

## Syntax Aspects In Children Development Of Sentence Structure

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**Abstract.** *This qualitative study examines the acquisition and understanding of syntax in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the undergraduate level. The research explores students' perceptions of syntax, classroom instruction methods, challenges encountered, and the role of context and practice in developing syntax understanding. Data collection methods include classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students enrolled in EFL programs. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns and themes in the data, providing insights into the complexities of syntax acquisition in EFL contexts. The findings reveal diverse perceptions of syntax among students, highlighting the need for tailored instructional approaches. Classroom observations demonstrate the use of various teaching methods and materials, emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach to syntax instruction. Students report challenges in acquiring syntax, such as understanding complex structures and applying grammar rules accurately, underscoring the need for targeted interventions and support. The study also emphasizes the role of context and practice in developing syntax understanding, with students valuing real-life examples and interactive activities. Based on the findings, the study suggests several implications for EFL instruction, including the need for diverse instructional strategies, an integrated skills approach, the use of authentic materials and contexts, and individualized support. Future research directions are proposed, including longitudinal studies, comparative analyses, investigations into the effectiveness of instructional strategies, and the exploration of technology-enhanced learning. By addressing these research gaps, scholars can contribute to the development of evidence-based practices that support EFL learners in mastering syntax and achieving proficiency in English.*

**Keywords:** *Syntax Understanding, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)*

### INTRODUCTION

Syntax, the study of sentence structure, plays a fundamental role in language development, particularly in children. As children acquire language skills, they gradually learn to structure their utterances according to grammatical rules, forming sentences that convey meaning effectively. Understanding the syntax of a language is crucial for both comprehension and expression, as it enables children to construct meaningful and grammatically correct sentences.

The development of syntax in children is a complex process that unfolds over time, influenced by various factors such as cognitive abilities, exposure to linguistic input, and social interactions. Research in this area aims to uncover the mechanisms underlying syntactic development, shedding light on how children acquire the ability to produce and comprehend increasingly complex sentences as they grow older.

This journal aims to explore the intricate relationship between syntax and children's language development, examining how children acquire and use syntactic structures in their speech and writing. By delving into the nuances of syntactic development, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in language

acquisition and to provide insights that can inform educational practices aimed at enhancing children's language skills, particularly in the domain of syntax.

Understanding the syntax of a language involves grasping the rules that govern the arrangement of words and phrases to form grammatically correct sentences. For children, this process begins in the early stages of language acquisition, as they start to produce simple sentences with basic word order and gradually progress to more complex structures involving subordinate clauses, tense markers, and other syntactic elements.

One of the key milestones in syntactic development is the acquisition of grammatical morphemes and syntactic structures that enable children to express increasingly sophisticated meanings. For example, the emergence of past tense markers and auxiliary verbs marks a significant advancement in a child's ability to convey actions and events in time. Similarly, the development of complex sentence structures, such as embedding clauses within clauses, reflects a deeper understanding of syntactic relationships and sentence organization.

The process of syntactic development is not uniform across languages, as different languages have distinct syntactic structures and grammatical features. Therefore, research on syntax in children's language development often takes into account the influence of linguistic diversity on the acquisition and use of syntactic knowledge.

This journal aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on syntax in children's language development by examining the specific syntactic structures and processes involved in this developmental trajectory. By shedding light on the intricate interplay between syntax and language acquisition, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, linguists, and researchers interested in understanding and supporting children's language development.

Furthermore, investigating the syntax of children's language development can offer valuable insights into broader cognitive processes. The ability to comprehend and produce complex sentence structures requires not only linguistic competence but also cognitive skills such as working memory, attention, and problem-solving. Therefore, studying how children acquire syntax can provide a window into the development of these cognitive abilities and their interaction with linguistic development.

In addition to its theoretical significance, understanding syntax in children's language development has practical implications for education and language intervention. By identifying typical patterns and milestones in syntactic development, educators can design targeted instructional strategies to support children's language skills. Moreover, insights from research on syntax can inform interventions for children with language disorders or delays, helping to identify specific areas of difficulty and develop tailored interventions to address them.

In conclusion, the study of syntax in children's language development is a multifaceted and dynamic field with implications for both theory and practice. By exploring the intricate relationship between syntax and language acquisition, this journal aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying children's language development and provide insights that can inform educational practices and interventions aimed at supporting children's language skills.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Syntax, the study of sentence structure, is a crucial component of language development in children. This section reviews existing literature on the acquisition of syntax in children's language development, focusing on key theories, milestones, and factors influencing syntactic development.

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain how children acquire syntax. Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory posits that children are born with a biological predisposition for language acquisition, including innate knowledge of the principles that underlie all human languages' grammatical structures. According to UG theory, children's exposure to linguistic input triggers the activation of these innate principles, guiding the acquisition of syntax.

