

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING AIDS IN TEACHING SYNTAX AT YUFL

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of using tree diagrams and visual presentations of syntax components to understand syntactic rules and develop students' reading skills. It aims to examine whether the targeted syntax teaching enhances students' decoding abilities and comprehending the texts, especially, general linguistics. Syntax stands as an important role in various areas, especially reading comprehension, writing and translation. But most of the students usually focus on vocabulary and other strategies when they read the new texts. They do not realize the importance of syntax in reading comprehension. This research addresses this gap by examining how specific syntax components improve comprehending the texts. In this study, the students from Japanese major were tested with the created design. At the beginning, the teachers from the department of linguistics were interviewed whether they agreed that teaching syntax is needed to understand the complex sentences and then the experimental group, First Year Japanese Specialization students from Yangon University of Foreign Languages, was asked to answer the yes/no questions about the knowledge of syntax and reading comprehension tests. After that they received targeted syntax instruction for six periods. Data were collected through reading comprehension tests and sentence analyzing. Finally, same tasks of the beginning of the experiment were asked again to get the feedback from students. The final findings pointed out the significant improvements of students in reading comprehension, better decoding of complex sentences and analyzing the components of sentences compared with the beginning results. Therefore, it can be seen that using visual aids in teaching syntax appears to be a useful tool for promoting reading skills. Moreover, the results enhance overall reading proficiency. Future research could further discover the effects and application of syntax instruction in translation and writing skills.

Keywords: syntax instruction, reading comprehension, decoding skills, translation and writing skill

Introduction

Understanding both vocabulary and syntax is essential for comprehending any text. However, many students tend to focus primarily on vocabulary and other reading strategies when encountering new texts, often neglecting the importance of syntax—the set of rules that govern how words are arranged to form sentences. While vocabulary helps students recognize individual words, comprehension of complex sentences depends heavily on understanding their structure. Syntax plays a key role in reading comprehension, writing, and translation, yet it is often underemphasized in traditional language instruction. This gap in instruction becomes more pronounced when students face complex academic texts, particularly those related to linguistics, where syntax is a central component.

Research shows that explicit syntax instruction significantly improves students' ability to process and understand complex sentences. For example, a study by Hsieh (2012) demonstrated that students who received direct instruction on sentence structures performed better in reading comprehension tests compared to those who focused solely on vocabulary. Similarly, Alseweed (2019) found that students' ability to analyze sentence components is crucial for decoding

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meaning, especially in academic texts. Despite these findings, syntax is still overlooked in many language curricula, and most students do not receive adequate training in this area.

Furthermore, many existing studies on visual aids in language learning have focused on broader aspects of grammar, such as teaching tenses or parts of speech, rather than on syntax specifically. Visual tools like tree diagrams are known to help students conceptualize abstract grammatical rules and break down complex sentence structures, but their specific impact on syntax learning remains under-researched, particularly for non-native learners studying complex linguistic texts. The lack of targeted studies on this topic presents a significant gap in the literature.

This study aimed to address this gap by investigating how visual aids, such as tree diagrams, can be used to enhance students' understanding of syntax and improve their reading comprehension.

The focus is on first-year Japanese major students, who often struggle with understanding complex linguistic theories due to a lack of explicit syntax instruction. By providing targeted syntax instruction using visual aids, this study seeks to explore whether these tools can help students better analyze sentence structures, identify key components, and improve their overall reading comprehension skills.

The purpose of the study is to describe the way that using visual aids can help students analyze various phrases in a sentence and to discover that way can improve students' reading comprehension skill especially in understanding the linguistic theories. This paper describes that by using visual aids in teaching syntax instructions, students can improve their syntactic awareness and reading comprehension skill. The experiment group has to answer the questions about the knowledge of syntax and the reading comprehension questions and syntactic structure exercises which have the same test components. Five teachers from the department of linguistics, YUFL are also interviewed about their perspectives on their experience of teaching syntax to students. In this paper, mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative methods are used to analyze data and integrate the findings. These findings can give another significant way of teaching syntax in other areas, such as writing and translation.

