

ENHANCING LEARNERS' SYNTACTIC COMPETENCE THROUGH LITERARY TEXTS: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND GREEK

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ABSTRACT

This research compares the word order in the declarative and interrogative sentences of English, French, and Greek, with an emphasis on the way in which literary texts improve learners' linguistic skills. It takes into consideration fundamental linguistic characteristics such as word order, types of sentences and their construction, showing parallels and revealing differences. These distinctions present some of the difficulties for Greeks learning English and French. This research analyzes literary texts by Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, and Nikos Kazantzakis in order to illustrate the way complicated phrase patterns, changes in morphology, and structural changes influence on learning a foreign language. The texts offer pieces of natural language use which go above typical teaching techniques to help students understand phrase building and syntax in a more thorough manner. The results of the research imply that including literary texts within foreign language teaching not only improves grammatical awareness, however, it also encourages intellectual inquiry and comprehension of culture.

This study emphasizes the instructional usefulness of written literary texts when teaching syntax by linking academic grammatical study to actual literary usage and proposes its wider implementation in foreign language teaching, especially in the times of the wide spread of AI applications and tools.

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Introduction

The fundamental purpose of this cross-language and cross-cultural investigation is to examine the distinctions and parallels within fundamental structural principles in English and French compared to Greek, with literary texts as models. This quantitative examination will illustrate that being aware of the differences between the two languages can broaden the knowledge of the two through the implementation of literary texts highlighting the great number of nuanced syntactic frameworks which boost learners' verbal abilities.

The use of literary texts in language training is a useful tool for teaching grammar, word formation, sentence structure and word order, semantics, culture. Literary texts that offer various and original conversations, give learners the opportunity to discover challenging grammar patterns whereas simultaneously engaging in extensive and energetic discussions. Interaction with great reading also encourages intellectual curiosity and the application of syntax beyond strict syntactic limits. Texts in literature include several examples of complex language and expressions, helping learners to understand whether grammatical concepts function in daily life. Literary texts contain a wide range of vocabulary, making it possible to investigate and analyze complex morphological and syntactic mechanisms. Literary texts are often utilized to inspire students through stimulating readers psychologically and mentally.

This article focuses on a specific case: teaching English and French to Greek native speakers in the Greek Secondary school through the implementation of literary texts within their basic methodological materials used in their foreign language classroom. We all know that English and French are members of two distinct language groups, respectively the Germanic and the Romance ones. Although they retain similar frameworks, they deviate greatly overall morphology. By juxtaposing both of them to the Greek language, Greek learners of English and French may gain a better grasp of the way the language functions on various scales. The result could outcome in an

increased awareness concerning the way processes of morphology work throughout cultures.

To demonstrate the way distinct grammar patterns affect understanding and phrase structuring, specific instances from modern and classical Greek, English and French literary texts might be used. Although not belonging to present-day literature, literary works (and excerpts from them) such as "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens and "Les Misérables" by Victor Hugo have a number of complicated morphological and syntactic features which could possibly be used for studying language and assessment. Literary texts suggest that the acquisition of communication due to writing promotes the development of cognitive perception and invention as well as grammatical understanding. Based on Matthiessen and Halliday (2014), Vinay, and Darbelnet (1995), the use of literary texts may function like a link across concepts and actions in the teaching of languages.

Some Insights on the Significance of Syntax in Language Teaching from a Contrastive Analysis Perspective

Recognizing semantics is essential for those beginning to speak since it is the foundation of linguistic ability. According to Chomsky (2002), the capacity to form and interpret phrases differentiates an expert translator from a beginner. Foreign language teachers, who specialize in linguistic patterns, may assist learners in more than comprehending, yet, also producing technically acceptable phrases. Furthermore, teaching syntax through literary texts enables learners to observe linguistics in practice, grounded in genuine/natural speech. Literary books, filled with intricate and numerous word forms, teach students to further sophisticated semantics compared to what they would find in conventional grammar curriculum (Mansfield 1997).

Recognition of the semantic variations in English and French is critical for those Greeks studying these two languages, especially if employing literary texts to solidify their comprehension of complicated patterns of speech. Despite both English and French use the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, their approach to word order in declarative and interrogative sentences and negation typically differs distinctly. A study

of comparison highlights those variations and enables Greek learners to handle each of the two languages unique morphological norms.

A comparison of English and French grammar exposes either similar features or considerable distinctions, notably in terms of word order in declarative and interrogative sentences, negation, etc. For instance, in affirmative statements, both English and French use the identical basic SVO arrangement of words. As an example in the English language: "The student reads one book." In French: "L'étudiant lit un livre". Although it may be assumed by some that English provides greater structural freedom, French has higher requirements that students need to comply with. Considering those distinctions is critical for learners, because it prepares them to meet the distinctive requirements that accompany every language. Texts from literature are an effective way for learners to investigate linguistic patterns in the setting, so enhancing their understanding of both English and French paragraph building techniques.

