

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains theories that are the basis of this research. These theories include English syntax, grammar, structure, factors that influence learning English syntax based on Interlanguage Theory Perspectives, and the last is about relevant research studies.

A. Syntax, Grammar, and Structure

In this study, syntax, grammar, and structure need to be known because these three things are the basis for identifying the barriers faced by junior high school students in learning English syntax. Syntax is the study that focuses on how words are arranged to form coherent phrases or sentences. Grammar is a broader set of rules covering various aspects of language, including morphology (the study of how to form words from the smallest units) and syntax itself. As Radford (2004) said grammar consists of morphology and syntax. And the last one is structure, according to Juliyansyah and Harun (2021), in simple terms, structure in this context, sentence structure can be interpreted as a word arrangement that has a meaning that can be understood by the reader. It can be interpreted that sentence structure is the arrangement of language elements in sentences that form certain patterns (for example: subject (S), predicate (P), object (O), adverb (K)).

From the definitions of syntax, grammar, and structure, it can be seen that the three aspects are interrelated. Syntax is a part of grammar that focuses on the rules for forming words into correct and meaningful phrases or sentences. Meanwhile, structure is the arrangement of elements in a sentence that form a pattern resulting from the use of grammar and syntax rules. For example, when making a sentence ‘She goes to school’ grammar regulates various aspects, including morphology (how to form words from the smallest unit), namely in forming the word goes (go+es) for the subject ‘She’, and regulating syntax, namely how words are arranged correctly according to the pattern of ‘subject + verb + object’ for the sentence ‘She goes to school’.

Table 2. 1 Example of Grammar's Aspect: Syntax and Morphology

Sentence	Grammar	
	Morphology	Syntax
She goes to school.	In the present tense, the verb 'go' becomes 'goes' (go+es) for the subject 'she'.	She goes to school . The sentence is arranged according to the pattern ' subject + verb + object '.

It can be seen from the sentence that the resulting structure is correct and meaningful because the rules of grammar and syntax applied are correct. Conversely, the resulting structure will be inappropriate if the grammar and syntax rules used are not appropriate. Therefore, to form a correct structure, it is important to understand the rules of syntax more deeply.

1. Definition and Importance of Syntax

Syntax is the study of the rules of how words and phrases are arranged into meaningful sentences. According to Chomsky (2002), syntax is the study of how to make sentences in a particular language using certain rules and procedures.

In English language learning, one of which is in junior high school, where students begin to learn to make simple English sentences, syntax is one aspect of language that is important to understand and learn, because syntax is the basis for making and understanding good and correct sentences. By understanding syntax, when writing, students can arrange words into sentences that can be understood because the sentences they make are correct and structured according to existing rules and procedures, and when students speak, what they say will be easily understood by people who listen to them. In addition, by understanding syntax, when reading, students will easily understand the meaning of what they read, because they understand the

sentence patterns they read, and when they listen to people who speak to them, they will easily understand what the person is saying. As said by Sabrina et al. (2024), students who understand syntax are better able to organize their thoughts more regularly in English and master proper sentence construction. As a result, their ability to communicate their thoughts in writing and conversation improves, and students will be able to understand increasingly difficult English texts, including scientific literature and reading sources.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that syntax is the study of how to arrange words into sentences. Syntax is important to learn because it allows students to construct good and correct sentences. Furthermore, students can organize their ideas or thoughts more orderly within the sentences they create. This allows the sentences they create to be easily understood by others. In understanding syntax rules, some important things to understand are syntactic categories and syntactic units.

2. Syntactic Categories

Syntactic categories, also known as parts of speech, include nouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and adjectives. Carnie (2011) said that groups of words that allow us to determine the guidelines and boundaries of sentence structure are known as syntactic categories or parts of speech, including nouns (N), verbs (V), adjectives (Adj), and adverbs (Adv).

1. Noun is a term used to describe a person, location, or object. Example: Susanti, Tasikmalaya, cat.
2. Verb is a category of word that describes an event, action, or condition. Examples: run, cut, play. Verbs are divided into two, namely main verbs and auxiliary verbs. Main verbs consist of action verbs (example: speak, study, read) and linking verbs, linking verbs are verbs that do not display action (example: am, is, are, was, taste, smell). Auxiliary verbs, for example, am, is, are, was, were, do, does, did.
3. Adjectives are terms that indicate quality, quantity, or extent. Examples: beautiful, soft, hard, good.

4. Adverbs are terms that express place, time, degree, amount, reason, contradiction, confirmation, denial, or method. Examples: here, yesterday, very, quickly.
5. Prepositions are connecting words that indicate time, place, direction of position, and so on. These words are placed before nouns. Examples: in, on, on, before, at the time, because, before.