Research Questions

1. How do modifiers in syntax influence students' reading comprehension?
2. In what ways does understanding modifiers in syntax improve students' ability to decode and process complex sentences in linguistic theories?
3. What is the impact of syntax instruction on overall understanding of linguistic theories and other readings?
4. In what extent do visual aids in teaching syntax help students understand the grammar rules?

Literature Review

Syntax, the study of the structure and rules that govern the arrangement of words in sentences, is one of the fundamental branches of linguistics. It not only helps students understand the grammatical relationships within sentences but also improve their reading comprehension

skill. The understanding of the syntactic rules and reading comprehension are integrated each other. According to Perfetti (1985), a strong understanding of syntactic structures is essential for understanding complex texts. Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2009) states that integrating visual and verbal information can facilitate deeper learning. Beamer and Biber (2013) found that such visualizations enable learners to break down complex sentences, improving their comprehension of the underlying syntax. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory (1983) suggests that visual aids cater to visual learners and enhance engagement across various learning styles and can help accommodate diverse student needs, making syntax instruction more inclusive.

Incorporating visuals in syntax instruction can make lessons more inclusive and effective. Research by Hock et al. (2009) indicates that visual representations of syntax not only aid in understanding but also enhance retention, as students can recall information better when it is presented visually. Studies have shown that sentence diagramming can lead to improved syntactic awareness and reading comprehension (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Traditional teaching methods are good to use in teaching syntax but they often rely on text-based approaches. Instead, students can have lots of benefits from visual learning strategies. Some researchers examine on the effectiveness of using visual aids in teaching syntax. They highlight their impact on learning outcomes and implications for classroom practice. Some research shows that visual aids can improve comprehension of syntactic concepts that can lead to understanding the reading passages. Hsieh (2012) found that using sentence diagrams helped students visualize grammatical relationships, leading to better retention and understanding of syntax. Visual aids can increase students' interactive learning and engagement. According to Alseweed (2019), students reported higher motivation and participation when lessons incorporated visual elements, such as info graphics and interactive tasks that illustrate syntactic rules. Some researchers described the benefits of some strategies of using visual aids in teaching syntax. A study by Hwang et al. (2020) found that students who learned with multimedia resources performed better on syntax assessments compared to those who received traditional instruction.

As mentioned above, existing studies (e.g., Beamer & Biber, 2013; Hwang et al., 2020) have shown that visual aids, such as sentence diagramming and multimedia resources, are effective in breaking down syntactic structures, thus improving students' comprehension. However, there remains a gap in exploring how visual aids can be used to specifically target and teach syntactic modifiers, clause structures, and sentence composition, which are critical in understanding linguistic theories.

Moreover, Research by Alseweed (2019) and Hsieh (2012) highlights the positive effects of visual aids on student engagement and motivation, particularly in complex subjects. However, there is still limited focus on application of these methods, especially for non-native speakers studying in specialized fields like linguistics. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the impact of visual aids on enhancing syntactic awareness and reading comprehension in first-year Japanese major students, who often struggle with understanding syntactic rules.

Methodology

The experiment group is eighty-five First Year Japanese specialization students at (YUFL) Yangon University of Foreign Languages. All the first-year students from YUFL have to take the general linguistics as one of the core courses at their first year. Linguistics is the new subject for all the first-year students at YUFL. They have a little knowledge of linguistics but they do not understand most of the linguistic theories so that they cannot apply with Myanmar. It shows that they have difficulties in sentence structure. Syntax, the study of sentence structure, is one of the important parts of the levels of general linguistic analysis. In syntax, the components about phrase structure, clause structure, sentence structure are taught. All are important and among them, learning modifiers in phrase structure can increase the student's ability to understand the complex sentences and clauses.