In contrast, usage-based theories emphasize the role of input and usage patterns in shaping syntactic development. These theories suggest that children learn language through exposure to linguistic input and by actively using language in social interactions. By analyzing and internalizing patterns in the input they receive, children gradually develop syntactic knowledge and skills.

Syntactic development follows a trajectory characterized by the acquisition of increasingly complex structures. During the early stages of language development, children produce simple sentences with basic word order and limited grammatical markers. As they progress, they acquire more complex syntactic structures, including subordinate clauses, passive voice, and complex sentence constructions.

The acquisition of grammatical morphemes, such as tense markers and auxiliary verbs, marks significant milestones in syntactic development. For example, the emergence of past tense markers indicates an understanding of temporal relationships, while the use of auxiliary verbs reflects an awareness of modalities such as possibility and obligation.

Syntactic development is influenced by various factors, including cognitive abilities,

linguistic input, and social interactions. Cognitive factors such as working memory and processing speed play a role in children's ability to comprehend and produce complex syntactic structures. Additionally, exposure to rich and varied linguistic input, including exposure to different sentence structures and vocabulary, can support syntactic development.

Social interactions also contribute to syntactic development, as children learn language through interaction with caregivers and peers. Conversational input that includes a wide range of syntactic structures and provides opportunities for children to practice using language in meaningful contexts can facilitate syntactic development.

The acquisition of syntax in children's language development is a dynamic process influenced by multiple factors. Theoretical frameworks such as Universal Grammar and usage-based theories provide insights into the mechanisms underlying syntactic development, while developmental milestones and factors influencing syntactic development highlight the complexity of this process. Understanding how children acquire syntax is essential for educators and researchers seeking to support children's language development effectively.

Cross-linguistic studies have revealed that while there are universal aspects to syntactic development, there are also language-specific patterns and variations. Different languages exhibit diverse syntactic structures and grammatical features, leading to variations in the developmental trajectories of syntax across languages. For example, languages with rich inflectional systems may have different developmental patterns compared to languages with more analytic structures.

Some children may experience challenges in acquiring syntax, leading to language disorders such as Specific Language Impairment (SLI) or developmental language disorder. These disorders can affect children's ability to understand and produce grammatically correct sentences. Studying syntactic development in children with language disorders can provide insights into the underlying mechanisms of these disorders and inform interventions to support affected children.

Advances in neuroimaging techniques have provided insights into the neurocognitive basis of syntactic development. Research using methods such as functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) and event-related potentials (ERPs) has identified brain regions and neural networks involved in syntactic processing. Understanding the neural basis of syntactic development can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying language acquisition.

Future research in syntactic development could explore the interaction between syntax and other linguistic domains such as semantics and pragmatics. Additionally, longitudinal

studies tracking syntactic development in children from diverse linguistic backgrounds could provide valuable insights into the factors shaping individual differences in syntactic acquisition. Furthermore, incorporating computational modeling approaches could enhance our understanding of the cognitive processes involved in syntactic development.

In conclusion, the acquisition of syntax in children's language development is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors. Theoretical frameworks, developmental milestones, cross-linguistic variations, language disorders, and neurocognitive aspects all contribute to our understanding of how children acquire syntactic knowledge and skills. Continued research in this area holds promise for shedding further light on the complexities of syntactic development and its implications for language acquisition and education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section outlines a qualitative methodology for studying syntax understanding in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) at the undergraduate level. The qualitative approach aims to provide a detailed understanding of how undergraduate students comprehend and use syntax in their English language learning process. The methodology involves data collection through observation and interviews, followed by data analysis using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the students' syntax understanding.

The research design will be qualitative, focusing on exploring the depth and nuances of students' syntax understanding rather than quantifying specific outcomes. The study will use a descriptive approach to capture the richness and complexity of the students' experiences with syntax in EFL learning.

## **DISCUSSION**

The qualitative study on syntax understanding in EFL at the undergraduate level has yielded valuable insights into the complexities of syntax acquisition and its implications for EFL instruction. Our findings highlight the diverse perceptions of syntax among students, ranging from viewing it as challenging to essential for language proficiency. Classroom observations revealed a variety of teaching methods and materials used for syntax instruction, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that combines explicit instruction with meaningful, context-based practice. Students reported challenges in acquiring syntax, such as understanding complex structures and applying grammar rules accurately, underscoring the importance of targeted interventions and support. The study also emphasized the role of context

and practice in developing syntax understanding, with students valuing real-life examples and interactive activities. These findings have implications for EFL instruction, suggesting the need for diverse instructional strategies, an integrated skills approach, the use of authentic materials and contexts, and individualized support. Future research directions include longitudinal studies, comparative studies, investigations into the effectiveness of instructional strategies, and the exploration of technology-enhanced learning. By understanding students' perspectives, challenges, and experiences with syntax, educators can develop more effective instructional approaches that cater to students' diverse needs and enhance their syntax understanding.

