coded video frames or parts of video frames.

At the next level, a **slice** represents all or part of a coded video frame and consists of a number of coded **macroblocks**, each containing compressed data corresponding to a 16×16 block of displayed pixels in a video frame. At the lowest level of Figure 4.19, a macroblock contains type information describing the particular choice of methods used to code the macroblock,

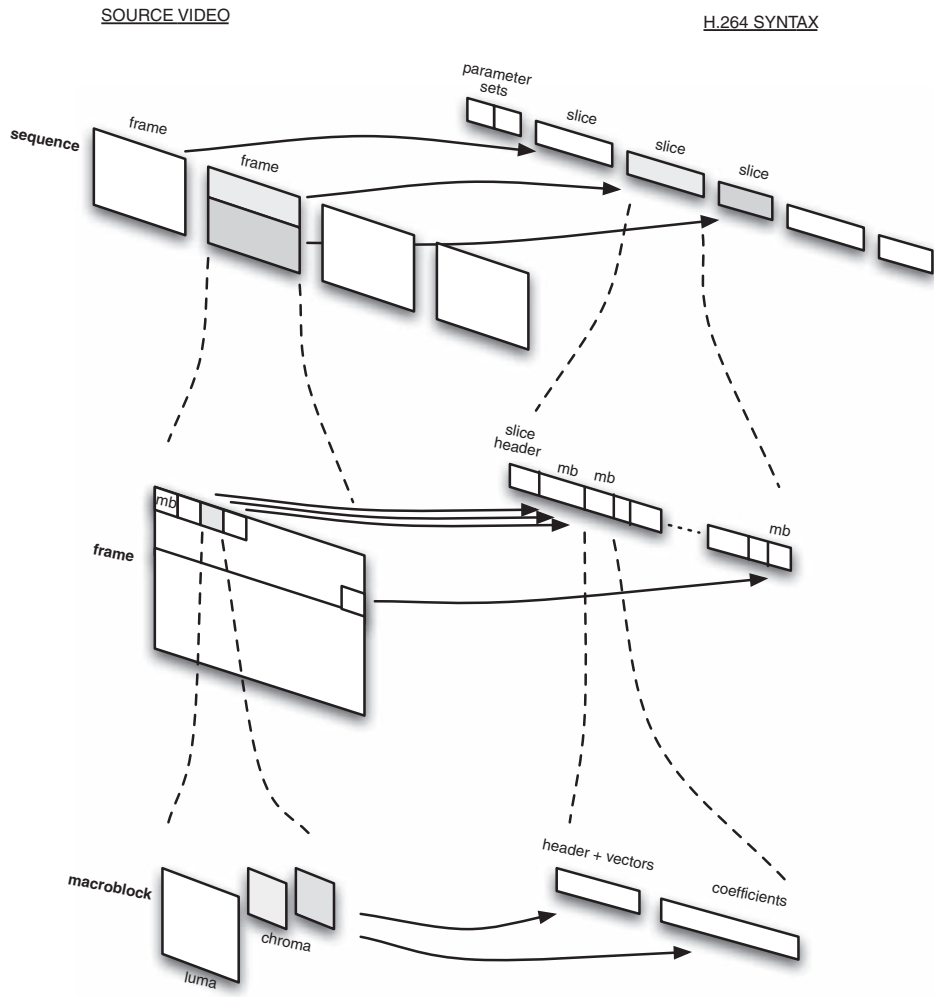


Figure 4.19 H.264 syntax: overview