The researcher developed interview questions for teachers who teach General Linguistics to First Year Students at YUFL. Then set the yes/no questions to realize the clear syntax knowledge level of the experiment group. These questions were used before teaching syntax. These yes/no questions were also used after the Post-test to get the feedback from students that what are their views on teaching syntax. To discover students' ability on analyzing complex texts and syntactic rules, Pre- and Post-tests were created with same test items. For this, short passages from the linguistic text and another authentic text were used to evaluate students' reading comprehension skill as well as their understanding of the linguistic theories and understanding the phrase structure, clause structure and sentence structure in syntax. (See in Appendixis)

The experiment group was taught syntax six weeks by using visual aids for effectiveness in their learning process. There are two periods in a week to teach syntax. In the first two weeks, phrase structure rule, in the second two weeks, clause structure rule, and in the last two weeks, sentence structure rules were taught.

In teaching syntax, visual aids were used as an effective tool in every steps. Using these visual formats helped students arrange and manage complex ideas. During the lecture, the most commonly used to represent the syntactic structure of a sentence is 'tree diagrams'. To explain different parts of speech, different color was used (for example- green for nouns, red for verbs, blue for adjectives, black for preposition, pink for Np). It is called color-coding. This helps students see the different parts of the sentence components. To help students recognize sentence patterns, to arrange them, to create grammatically correct sentences, to be able to form complete and meaningful sentences, and to illustrate the process of sentence construction (for example, start a sentence with a subject, verb and followed by objects, complements and modifiers), word cards, sentence strips, syntax tree and flowcharts were used. At the same time, students' comprehension check was made to know their understanding the syntactic structure and comprehending the linguistic rules. Teaching schedule can be seen in the following table, Table 1.

Table 1. Teaching Schedule

No.	Week	Procedures	Period
1.	Week 1	Phrase structure rules	1 period
	Week 2	Visual aids: Tree diagrams, Color-Coding, word cards,	1 period

No.	Week	Procedures	Period
2.	Week 3	Clause structure	1 period
	Week 4	Visual aids: sentence strips, Flowcharts,	1 period
3.	Week 5	Sentence structure	1 period
	Week 6	Visual aids: syntax tree, (Syntax sorting game)	1 period

Data Collection

The perspectives of five teachers from the department of linguistics were collected to know their experience in teaching syntax and how visual aids are effective in their lessons. The results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' perspectives (5 teachers)

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you have an experience of teaching syntax to students?	4	1
2.	Do you agree that teaching syntax is profitable for students?	5	0
3.	Do you think that teaching syntax can support students in comprehending any passages?	3	2
4.	Do you agree that if the students know the process of sentence structure very well, they can understand the complex sentences?	5	0
5.	Do you usually use visual aids when teaching syntax to your students?	3	2
6.	Can your students analyse the complex sentences after teaching the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences?	3	2
7.	Describe your other opinions based on your teaching experience in syntax.		

The students' perspectives were also collected before teaching syntax and after teaching. The results of students' perspectives can be seen in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3. Students' perspectives (Before teaching) (85 Japanese major students)

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you understand what syntax is?	10	75
2.	Can you analyse the various kinds of modifiers in complex sentences?	14	71
3.	Can you categorize the kinds of sentences?	7	78
4.	Do you agree that visual aids help you to understand sentence structure and grammatical rules?	70	15
5.	Do you agree that understanding the rules of sentence structure can help you to comprehend the complex sentences?	65	20

Table 4. Students' perspectives (After teaching) (85 Japanese major students)

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you understand what syntax is?	70	15
2.	Can you analyse the various kinds of modifiers in complex sentences?	70	15
3.	Can you categorize the kinds of sentences?	68	17
4.	Do you agree that visual aids help you to understand sentence structure and grammatical rules?	80	5
5.	Do you agree that understanding the rules of sentence structure can help you to comprehend the complex sentences?	75	10

For the Pre- and Post-tests, the test with same items was created. For this, get short passages from the linguistic text and another authentic text (see in Appendix B and C) to evaluate students' reading comprehension skill and to decode their abilities as well as their understanding of the linguistic theories and understanding the phrase structure, clause structure and sentence structure in syntax. The results of Pre-test can be seen in Table 5 and the results of Post-test in Table 6.