Understanding the categories that have been explained, namely nouns (N), verbs (V), adjectives (Adj), and adverbs (Adv), in this study is very important, because these categories are the basis for forming phrase, clause, and sentence structures.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that syntactic categories are types of words that have specific functions in sentences. Therefore, it is very important to understand them, because by understanding these types of words, we can learn how to use them correctly in sentences.

3. Syntactic Unit

After understanding syntactic categories, understanding syntactic units is also important in this research. Syntactic units consist of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. These units are the basis for creating a sentence structure that complies with English syntax. As Lasmini (2021) said, syntactic units consist of elements that construct sentences, namely words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

1. Word refers to the smallest unit and the most basic syntactic unit. A word is a unit of language that has meaning. Words can stand alone or be combined with others to form phrases or sentences. Haspelmath (2023) says the term 'word' refers to a root or compound that may be enhanced by necessary affixes, if any, as well as by optional ones.
2. Phrase is a group of words (consisting of two or more words) that have meaning, but do not have a subject and verb. Phrases are divided into several types, namely noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, prepositional phrases, and adverbial phrases. Kim and Sells (2008, as cited

in Maulidyah et al., 2024) said noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, prepositional phrase, and adverbial phrase are the five categories of phrases that are projected from the lexical categories.

- a. Noun phrase is a group of words (consisting of two or more words) where the main word is a noun. According to Helmie et al. (2022), there are four main components in a noun phrase, namely: (1) The determiner is the component that establishes the noun phrase's reference within its language or context of use, for example a, an, the, this, that, etc. (2) Pre-modifiers are all components that come before the head that function to provide additional information, for example your, my, his, her, their, and its as possessive pronouns. (3) The head is the phrase's primary unit (the noun itself), for example: an apple; the word 'apple' here is the head of the phrase. (4) Post-modifier is the opposite of pre-modifier, that is, all components that function to provide information after the head.
- b. Verb phrase is a group of words consisting of a main verb and an auxiliary verb. For example, 'is going' in 'She is going to school.'
- c. Adjective phrase is a group of words where the adjective is the main word. According to Helmie et al. (2022), to complete the meaning, the adjective phrase may contain modifiers or complements that can appear before or after the head. An example is 'very cute' in 'my cat is very cute.'
- d. Prepositional phrase is a group of words consisting of a preposition followed by a noun or pronoun. The noun or pronoun after a preposition is called the object of the preposition. The function of a prepositional phrase is to provide information such as information about place, time, reason, or method. An example is 'under (preposition) + the table (object of preposition)' in 'the ball is under the table.' This sentence explains where the ball is, and the answer is under the table.

- e. Adverbial phrases are groups of words that function as adverbs in a sentence, which can function to provide information about when, where, why, etc.
3. Clause can be defined as a part of a sentence that consists of a subject and a predicate. According to Helmie et al. (2022), clause is a group of words consisting of a subject and a predicate. Clauses are grouped into two based on the division of units, namely independent clauses and dependent clauses (Sariakin & Anwar, 2020).
- a. Independent clause, an independent clause is often also called a main clause, namely a clause that can stand alone, without depending on other sentences, and already has a complete meaning. According to Nasir et al. (2022), the main clause (independent clause) is the main message from the author to the reader and a clause that can stand alone without any complement or support. In a sentence, an independent clause can function independently but still make sense (Helmie et al., 2022). An example of an independent clause is ‘She was crying.’
 - b. Dependent clause, a dependent clause is a clause that depends on the sentence to understand its meaning. According to Sariakin and Anwar (2020), a dependent clause is also called a subordinate clause, namely a clause that requires another element to understand its meaning, and this clause is under the independent clause. A dependent clause is one that depends on the independent clause to give the sentence meaning, because it cannot function on its own (Helmie et al., 2022). An example of a dependent clause is ‘when it rained’. Without being connected to an independent clause, the reader will ask what ‘when it rained,’ different when connected to an independent clause, it will be ‘She was crying when it rained,’ so the reader will get the complete meaning that when it rained, she was crying.

4. Sentence is a structure of language that is comprehended by speakers, has a distinct beginning and end, and conveys a complete idea or query (Loberger & Shoup, 2009, as cited in Azkiyyah & Purnamasari, 2023). Sentences are divided into four types, namely simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences. The several types of sentences are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences (Lestari et al., 2022).
- a. Simple sentence is a sentence formed from one independent clause. A simple sentence can be defined as a sentence with only one independent clause and no coordinating or subordinate clauses (Azkiyyah & Purnamasari, 2023). A simple sentence is a sentence that consists of one independent clause without a dependent clause and can have one or more subjects and one or more predicates (Helmie et al., 2022).
 - b. Compound sentence refers to a sentence that consists of the union of two or more separate clauses (Lestari et al., 2022). A compound sentence is formed by two or more independent clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction (Azkiyyah & Purnamasari, 2023).
 - c. Complex sentence can be defined as a sentence that consists of one independent clause and two or more dependent clauses (Azkiyyah & Purnamasari, 2023; Helmie et al., 2022).
 - d. Compound-complex sentences include at least one dependent clause and two independent clauses (Helmie et al., 2022).

