



THE ROLE OF SYNTAX IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract

Language is one of the complicated and dynamic of communication that involves the usage of symbols, sounds or gestures to convey the meaning. However, what is language acquisition actually, and what are it's differences with language learning? The terms "language acquisition" and "language learning" may seem interchangeable, but they are completely different. Fundamentally, language learning involves a conscious, intentional effort to acquire linguistic knowledge through active study and formal teaching methods. It follows a structured approach, often observed in classroom settings, where individuals actively delve into understanding grammar rules, expanding vocabulary and grasping linguistic nuances. In contrast, language acquisition is a term, the meaning have never been invariable, for vocabularies and phrases that placed in a specific order in any language. If we change the position of even one word, it's possible to change the meaning of the entire sentence. All languages own their specific rules to utilise words in correct order and accomplished scientists of the language can take an action these rules to make sentences sound more poignant and poetic. When it comes to article, it discusses the language acquisition, syntax, the several researches which applied by several scientists, the differences of Syntax between different languages. To cut it short, this article gives the details about the role of Syntax in Language acquisition.

Key words: syntax, language acquisition, the prelinguistic stage, the holophrastic stage, the two-word stage, the telegraphic stage, the early multi-word stage, the mature stage, syntactic structures, word order, grammatical functions.

Introduction

Language acquisition is the complex process by which individuals boost the ability to apprehend, understand, and use language for effective and valuable communication. If we look into the topic language acquisition more, it is a subconscious as well as natural process that children acquire the knowledge of their first language through both interaction and education to avoid ignorance of their





language. This innate ability to obtain language promptly occurs undoubtedly through experiencing meaningful and completely real ambiance around them, like communication with peers or teachers and more. What's more, language acquisition refers to the process by which humans learn and develop the ability to understand, produce and use language. It is a key aspect of human development and occurs in two main contexts : first language acquisition (L1) and language acquisition (L2). Besides this, language acquisition is indissolubly linked with syntax. Due to the fact that, syntax is basically procedure of using words in a specific order, like a bit language acquisition.

Methods

Language acquisition is a fascinating process that plays a fundamental role in human communication. This journey begins in infancy, starting with sounds like coos and babbles, gradually transforming into spoken words, and ultimately leading to full linguistic proficiency. However, this process isn't always straightforward or enchanting for everyone. Many individuals face challenges in developing language skills and achieving fluency, even into adulthood. In this theme we can approach the seven stages of Language acquisition in children.

- **The prelinguistic stage(0 to 12 months)-** this is the initial phase of the language acquisition process. The journey of language acquisition begins with what might seem like random sounds and noises made by newborns. This stage often characterized by cooing and babbling, is the foundation upon which infants start to develop their communication skills. Although these early sounds may appear meaningless, they are actually the first attempts of the babies to interact and express themselves.
- **The holophrastic stage(12 to 18 months)-** the next significant stage is occurs, when children begin to use single words to convey their needs and thoughts. These words, such as “mama”, “dada”, or “milk” are often used to express a whole sentence or idea. While children might only utter one word at a time, they are actively using this limited vocabulary to communicate effectively.
- **The telegraphis stage(24 to 30months)-** at this age, children start to communicate in very short sentences, similar to telegrams. They might leave out words like verbs, prepositions or articles, but they still get their messages across. This is an important step in learning to speak full sentences.





- **The early multi-word stage(30+months)-** in this step, children's vocabulary grows, and they start using more words in their sentences. Their grammar improves and they start using verbs, plurals and other sentence structures correctly. It is like upgrading from a telegram from to a short story.
- **The later multi-word stage (3 to 4 years)-** in later, children continue to expand their vocabulary and grammar skills. They start to build longer and more complex sentences, using more advanced grammatical structures, like prepositions and conjunctions. Their speech also becomes more fluent and expressive.
- **The mature stage (5+years)-** Eventually, they have usually mastered the basics of language. Their grammar is improving. They know more words, and they feel more comfortable talking. They should be able to talk clearly and straightforwardly to others, with only a few minor mistakes.