Table 5. Results of Pre-test

Item	No. of questions	All items-correct	2 and under 2 items correct	All items-wrong
Reading 1(from Text)	3	10 Ss (12%)	75 Ss (88%)	0
Reading 2 (from Text)	3	20 Ss (24%)	65 Ss (76%)	0
Reading 3 (not from Text)	4	5 Ss (6%)	80 Ss (94%)	0
Others (from Text)	5	0 (0%)	65 Ss (76%)	20 Ss (24%)

Table 6. Results of Post-test

Item	No. of questions	All items-correct	2 and under 2 items correct	All items-wrong
Reading 1(from Text)	3	75 Ss (88%)	10 Ss (12%)	0
Reading 2 (from Text)	3	80 Ss (94%)	5 Ss (6%)	0
Reading 3 (not from Text)	4	70 Ss (82%)	15 Ss (18%)	0
Others (from Text)	5	65 Ss (76%)	20 Ss (24%)	0

Analysis

Five teachers from the Department of Linguistics were asked about their experience in teaching linguistics. For the first question, about their experience of teaching syntax to students, 80% of the teachers said that they have experience of teaching syntax. In No.2, 80% of the teachers agreed that teaching syntax is very profitable and that improve students' reading comprehension skill. In No.3, 60% of the teachers thought that teaching syntax can give a great support to students to improve their reading comprehension skill. For No.4, 80% agreed that if the students understand the process of sentence structure, they can understand all kinds of sentences; simple, compound and complex. In No.5, only 60% of the teachers agreed that not only vocabularies but also the structure of words is important to know when reading. In No.6, 60% of the teachers agreed that students can analyze the complex sentences after teaching the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences. For the question No.7, the two teachers gave their opinions on teaching syntax that some of the students still could not decide whether it was a clause or a clause as a modifier, one of the teachers said most of the students could not decide whether it was a phrase modifier or clause modifier, and the other two teachers said that some of the students could not analyze whether the sentences are compound or simple or complex even though they have already taught the sentence structure rules. The perspectives of the teachers from linguistic department can be seen in Figure 1.

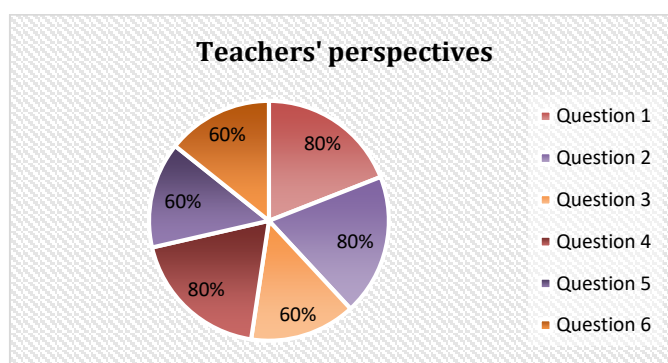


Figure 1. Teachers' perspectives

The eighty-five students from First Year Japanese major were determined as an experiment group. First, they were asked the questions to know their clear knowledge about syntax. Figure. 2 is the data of students' knowledge about syntax before teaching.

