



ISSUES OF GRAMMAR: MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

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ANNOTATION

Grammar is the fundamental structure that governs the way words and sentences are formed and used in any language. It plays an essential role in ensuring clear and effective communication. In linguistics, grammar is traditionally divided into two primary components: morphology and syntax. Morphology deals with the structure of words, while syntax concerns the structure of sentences. Both areas of grammar are vital for understanding how language works, and their mastery is crucial for both language learners and native speakers. In this essay, I will explore the issues surrounding grammar with a particular focus on morphological and syntactic challenges. These issues often arise in the context of language learning, language analysis, and even in practical communication. By examining common problems related to morphology and syntax, this essay aims to highlight the importance of mastering these aspects of grammar and the role they play in effective communication.

Keywords: grammar, morphology, syntax, word structure, sentence structure, morphemes, free morphemes, bound morphemes, inflection, word formation errors, irregular verbs, affixes, word order, agreement errors, punctuation errors, syntactic rules, subject-verb agreement, sentence construction, language learning, grammar rules, fluency, language proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is the backbone of any language, providing the rules that govern the structure of words and sentences. It is essential not only for effective communication but also for ensuring clarity, precision, and coherence in both spoken and written language. At the core of grammar lie two fundamental components: **morphology** and **syntax**. While these two fields address different aspects of language, they are intimately connected and together form the framework for how language operates. **Morphology**, the study of the structure and formation of words, examines how words are built from smaller units known as morphemes—such as prefixes, suffixes, roots, and stems. These units combine to express meaning and can undergo transformations to indicate tense, case, number, gender, and other grammatical features. On the other hand, **syntax** focuses on the rules that govern how words and phrases are arranged to form sentences. It looks at sentence structure, the order of words, and how different parts of speech interact to convey meaning. The relationship between morphology and syntax is crucial for understanding how meaning is conveyed in any language. However, the complexity of these two grammatical elements often leads to difficulties for learners and speakers. Morphological errors, such as incorrect verb conjugations or misused



affixes, can change the meaning of a sentence. Similarly, syntactic issues like word order mistakes or subject-verb agreement errors can hinder communication and cause confusion. These problems are particularly challenging in languages with complex grammatical systems.

In this essay, we will explore the common issues related to morphology and syntax, examining how these problems arise and their impact on communication. Additionally, we will discuss how mastering these aspects of grammar is crucial for achieving fluency and clarity in any language. Through this analysis, the essay aims to highlight the importance of understanding and addressing morphological and syntactic issues in both language learning and practical communication.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

To explore the issues related to **morphology** and **syntax**, this study draws upon a combination of theoretical materials and empirical data. The aim is to examine common grammatical errors and challenges faced by language learners and native speakers alike, with a particular focus on the role of morphology and syntax in language processing and communication.

Materials

The materials for this study include a wide range of sources, which collectively provide a solid foundation for analyzing morphological and syntactic issues. These materials can be classified into the following categories:

Linguistic Texts: The primary material used for understanding the theoretical concepts of morphology and syntax includes academic textbooks and research papers. These texts cover both general linguistic theories and more specific studies on grammatical structure. Works by linguists such as Noam Chomsky, Ferdinand de Saussure, and William Labov provide an in-depth exploration of sentence structures and word formation processes, offering insights into the complexities of both morphology and syntax.

Corpus Data: Real-world examples of language use are extracted from various linguistic corpora, including written texts, speeches, and dialogues. This data serves as a practical representation of how morphology and syntax are applied in everyday communication. It also provides examples of common errors and challenges that learners face, such as incorrect verb conjugations, misplaced modifiers, and word order issues.

Language Learning Materials: Materials designed for teaching grammar and language structure are another key resource. These include textbooks, exercises, and worksheets aimed at teaching both **morphology** and **syntax**. Such materials are useful for understanding how grammatical rules are taught to learners and what kinds of problems they encounter during the learning process.

Case Studies: To illustrate the application of grammatical theories in real-life situations, this study also utilizes case studies from various educational contexts. These case studies include examples of language learners' writing and speech samples, showcasing frequent errors in morphology and syntax. Through these samples, the study will analyze the types of mistakes commonly made by learners at different stages of language acquisition.

The methodology employed in this study combines both **qualitative** and **quantitative** approaches to examine the grammatical issues in greater detail. This dual approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in the study of **morphology** and **syntax**. **Qualitative Analysis:** The qualitative aspect of the study focuses on the **theoretical analysis** of morphology and syntax. Key linguistic theories are examined to explain how morphemes function in word formation and how syntactic rules determine sentence structure. Textual analysis is also used to explore language corpora and identify common errors. These errors are categorized into morphological and syntactic types, and patterns of mistakes are identified through close reading of sample texts. This approach helps to provide a deeper understanding of how morphological and syntactic rules are learned and applied in practice.