From the explanation above, it can be understood that syntactic units are the parts that form sentences, namely words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. In simple terms, it can be understood that words form phrases, phrases form clauses, and clauses form sentences.

4. Sentence Patterns and Elements

Sentences consist of several elements. According to Rahmawati and Rachmi (2022), a sentence can consist of any combination of five components.

They are subject, predicate, object, complement, and adjunct. According to Purnomoadjie and Mulyadi (2019), in English, normal sentences usually consist of at least 3 elements, namely subject, verb, and object.

1. Subject of a sentence is the one that conducts in or experiences the action. According to Purnomoadjie and Mulyadi (2019), the subject of a sentence is the person or thing talked about in the sentence, usually a person, place, or thing.
2. Verbs are what is done or the situation experienced by the subject. According to Hidayah et al. (2024), a verb is a word that explains the action or statement of the subject, so that in the sentence, the verb comes after the subject. According to Herring (2016), the verb is the root of the predicate.
3. Object is something that receives action from the subject. According to Hidayah et al. (2024), an object refers to a word or phrase that receives action from the subject in the sentence. Like subjects, objects are usually people, places, or animals (Lasmini, 2021). According to Purnomoadjie and Mulyadi (2019), objects are divided into two, namely direct objects and indirect objects. The noun or pronoun that receives the action is called the direct object (example: She cooks **pizza**), while the indirect object is the answer to or for whom something is done (example: She cooks **me** a pizza).
4. Complement is a word or more that functions as a complement to a noun or pronoun in a sentence (Hidayah et al., 2024). According to Purnomoadjie and Mulyadi (2019), complement can be grouped into two, namely subject complement (subject complement explains more about the subject through verbs) and object complement (object complement explains more about the object through verbs). Object complement is a word, phrase, or clause that modifies and follows the object directly (Hidayah et al., 2024).
5. Adjuncts are elements that provide additional information about a sentence, usually answering what, why, where, and when. Adjuncts are different from complements, complements are required in a sentence, while adjuncts can be omitted and are optional (Hidayah et al., 2024). Adjuncts are divided into three, namely: (1) Circumstance adjuncts explain the setting (place,

time, and manner), (2) Stance adjuncts explain or express the speaker's attitude, (3) Connective adjuncts indicate the semantic relationship between two phrases or portions of clauses, for example 'on the other hand.' (Rahmawati & Rachmi, 2022).

These five elements (subject, verb, object, complement, and adjunct), when ordered are called sentence patterns (Rahmawati & Rachmi, 2022). Sentence patterns can consist of several patterns, namely SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOC, SVOA, or SVOCA (subject, verb, object, complement, adjunct) (Lasmini, 2021).

From the explanation above, it can be understood that sentence elements are parts that have roles and functions within a sentence. When these parts are arranged, they create a sentence pattern. It is important for students to understand sentence elements and sentence patterns so they can understand how to construct complete and structured sentences, thus making their meaning easier to understand.

B. Factors Influencing Learning English Syntax: An Interlanguage Theory Perspectives

Interlanguage Theory is a theory proposed by Larry Selinker. According to Nsengimana et al. (2024), Larry Selinker put forward the Interlanguage Theory, his work on Interlanguage Theory from 1972 is what made him famous. Selinker (1972) said that there is a separate language system (usually different from the first language and different from the target language) produced by language learners when they try to use the rules of the target language. This language system is called interlanguage. This hypothesis is supported by evidence where language learners produce utterances (sentences) that differ from the utterances (sentences) that native speakers would produce when native speakers attempt to express the same meaning as the language learners.

In the context of this research, the Interlanguage is language system that students create when they try to apply the rules of the target language (English) can be different from their first language (Sundanese), different from the second

language (Indonesian), and different from the target language (English). This is because students have Sundanese as their first language and Indonesian as their second language (the language that is often used, especially when studying at school), and students are learning English as a foreign language.

Interlanguage is a temporary language system created by language learners who can develop closer to the target language according to their progress in learning the target language. As said by Afiana et al. (2018), interlanguage describes how learners create a linguistic system that gradually becomes more similar to the system of the target language.