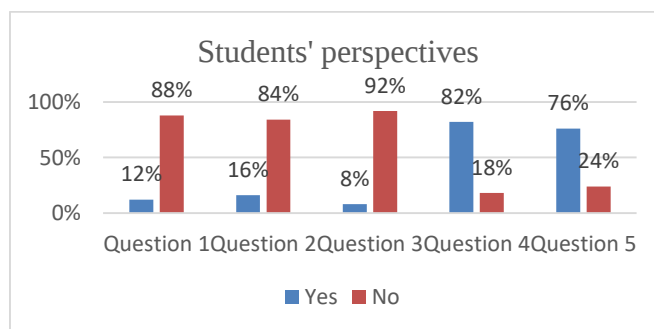


Figure 2. Students' perspectives (Before teaching) (85 students from Japanese major)

In Question No.1, 88% of the students said that they thought if they understood new vocabularies and some reading strategies, they can understand the whole passage easily. 12% said that they did not think that only understanding new vocabularies was not the solution of the understanding the texts. But in No. 2, 84% of the students agreed that without knowing the sentence structure, they could not understand the whole text. For No.3 question, 'do you have any knowledge of syntax', only 8% said that they had but 92% said 'no'. In No. (4), 82% of students said they did not remember which is called phrase, clause and kinds of sentences. In No. (5), 76% of the students agreed that if they knew the rules of sentence structure, they could understand the complex sentences. Therefore, it can be seen that some of the students have the knowledge of sentence structure rules but some do not. It can be said that some do not remember or they may not know that these grammar rules are included in syntax.

The students' perspectives also changed after teaching. They were asked about their own opinion on learning sentence structure rules in syntax again. This can be seen in Figure 3.

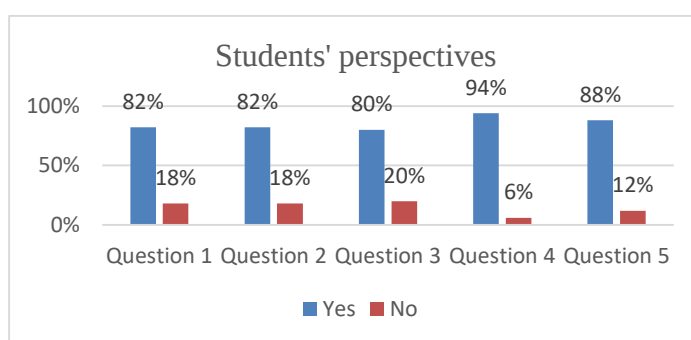


Figure 3: Students' perspectives (After teaching)

In Question No.1, 88% of the students said that they understand what syntax is. In No.2, 84% responded that they could analyze various kinds of modifiers in sentences but 16% of the students said they still confused between the word and modifiers. In No. (3), 92% described that they could easily categorize the different kinds of sentences. The positive views of students for teaching syntax can be seen in No. (4) and (5). In No.4, 82% agreed that visual aids helped them to understand grammatical rules and analyze sentence structure. They could comprehend the linguistic theory more easily than the earlier. In No.5, 76% of the students agreed that they could analyze the complex sentences. But 24% of the students still confused between the sentence types.

After the six weeks of teaching syntax, most of the students realized that not only knowing the various reading strategies but also understanding the sentence structure rules are important for improving their reading comprehension skill. After teaching, the students' positive view on the questions, No.1, 2 and 3 were totally changed. It shows that students can describe the modifiers that are important in a sentence and categorize the kinds of sentences. The comparison between the results of before teaching and after teaching can be seen in Figure 4.