Result and Discussion

Syntax refers to the combination words and phrases that used in a specific order. If the position of even one word is changed, the meaning of the entire sentence changes in the same. When it comes to the topic, it is one of the most advanced topic which can make it difficult to understand. Syntax is crucial to understanding constituency, the term for multiple words acting as a single unit. In long and complex sentences, constituency is necessary to determine the hierarchy within the sentence, particularly with sentence diagramming. Syntax covers topics like word order and grammar rules, such as subject-verb agreement.

There are seven types of syntatic patterns to make proper sentences and clauses.

1. Subject+Verb

This is the standard syntatic pattern, including the minimum requirements of just a subject and verb. The Verb always comes after subject in every situation, except inversions.

Example: I worked a lot yesterday, due to today's meeting with another company.

2. Subject+ verb + direct object





If the verb is transitive and use a direct speech. The direct object always goes after the verb.

Example: Jane placed the book into the shelf.

3. Subject+ verb +subject complement

Subject complement comes after verb and subject complement always use linking verbs, like seem or be.

Example: The girl, who stands next to me, seems quite alarmed.

4. Subject+ verb+ adverbial compliment

Adverbial compliments come after the verb (if there is no object).

Example: The hikers rested peacefully under the shade of the ancient oak tree after long journey.

5. Subject+verb + indirect object+ direct object

In some cases, both direct object and indirect object are utilised in a sentence. At that moment, indirect object must follow the main verb, direct object comes after the indirect object.

Example: She gave her friend a thoughtful gift.

6. Subject +verb+ direct object+ preposition + indirect object

If there is a *preposition* in a sentence, we are not able to follow the rule above(5th rule). The two types of objects must change their places. It means that direct object follows verb, and the indirect object must come after the preposition.

Example: She gave a thoughtful gift to her friend.

7. Subject + verb +direct object + adverbial compliment

Example: She placed the book cautiously on the wooden table.

Understanding syntax in language acquisition necessitates a multifaceted methodological approach. Longitudinal studies are frequently used to track the developmental milestones of syntax in children Over time (Ingram, 1989). These are often complemented by cross-sectional studies that provide a Snapshot of syntactic skills across different age groups (Johnson, 2010). Experimental methods, including elicited production and comprehension tasks, have also gained prominence. These allow researchers to isolate specific syntactic structures for more focused study (Crain





& Thornton, 1998). When viewed through a cross-linguistic lens, these methodologies can offer compelling insights into the universality or variability of syntactic rules across languages, thereby enriching the discourse on language acquisition strategies tailored for diverse linguistic environments (Sachs, Bard, & Johnson, 1981). The field of syntax acquisition in multilingual contexts is replete with intriguing complexities. There are several lines of empirical studies that underscore both the benefits .

Benefits:

Metalinguistic Awareness: Studies have consistently shown that multilingual individuals have a heightened metalinguistic awareness, which refers to the ability to think about language analytically (Bialystok, 2001). This is particularly useful when learning complex syntactic structures across languages.

Cognitive Advantages: Beyond language itself, the cognitive benefits of multilingualism extend to other domains, including enhanced working memory and greater adaptability in problem-solving scenarios (Adesope et al., 2010).

Conclusion

The role of syntax in language acquisition is foundational to understanding how individuals develop linguistic competence. Syntax provides the structural framework that governs the organization of words into meaningful sentences, enabling communication and cognitive development. Research highlights the interplay between innate linguistic abilities and environmental input, with theories like Universal Grammar emphasizing the innate predisposition for syntactic understanding. Simultaneously, exposure to language-rich environments and interactive communication plays a crucial role in shaping and refining syntactic skills. Children acquire syntax incrementally, beginning with simple constructions and advancing to more complex sentence structures as their cognitive and linguistic capacities expand. Errors made during this process reflect developmental stages and serve as indicators of underlying syntactic knowledge. By studying syntax acquisition, linguists and educators can better support language development in typical and atypical contexts. Ultimately, syntax bridges the gap between thought and expression, underscoring its essential role in the broader tapestry of language acquisition.

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