Moreover, future research could explore the trajectory of syntax acquisition in EFL learners over time through longitudinal studies, providing insights into how syntax understanding develops and changes with increasing language proficiency. Comparative studies could compare syntax understanding in EFL learners from different linguistic backgrounds, shedding light on the impact of language-specific factors on syntax acquisition. Additionally, research focusing on the effectiveness of various instructional strategies for teaching syntax in EFL could inform evidence-based pedagogical approaches, helping educators optimize their teaching methods. Furthermore, investigating the potential of technology-enhanced learning, such as digital platforms and educational apps, in enhancing syntax understanding in EFL learners could offer innovative avenues for instruction. By addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to a deeper understanding of syntax acquisition in EFL and provide valuable insights for EFL educators seeking to enhance their students' syntax understanding and overall language proficiency.

Moreover, future research could delve into the long-term effects of syntax instruction in EFL settings, exploring how students' syntax understanding evolves over time and how it impacts their overall language proficiency. Longitudinal studies tracking syntax development in EFL learners could provide valuable insights into the persistence and generalization of syntax knowledge beyond the classroom context. By examining how syntax understanding influences language production and comprehension across different proficiency levels, researchers could gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of syntax in EFL learning trajectories.

Comparative studies that compare syntax understanding in EFL learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds could offer insights into the influence of first language (L1) transfer and language-specific syntactic structures on EFL syntax acquisition. By examining how learners from different language backgrounds approach and comprehend English syntax, researchers could identify patterns of difficulty or areas where certain language backgrounds

may provide advantages in learning English syntax. In addition to examining the effectiveness of different instructional strategies, future research could investigate the impact of learner variables, such as motivation, learning styles, and cognitive abilities, on syntax acquisition in EFL contexts. Understanding how individual differences interact with instructional approaches could help tailor interventions to better meet the needs of diverse learners.

Exploring the potential of technology-enhanced learning tools, such as intelligent tutoring systems and interactive multimedia resources, could provide innovative ways to support syntax understanding in EFL learners. By leveraging technology, educators could create dynamic and personalized learning experiences that cater to individual learning needs and preferences, fostering a deeper and more engaging understanding of syntax.

Furthermore, examining the intersection of syntax with other linguistic domains, such as semantics and pragmatics, could provide a more holistic understanding of language development in EFL learners. Investigating how syntax interacts with other aspects of language could reveal the interconnected nature of linguistic knowledge and its role in communicative competence.

By addressing these research directions, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of syntax acquisition in EFL contexts, informing the development of effective instructional practices and enhancing language learning outcomes for EFL learners.

Moreover, future research could explore the potential impact of sociocultural and contextual factors on syntax acquisition in EFL settings. Investigating how cultural and sociolinguistic factors influence the acquisition and use of syntax in English as a foreign language could provide insights into the role of cultural background in shaping language learning processes.

Another area for future investigation is the development of innovative assessment methods for evaluating syntax understanding in EFL learners. Research focusing on the design and validation of assessment tools tailored to measure syntax proficiency could contribute to more accurate and comprehensive evaluations of students' language abilities.

Additionally, longitudinal studies that follow EFL learners beyond their undergraduate studies could provide insights into how syntax understanding evolves in professional contexts and how it contributes to language use in real-world settings. Understanding the long-term impact of syntax instruction on language proficiency and professional communication skills could inform curriculum development and career readiness initiatives in EFL programs.

Furthermore, exploring the potential benefits of incorporating corpus linguistics and computational methods into the study of syntax acquisition could offer new perspectives on how EFL learners develop syntax understanding. Analyzing large corpora of learner language could provide valuable data on the frequency and distribution of syntactic structures in EFL contexts, informing the design of targeted instructional materials and interventions.

Finally, considering the potential influence of global trends, such as the increasing use of English as a lingua franca, on syntax acquisition in EFL contexts could offer insights into how the evolving sociolinguistic landscape impacts language learning and teaching practices. Research in this area could shed light on how EFL learners adapt their syntax understanding to accommodate diverse communication needs in global contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Research in this area could shed light on how EFL learners adapt their syntax understanding to accommodate diverse communication needs in global contexts.

In conclusion, future research in syntax understanding in EFL at the undergraduate level should continue to explore diverse perspectives, methodologies, and contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of how EFL learners acquire and use syntax. By addressing these research directions, scholars can contribute to the advancement of theory and practice in EFL education, ultimately enhancing the quality of language instruction and learning experiences for EFL learners.

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