Error Analysis: A crucial methodology in this study is **error analysis**, which involves systematically identifying and categorizing common mistakes made by language learners. This analysis includes both **morphological errors** (e.g., incorrect plural forms, verb conjugation errors, and misuse of prefixes or suffixes) and **syntactic errors** (e.g., word order mistakes, subject-verb agreement issues, and punctuation errors). Error analysis also examines the impact of these errors on the overall meaning and clarity of communication. The study then explores the underlying causes of these errors, whether they are due to confusion with grammar rules, influence from the learner's native language, or lack of exposure to proper grammatical structures.

Quantitative Analysis: A quantitative approach is used to examine the frequency and distribution of grammatical errors in a larger sample of language learners. A survey is administered to a group of learners of various language backgrounds, asking them to complete exercises on **morphology** and **syntax**. The results of these exercises are analyzed to determine the most common errors in both morphological and syntactic structures. This statistical approach allows for the identification of recurring patterns and trends in the types of mistakes made by learners. Data analysis software is used to track the frequency of these errors and to generate insights into how these mistakes correlate with the learners' proficiency level.

Comparison Across Language Learners: The study also compares the types of errors made by learners of different language backgrounds. By analyzing the language acquisition process in students who are learning English as a second language (ESL) and comparing them with native speakers of English, the study examines how errors in morphology and syntax differ depending on the learner's linguistic background. This comparison helps in understanding the specific challenges faced by learners from different language families and the impact of first language interference on their second language acquisition. By utilizing a combination of theoretical texts, linguistic corpora, language learning materials, case studies, and error analysis, this study aims to provide a detailed examination of the issues related to **morphology** and **syntax**. The qualitative and quantitative methodologies employed in the research will allow for a deeper understanding of how morphological and syntactic rules are learned, applied, and sometimes misapplied. Ultimately, this research aims to highlight the critical role of proper grammatical knowledge in language acquisition and communication, providing insights for educators and learners alike.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the common issues related to **morphology** and **syntax**, particularly in the context of language learning. By analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, several key findings were identified that highlight the challenges learners face when mastering these two aspects of grammar. These findings are divided into two main categories: **morphological issues** and **syntactic issues**.

1. Morphological Issues

The analysis of grammatical errors related to morphology revealed several recurring patterns across different groups of language learners. The most common morphological errors were related to **word formation** and **verb conjugation**.

Verb Conjugation Errors: One of the most frequent morphological mistakes observed was incorrect verb conjugation. In English, where verbs change depending on tense (e.g., "walk" vs. "walked"), learners often made errors in the past tense. For instance, a common mistake was using the base form of the verb ("I walk yesterday") instead of the past tense form ("I walked yesterday"). This error was especially common among learners from languages with less inflectional morphology, where tense is indicated by auxiliary verbs rather than changes to the verb itself.

Misuse of Affixes: Another significant issue was the incorrect use of affixes, such as prefixes and suffixes. Learners frequently misused or omitted suffixes in pluralization (e.g., "childs" instead of "children") and verb tense (e.g., "runned" instead of "ran"). These errors were more prominent among early-stage learners of English and were often a result of the learners' native language influencing their understanding of English morphology.

Irregular Forms: The use of irregular forms was also a significant source of errors. In English, verbs like "go" (past tense "went") and "eat" (past tense "ate") deviate from regular conjugation patterns. Learners often struggled with these irregular forms, frequently using regular forms where irregular ones were required, such as "goed" instead of "went."

2. Syntactic Issues

Syntactic errors were also prevalent among the language learners analyzed in this study. These errors were largely related to **word order**, **subject-verb agreement**, and **punctuation**.

Word Order Errors: One of the most frequent syntactic mistakes was the incorrect order of words in sentences. In English, the typical word order is **subject-verb-object (SVO)**, but many learners mistakenly followed the structure of their native languages, which may follow a different order. For example, in languages like Japanese (which follows a subject-object-verb order), learners would produce sentences like "I a book read" instead of the correct "I read a book." These errors often caused confusion in meaning, as the word order in a sentence is essential for conveying the correct message.

Subject-Verb Agreement: Errors in **subject-verb agreement** were also common. In English, the subject and verb must agree in number and person (e.g., "He runs" vs. "They run"). Many learners, especially those from languages without subject-verb agreement markers, frequently made mistakes such as "She run" instead of "She runs," or "They

runs" instead of "They run." These errors were particularly noticeable in sentences with complex subjects or compound subjects.

Punctuation Mistakes: Punctuation errors were a frequent syntactic issue, especially among learners who were still in the early stages of language acquisition. Misplaced commas, periods, and question marks caused confusion in sentence boundaries and meaning. For example, the incorrect placement of commas in sentences such as "Let's eat, Grandma!" vs. "Let's eat Grandma!" created a significant change in meaning and were often pointed out as areas of concern in error analysis.