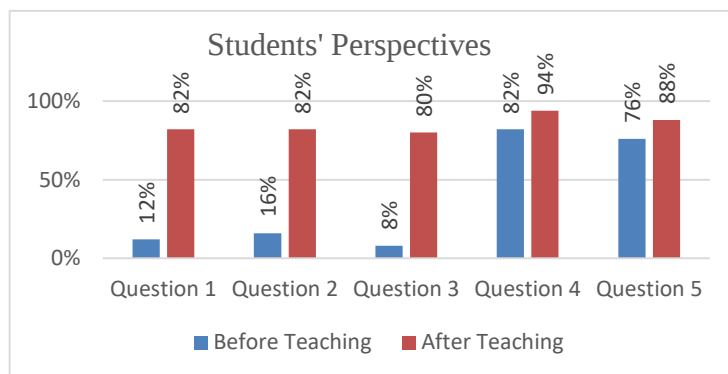


Figure 4. Comparison between Before Teaching and After Teaching

Students also did the Pre- and Post-tests which were created with same test items to check their reading comprehension skill and understanding the sentence structure rules. For this, used short passages from the linguistic text and another authentic text were used. Before teaching syntax, students were asked to answer the Pre-test reading comprehension questions and did sentence structure exercises to know their level of reading comprehension skill and knowledge of the sentence structure rules. Before teaching syntactic rules, only 12% of the students could answer all the questions in Reading (1), correctly. In Reading passage (2), 24% and in Reading passage (3), 59% of the students could answer correctly. But a few students could answer correctly for other questions about modifiers. Students could answer at least two questions correctly from each item. The results of Pre-test can be seen in Figure 5.

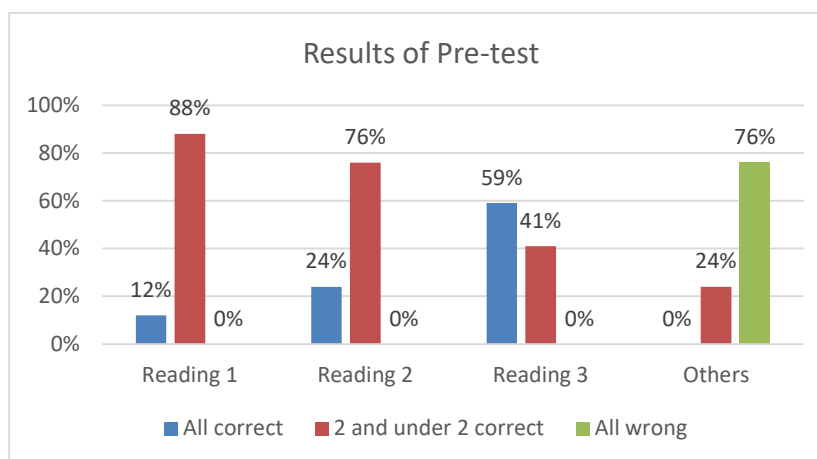


Figure 5. Results of Pre-test

Then the Post-test was conducted. The progress of students' improvement in their reading comprehension skill can be seen in Figure 6.

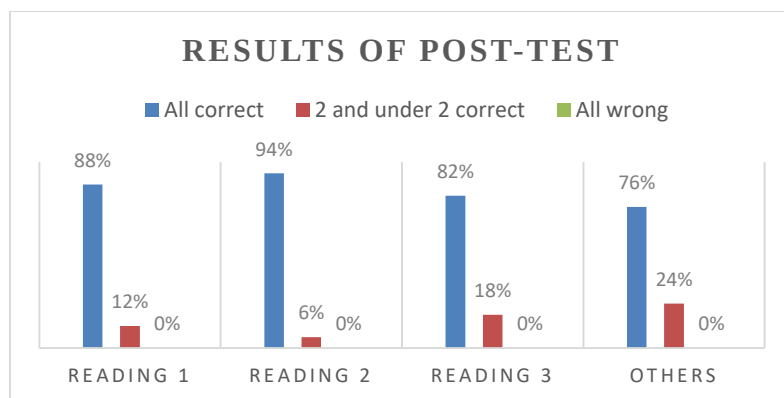


Figure 6. Results of Post-test

It shows that students' understanding of syntactic rules gives a great help to comprehend the reading passages. In Reading (1), 88% of the students, in Reading (2), 94% and in Reading (3), 82% could answer all the questions correctly. The most interesting is that 76% of the students could answer other questions about modifiers that a few could answer in Pre-test.