In learning English syntax, interlanguage can be understood as temporary syntax rules created by students, which are usually different from the syntax rules of their first language or other languages already mastered and different from the syntax rules of the target language. As learners' understanding of English syntax develops, these rules will develop until they match the syntax rules of the target language. One example of Interlanguage occurrence in learning English syntax is when someone makes a wrong interrogative sentence, for example, a student says 'Why you are angry?' which must be 'Why are you angry?' This error occurs because students do not know or are still learning that the structure of interrogative sentences in English is different from the structure of positive sentences. In WH-questions that use 'to be' and 'adjective,' the correct structure is 'WH-word + to be + subject + adjective?' As students' understanding of learning English syntax develops, they will become more proficient in constructing interrogative sentences with the correct structure according to the target language.

There are five main processes that shape interlanguage. According to Selinker (1972), these five processes are:

1. Language transfer is the process when learners use the rules from their first language to the target language. In the context of this research, language transfer is not only the process by which students apply the rules of their first language to the target language; it also potentially involves applying the rules of their second language. This is because in this study, apart from having a first language, namely Sundanese, students have also mastered a

second language, namely Indonesian. This language is often used by students, especially when studying at school.

2. Overgeneralization is the process in which students use the rules of the target language excessively (applying rules to all sentences that do not use those rules).
3. Transfer of training is the process in which teaching methods or materials are inappropriate or confusing for learners.
4. Communication strategies are the process where learners attempt to communicate using sentences they can form (though not yet perfect).
5. Strategies of learning are the process when learners use learning methods that are inappropriate for them.

Although it was previously mentioned that interlanguage (language system) can develop along with the development of learners' language comprehension, Selinker (1972) revealed that these five processes can cause rules, items, and subsystems in interlanguage to freeze (not develop) even though learning continues. This can be interpreted that these five processes can cause errors in the sentence structures produced by language learners. If not addressed properly, such as through the absence of appropriate feedback, these errors will become fossilized and continue to be used by learners. This is called fossilization, where the development of learners' language, including the development of their syntax, stops or no longer develops towards the rules of the target language, even though learning continues. This shows that the five processes mentioned not only form the interlanguage but are also factors that can influence and hinder the learning of English syntax.

This Interlanguage Theory will be used to interpret the data on the barriers faced by students in learning English syntax. However, we will only use two aspects of Interlanguage Theory, namely language transfer and overgeneralization. This is due to the limited costs and time to complete this research.

C. Study of Relevant Research

Two previously conducted research are relevant to this research, namely:

1. Research conducted by Ismahani et al. (2024) discussed challenges faced by Indonesian English language learners in understanding syntax. The number of participants in this study was 5 people, consisting of participants of different ages and levels of education, namely one senior high school student, two university students, and two English teachers. The results of the research indicated that differences in sentence structure between Indonesian and English cause English language learners to experience difficulties in understanding and constructing sentences, especially complex sentences, and feel confused by different tenses, and one of the teachers stated that it was difficult to apply effective methods in learning syntax to students. The challenges found, namely the difficulty of constructing sentences due to structural differences between Indonesian and English and the difficulty in distinguishing tense, are very relevant for junior high school students who often experience similar challenges when learning English syntax.
2. Research conducted by Gayo and Widodo (2018) discussed the analysis of morphological and syntactical errors in the English writing of junior high school students and identified the factors causing these errors. Participants in this study consisted of 77 ninth-grade students of Yogyakarta Junior High School. The results indicated that morpheme and syntax errors were found in students' writing. The syntax errors found included tense errors, passive voice errors, noun phrase errors, auxiliary errors, subject-verb agreement errors, and demonstrative determiner errors. To understand the pattern more clearly, the researchers classified the syntax errors found based on Burt et.al's (1982) theory, including omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering errors. The results also showed that the causes of errors in students' writing were interlingual (mother tongue influence) and intralingual (overgeneralization, ignorance of the rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesis).

Although these studies offer important findings, the first researcher focused on difficulties in learning English syntax based on the perceptions of university students, high school students, and teachers, not based on an analysis of syntactic errors in their writing. The second researcher focused on an analysis of syntactic and morpheme errors in students' writing and their causes, without directly addressing the barriers in learning English syntax, although these causes can still be understood as barriers in learning English syntax because they hinder students from understanding English syntax, resulting in writing containing syntactic errors. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding specifically the barriers in learning English syntax faced by junior high school students through an analysis of students' syntactic errors. This study addresses this gap by examining the barriers in learning English syntax faced by junior high school students at one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya through an analysis of students' syntactic errors. Junior high school students represent a critical stage in English language learning, where foundational skills in syntax are developed, so this research is important for advancing educational practice in this area.