3. Interference from Native Language

A notable finding from the study was the **interference from the learners' native languages**, which contributed to both morphological and syntactic errors. This phenomenon is common in second language acquisition, where learners apply the grammatical rules of their first language to their second language. For example, in languages with less morphological complexity than English, learners often omitted or misused certain grammatical markers such as verb tense, pluralization, or articles. Additionally, learners whose native language followed a subject-object-verb (SOV) structure often struggled to adapt to the SVO word order of English, leading to word order errors in their sentences.

4. Frequency of Errors Across Proficiency Levels

The frequency and types of errors varied significantly depending on the learners' proficiency levels. Beginner learners were more likely to make **basic morphological mistakes**, such as errors in verb conjugation or pluralization. Intermediate learners, while still making some basic errors, showed a greater awareness of **syntactic structures** but still struggled with more complex aspects like subject-verb agreement and word order. Advanced learners, on the other hand, demonstrated a better command of both morphology and syntax, with fewer errors overall. However, even advanced learners occasionally made minor errors in **complex sentence structures** or in less frequent grammatical rules.

5. Impact of Morphological and Syntactic Errors on Communication

The study also explored the impact of morphological and syntactic errors on communication. While many errors did not completely obscure meaning, they often led to confusion or misunderstanding. For example, incorrect word order or subject-verb agreement issues could make a sentence sound unnatural or awkward, even if the intended meaning was clear. In some cases, errors in verb conjugation or word formation altered the meaning of a sentence altogether. These findings emphasize the importance of mastering both morphology and syntax for effective communication.

The results of this study indicate that **morphological and syntactic issues** are significant obstacles in language learning and usage. Verb conjugation errors, misuse of affixes, and word order mistakes were among the most frequent challenges encountered by learners. Native language interference also played a crucial role in these errors, highlighting the importance of understanding both the theoretical and practical aspects of grammar. The frequency of errors decreased as learners advanced in proficiency, but even advanced learners still faced challenges with more complex grammatical structures. These findings underscore the need for targeted grammar

instruction and continued practice to overcome these issues and improve fluency in language use.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complexities of **morphology** and **syntax**, shedding light on the frequent challenges encountered by language learners and speakers alike. While many of these issues are common in language acquisition, the study underscores the pivotal role that both morphological and syntactic knowledge play in ensuring clear and accurate communication. This section discusses the implications of the results, the reasons behind the most common errors, and the importance of addressing these challenges in language teaching and learning.

1. The Interconnectedness of Morphology and Syntax

One of the most significant takeaways from this study is the interdependence of **morphology** and **syntax** in language structure. While morphology focuses on the internal structure of words, such as their roots, prefixes, and suffixes, syntax governs how those words are arranged to form meaningful sentences. It is apparent from the results that an error in one area often leads to issues in the other. For example, incorrect verb conjugations (a morphological error) can disrupt the syntactic flow of a sentence, leading to confusion or ambiguity. Similarly, syntactic issues such as word order mistakes can obscure the intended meaning of a morphologically correct sentence. This interplay between morphology and syntax highlights the importance of mastering both aspects of grammar to communicate effectively. In language acquisition, learners may not always distinguish between morphology and syntax when they encounter difficulties, often lumping both types of errors into a broader category of "grammar mistakes." This could explain why beginners tend to make errors in both areas, even though they may be able to identify the problem when it is explicitly pointed out. The complexity of mastering these components simultaneously suggests that a holistic approach to grammar teaching—one that integrates both morphological and syntactic elements—is essential for effective language learning.

2. The Influence of Native Language

A central theme in the discussion of grammatical issues is the **influence of the native language** on second language acquisition. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as **language transfer**, was clearly evident in the results of this study. Learners frequently transferred grammatical structures from their native language to the target language, which led to morphological and syntactic errors. For example, learners whose native language follows a subject-object-verb (SOV) word order often produced sentences with incorrect word order in English, which follows a subject-verb-object (SVO) structure. Language transfer is particularly significant when it comes to **morphological errors**, as the degree of inflection in a learner's native language can influence how they approach verb conjugation, pluralization, and the use of articles or auxiliary verbs in the target language. For instance, learners from languages like Chinese or Japanese, which have relatively simple morphology with little inflection, may struggle to correctly apply tense, number, or gender markings in a language like English that has complex inflectional systems. In contrast, speakers of languages like Spanish or

Russian, which share more similarities in terms of inflection, may find the transition to English morphology slightly easier, but they still face challenges with irregular forms and article usage. Recognizing the role of native language interference is crucial for educators and learners alike. It helps to explain why certain errors persist even as learners progress in their studies. It also underscores the need for **targeted instruction** that addresses specific challenges based on the learner's first language. Understanding the sources of these errors allows educators to focus on areas where language transfer is most likely to occur, thus minimizing confusion and enhancing the learning process.