Greek, compared to English and French, has an additional variable structure for words because of its complex inflected structure that transmits linguistic connections via class markers as opposed to rigid structural arrangement (Holton et al., 2012). Although English and French are typically SVO languages, Greek offers alternatives that include Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) as well as Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) in some circumstances, including significance conveyed by syntactic signals (Mackridge, 1985). Whether studying English or French, Greek native speakers may find it difficult to adjust to increasingly stringent grammatical limitations due to their morphological fluidity. Furthermore, negativity in Greek is distinct from that in both languages, with several negations or negative components used according to the verb as well as morphology (Tzartanos, 1946). Those characteristics provide works of literature an excellent tool for Greek trainees, since seeing actual language components in contextual promotes an increased awareness regarding the two target languages' morphological standards.

The Greek language has additional phrases sequence freedom thanks to its inflected shape that defines syntactic connections with gender extensions instead of set placing. The standard sequence in Greek remains similarly SVO. "Ο μαθητής διαβάζει ένα βιβλίο." However, variations such as "Ένα βιβλίο διαβάζει ο μαθητής," or "Διαβάζει

ένα βιβλίο ο μαθητής." are properly formed and commonly used to highlight distinct aspects of a phrase. In a comparable manner, adverb position in Greek permits a few permutations, e.g., "Ο μαθητής διαβάζει γρήγορα ένα βιβλίο." (The student quickly reads a book), "Γρήγορα, ο μαθητής διαβάζει ένα βιβλίο." (Quickly, the student reads a book), or "Ο μαθητής γρήγορα διαβάζει ένα βιβλίο". However, these variations in word order do not alter the propositional meaning of the sentence but rather serve pragmatic or stylistic functions, such as emphasis or focus (Holton, Mackridge, & Philippaki-Warbuton, 2012).

Contrary to this, French modifiers commonly adhere to rigorous placing restrictions, frequently following the verb: According to French: "L'étudiant finit rapidement son livre." (The student finishes his book rapidly.) The disparities in modifier position represent French's greater linguistic limitations, as opposed to the English language's somewhat wider semantics (Riegel et al. 2009).

In regard to question formation, in the English language the use of auxiliary verbs that are placed preceding the subject of the question is a must for the notional verbs: e.g., "Do you like coffee?". In French, the subject and verb swap positions such as "Aimes-tu le café?" The request is formed by inverting the verb "aimes" and combining it with the personal pronoun "tu". Furthermore, in conversational speaking French, queries are typically expressed with no inverting and with a straightforward ascending articulation: "Tu aimes le café?" In English, the optional "do" affords a uniform approach for creating inquiries in present-day phrases, but French learners have to toggle between formal and informal forms according to the occasion (Radford, 2004; Tesnière, 2015).

The Greek question construction relies solely on intonation, spelling and grammar, instead of auxiliary verbs or inversion. In written form, a question is denoted only with a question mark (?) - a semi-colon. Like the example above, the positive sentence "Σου αρέσει ο καφές." (You enjoy coffee.) turns into a question merely by raising the tone or by punctuating it when writing: "Σου αρέσει ο καφές;". The lack of modifications to structure in question formation renders Greek interrogative sentences easier to recognize for native speakers, whereas Greek learners of English and French have to adapt to the respective grammatical requirements of the target language.

A further significant morphological distinction between the Greek language and the systems of English and French is their forming negative sentences as well. In the English language, negation is usually created by inserting "not" immediately following the auxiliary verb (or the verb *BE* when it is a full verb): In the English language, a negative sentence in the present simple tense is: "I do not / don't like coffee." On the other hand, French negation needs the inclusion two distinct components: "ne" preceding the verb and "pas" following the verb. In French: "Je n'aime pas le café" (I do not / don't like coffee.).

The above two-part negation in French poses further difficulties for learners, because they have to recall the exact order and arrangement of the two components "ne" as well as "pas." Furthermore, in informal spoken French, the "ne" is frequently omitted leading to one-part elimination: "J'aime pas le café." This level of detail in negation, in which both formal and informal arrangements diverge considerably, necessitates special care during instruction (Riegel et al., 2009).

Greek negative sentence structure differs considerably from that of English and French. In Greek, negation is typically expressed with the particles 'δεν' and 'μη(v)' placed before the verb, rather than through auxiliary verbs or two-part constructions. For example, the standard English sentence 'I do not enjoy coffee' is translated into Greek as 'Δεν μου αρέσει ο καφές'. Greek negation is simpler than French, since it does not require multiple elements surrounding a single verb. The main difficulty arises from the distinction between 'δεν' and 'μη(v)'. The particle 'δεν' is most frequently used in declarative sentences, whereas 'μη(v)' appears in imperative and conditional clauses, such as in 'Μην πίνεις τόσο καφέ.' ('Don't drink so much coffee') (Tzartzanos, 1946).