Findings and Discussions

According to the results, it can be seen that not only the ordinary way of teaching method but also using the visual aids can lead to a successful and interesting lecture period for the students. Moreover, using visual aids can improve students' reading comprehension skill. But a balanced approach that combines visual aids with explicit instruction is needed. By using visual aids in teaching syntax, students improve their reading comprehension skill. Most of the students but not all can categorize the grammar tag name of the words in a sentence. Therefore, at a phrase level, they can describe a phrase and a phrase as a modifier. But a few of the students still confused between a phrase and a phrase as a modifier. In a clause structure, all of the students understand the structure of a clause but some of the students cannot describe what a dependent clause is and what an independent clause is. It is because they still have not understood what the coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions and their functions are. They confused the function of 'that' as a relative pronoun and as a complement word. Then they cannot describe whether it is a complex or a simple sentence. They cannot explain whether it is a relative clause or an independent clause, whether it is a clause or a clause as a modifier. It can be found that if the students understand the modifiers in syntax improve their ability in decoding and processing complex sentences in linguistic theories. Moreover, students can construct clear and coherent sentences that make students' spoken and written communication more effective, analyze and understand the structure of English. In addition, understanding syntax improves their ability to decode complex texts, i.e. students can identify the relationships between words and phrases more easily. The most profitable point is that understanding the rules of syntax can ease the process of learning a new language.

The results of this study confirm that incorporating visual aids into syntax instruction leads to notable improvements in students' reading comprehension and their ability to decode complex sentences. Visual aids, such as tree diagrams and other graphical representations, were found to make lessons more engaging and effective. These findings align with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes the importance of integrating

visual and verbal information to promote deeper understanding. As seen in the literature (Beamer & Biber, 2013), students who engage with visual tools show a better ability to break down and comprehend complex syntactic structures. This study reinforces that point, showing that students benefited from visual aids in terms of sentence parsing and understanding grammatical relationships.

In the area of clause structure, students demonstrated an improved understanding of the basics, yet some continued to confuse independent and dependent clauses, particularly when identifying subordinating and coordinating conjunctions. The confusion over the word "that" as both a relative pronoun and a complementizer further highlighted the need for more direct instruction on conjunctions and their functions. These findings suggest that while visual aids can provide a solid foundation, students benefit most when they are paired with more explicit instruction on complex syntax. This aligns with Hsieh's (2012) findings, which emphasized the need for a balanced instructional approach that integrates visual learning with detailed syntactic analysis.

Moreover, students who understood modifiers in syntax showed improved abilities in decoding and processing complex linguistic texts. This supports Perfetti's (1985) argument that syntactic awareness is crucial for understanding intricate sentence structures. Students who understand the use of modifiers could construct clearer, more coherent sentences and displayed greater confidence in both spoken and written communication. Additionally, their ability to analyze English sentence structures improved, making it easier for them to identify relationships between words and phrases.

One of the most significant findings is that understanding syntax not only helps them in reading comprehension but also facilitates the learning of new languages. Students who developed strong syntactic skills found it easier to apply these skills to new linguistic contexts. This aligns with Gardner's (1983) theory on multiple intelligences, which highlights the diverse ways students can engage with and process information, particularly through visual means.

In summary, the results indicate that visual aids play a critical role in enhancing syntactic awareness and reading comprehension. However, there are still areas where students need further support, particularly in distinguishing between different clause types and understanding the functions of conjunctions. This suggests that a comprehensive instructional approach, combining visual tools with explicit teaching of specific syntactic rules, is the most effective strategy for improving students' understanding of syntax.

Conclusion

This study shows that visual aids play an important role in teaching syntax, especially in improving students' reading comprehension and their ability to understand complex sentences. Tools like tree diagrams and color-coded sentence parts helped students recognize sentence patterns and analyze modifiers and clause structures. These tools made lessons more engaging and helped students better understand syntax. This study supports the ideas of Beamer & Biber (2013), Hsieh (2012), Mayer (2009) and Perfetti (1985), who showed that visual aids help students understand complex sentences and improve their reading skills. Additionally, Gardner's (1983) theory that visual tools can reach different types of learners is confirmed, as these aids made learning more accessible to a wide range of students.