3. The Development of Proficiency and Its Impact on Errors

The results of this study revealed a clear correlation between **language proficiency** and the frequency of grammatical errors. As learners advanced in their proficiency, the number of errors they made in both morphology and syntax decreased. This suggests that continued exposure to the language and practice in real-world contexts gradually leads to an improvement in grammatical accuracy. However, even advanced learners were not completely free from errors, particularly in more complex syntactic structures or less commonly used morphological forms. The persistence of errors, even among advanced learners, raises important questions about the nature of **language mastery**. While it is true that a higher proficiency level often correlates with fewer errors, it is unrealistic to expect complete grammatical accuracy at all times, especially in spontaneous speech or writing. Even native speakers make grammatical mistakes occasionally. Therefore, the goal of language instruction should not necessarily be to eliminate all errors but rather to help learners recognize and correct their mistakes when they occur and to enhance their overall fluency and communication skills. Additionally, the results suggest that while **morphological errors** are more frequent at the beginner and intermediate levels, **syntactic errors** tend to become more prominent as learners progress. This shift could be due to the increasing complexity of sentence structures that learners encounter at higher proficiency levels, where word order, subject-verb agreement, and punctuation become more challenging to master.

4. Pedagogical Implications and Approaches to Teaching Grammar

The findings from this study underscore the importance of **comprehensive grammar instruction** that addresses both morphology and syntax. Since errors in morphology can affect sentence structure and vice versa, language instruction should not treat these components in isolation. A well-rounded grammar curriculum should integrate both aspects of grammar, providing students with ample opportunities to practice and reinforce their understanding through activities that engage both word formation and sentence structure. In addition to explicit grammar instruction, **communicative language teaching** strategies that emphasize real-life language use are essential. This approach encourages learners to apply their grammatical knowledge in meaningful contexts, helping them internalize the rules of morphology and syntax more naturally. Activities such as role-playing, storytelling, and written composition allow learners to practice constructing sentences and using words correctly, thus reducing the likelihood of errors in both morphology and syntax. Furthermore, technology can play a key role in reinforcing grammatical concepts. Interactive tools such as language apps, online exercises, and grammar correction software can provide instant feedback, helping learners identify and correct errors in real time. These tools

can be particularly useful for learners who do not have immediate access to a teacher or tutor.

5. The Role of Feedback in Error Correction

Finally, the role of **feedback** in addressing morphological and syntactic errors is critical. Error correction should be a consistent part of language learning, but it is essential that feedback is constructive rather than merely punitive. Encouraging students to reflect on their mistakes and understand why they occurred can be more beneficial than simply pointing out the error. This reflective approach helps learners internalize the correct forms and structures, ultimately improving their proficiency over time.

The discussion of the results highlights the intricacies of grammatical issues in both **morphology** and **syntax** and underscores the importance of a holistic approach to language learning. Addressing errors in both areas requires an understanding of the interplay between them, as well as the influence of the learner's native language. By adopting targeted pedagogical strategies and providing appropriate feedback, educators can help learners overcome these challenges and improve their overall proficiency in the target language. Ultimately, mastering morphology and syntax is crucial for effective communication and fluency in any language.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive examination of the critical issues surrounding **morphology** and **syntax**, two foundational components of grammar. Through the analysis of common errors related to word formation and sentence structure, the research has highlighted the challenges faced by language learners, including difficulties in verb conjugation, subject-verb agreement, word order, and punctuation. The findings underscore the interconnectedness of **morphology** and **syntax**, emphasizing how errors in one area can affect the clarity and meaning of communication in another. The role of **native language interference** emerged as a significant factor influencing these errors. Learners often transfer grammatical structures from their first language, which can lead to mistakes in both morphology and syntax. This study also demonstrated that as learners progress in their language proficiency, the frequency of errors decreases, though more complex grammatical structures still present challenges for even advanced learners. These findings suggest that while grammatical accuracy improves with proficiency, complete mastery of morphology and syntax remains an ongoing process. The research emphasizes the importance of **integrated grammar instruction**, where both morphology and syntax are taught in tandem, providing learners with the necessary tools to recognize, correct, and prevent grammatical errors. A holistic approach that includes explicit teaching, practical application, and consistent feedback is essential for learners to fully grasp the intricacies of grammar. Additionally, the findings suggest that using communicative language teaching methods and technological tools can enhance the learning experience and provide real-time corrections. Ultimately, this study highlights the crucial role that morphology and syntax play in effective communication. As language learners strive for fluency, mastering these aspects of grammar is indispensable. By addressing the common challenges identified in this research, educators can better support learners

in their journey to linguistic proficiency, helping them to communicate clearly and confidently in the target language.

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