However, this study also had some limitations. While most students benefited from visual aids, some were still struggling with understanding the differences between independent and dependent clauses and identifying certain conjunctions. This shows that visual aids alone may not be enough and should be paired with more detailed explanations. Another limitation was the short length of the study, which may not have given students enough time to fully understand all the syntax rules. Future studies should explore if longer-term use of visual aids combined with clear instruction would lead to better results.

Additionally, this study was done with a specific group of first-year Japanese major students at YUFL, so it is difficult to achieve the generalizability and also difficult to apply to all student groups, especially those in other academic or linguistic settings. Future research should include students from different backgrounds to see if these results are consistent across various groups.

In conclusion, visual aids are a helpful tool for teaching syntax, but they work best when combined with clear, detailed instruction on grammar rules. The limitations of this study suggest that longer teaching periods and more focused instruction may be needed to fully address complex syntactic concepts. Future research should also look into the long-term effects of visual aids on other language skills, such as writing and translation, and explore how they can be used to teach more advanced syntax topics.

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Appendix A

Teachers' Interview Questions

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you have an experience of teaching syntax to students?		
2.	Do you agree that teaching syntax is profitable for students?		
3.	Do you think that teaching syntax can support students in comprehending any passages?		
4.	Do you agree that if the students know the process of sentence structure very well, they can understand the complex sentences?		
5.	Do you usually use visual aids when teaching syntax to your students?		
6.	Can your students analyse the complex sentences after teaching the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences?		
7.	Describe your other opinions based on your teaching experience in syntax.		

Questions for students' perspective (Before Teaching)

Answer the questions.

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you understand what is syntax?		
2.	Can you analyse the various kinds of modifiers in complex sentences?		
3.	Can you categorize the kinds of sentences?		
4.	Do you agree that visual aids help you understand sentence structure and grammatical rules?		
5.	Do you agree that understanding the rules of sentence structure can help you comprehend the complex sentences?		

Questions for students' perspective (After Teaching)

Answer the questions.

No.	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you understand what is syntax?		
2.	Can you analyse the various kinds of modifiers in complex sentences?		
3.	Can you categorize the kinds of sentences?		
4.	Do you agree that visual aids help you understand sentence structure and grammatical rules?		
5.	Do you agree that understanding the rules of sentence structure can help you comprehend the complex sentences?		

Appendix B

(I) Read the sentences and answer the questions.***Reading I***

Utterance meaning involves day-to-day interactions. It depends on context. It is studied in pragmatics. Utterances identify the person who has uttered such utterances. There are three types of utterance meaning: referential, social and affective.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics. They deal with what is communicated by the manner and style of an utterance. Pragmatics includes the study of how people use language to establish their identities through social meaning, to perform speech acts with performative sentences and so on. Performative sentences are the utterances that perform speech acts.

- (a) What does the word 'who' refer to in No.1?
- (b) What does pragmatics focus on?
- (c) What are performative sentences?

Reading II

A plosive occurs when a complete closure in the vocal tract is suddenly released. The air pressure which builds up behind the closure rushes out with an explosive sound. A complete closure at the glottis is known as a glottal stop. An affricate occurs when the air-pressure behind a complete closure in the vocal tract is gradually released.

- (a) When does a plosive occur?
- (b) What kind of air pressure rushes out with an explosive sound?
- (c) A complete closure of where is known as glottal stop?

Reading III

A phoneme is a contrastive unit in the sound system of a particular language. A good way to think about a phoneme is as a group of phonetically similar sounds **that** are treated as members of the same sound category. Because the members of a sound category are treated as “the same sound” in a language, they cannot be used for communicating differences in meaning. English speakers treat [th] and [t] as belonging to the same sound category, so they cannot be used to distinguish one word from another.

1. What does the word '**that**' refer to?
2. Can the members of the sound category be used for communication? Why?
3. In English, which sound is treated as belonging to the same sound [t]?
4. In this text, which are simple, which are compound and which are complex sentences?