A further significant aspect of Greek negation, which is not observed in English and French, is the double negation; it emphasizes the negation, e.g., "Δεν θέλω τίποτα." (I do not desire anything). That may prove confusing for Greek learners of English since multiple negatives frequently produce positive meaning in English. Recognizing the basic distinctions in negation is critical to Greek-speaking learners studying English or French, since every language possesses its own syntactic patterns.

Using Literary Texts to Teach Syntax

The incorporation of literary texts in language education is an effective technique for interacting learners in actual language in addition to strengthening their grasp of morphology and syntax. Literary texts include natural native speakers' language usage, rendering great instruments to demonstrate semantics in any language. Through studying pieces of renowned authors and their literary masterpieces, learners may have a greater understanding about the way various grammar rules operate and the way they might be implemented in their target language utilization.

One of the main benefits of using literary texts to teach grammar is that they expose students to a wide range of sentence structures in a rich and authentic context. Unlike academic examples, which are often simple and repetitive, literary works require learners to engage with more complex sentence patterns. According to Duff and Maley (1990), books provides actual instances of the way language is utilized efficiently and aesthetically, frequently violating established syntactic principles to produce decorative results. It enables learners to observe whether grammar works both conventionally as well as unconventionally.

For instance, in English writing, books from writers including William Shakespeare or the novelist Jane Austen sometimes have sophisticated phrases which necessitate rigorous linguistic study. In the play Hamlet by Shakespeare, the statement "To be, or not to be: which is the question" uses an inverse version of the standard wording form for theatrical purposes. In a comparable manner in French literature, poets such as Victor Hugo and Gustave Flaubert create formulations containing intricate hierarchy and acceptance, challenging readers to identify and evaluate numerous levels of semantics. Hugo's lengthy, detailed phrases in *Les Misérables*, for example, need a grasp of the way phrases and clauses are nestled inside a complicated linguistic context.

Teaching Syntactic Structures through Literary Texts

By educating semantics via literary texts, the ultimate objective is to assist learners recognize and understand grammatical patterns for real or relevant situations. Texts from literature frequently include a variety of language patterns, such as straightforward, convoluted, and complicated statements, and this may be examined to uncover inherent linguistic features. As an example, a chapter by Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* could be used to teach subordinate clauses in the English language. Intricate phrases such "That is a reality widely recognized since an individual in having abundance has to be in desire of a spouse," give ample scope for analyzing syntactic elements.

Learners can explore the way the subordinate clause works inside the bigger phrase, contributing to a broader knowledge of component connections. In French, extracts from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* may be employed to teach relative clause interpretation. The phrases including "Emma, qui ne voulait que d'amitié et d'actions, était prisonnière dans sa maison entière" allow learners to investigate the value of relative pronouns like "qui" alongside the way they combine components. That directly involved investigation of literary passages enables learners to see the way grammar is employed to convey information and provide cultural character.

Enhancing Syntax through Literature in the Classroom

Literary texts, in combination with evaluating language patterns, provide opportunities for innovative tasks which assist learners in absorbing grammatical norms. Another technique is to let learners rephrase paragraphs from a literary book, changing the grammar to shift the attention or priority. Learners, for instance, might change clauses in a phrase using Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* to experiment with various semantic options to consider: The initial phrase was: "It had been the greatest of circumstances; it had been the most awful of circumstances.". And a recent

modification could be: "The greatest of circumstances it had been, the most awful of circumstances it had been."

Such kind of exercise helps learners to reflect thoughtfully on the arrangement of words and the syntax while nevertheless exploring the initially published text. In the French language, an illustration, constructing an expression from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* could assist learners in identifying the subject, verb and numerous variations, in addition to understanding the way the distinct components of the statement communicate.

Literary texts, especially paired in structural evaluation, allow students to interact with actual language systems simultaneously gaining analytical morphological and syntactic awareness and knowledge. Syntactic conversion activities are excellent strategies in helping learners adjust the framework of a text while keeping its deeper significance. It enables researchers to investigate differences in sentence structure, reception, (and intonation on certain occasions) through English, French, or Greek. A good illustration is the structure of the question form that differs drastically across each of the three languages under investigation: It is easy to detect the similarities and the differences in the interrogative sentences: English: "Would you like a cup of tea?";

French: "Voudrais-tu du thé?";

Greek: "Θα ήθελες τσάι;".

Notwithstanding the reality that either English or French use the Subject Verb Object (SVO) sequence, from their questioning patterns remain rather complicated for Greek-speaking learners. In the English language, questions must include auxiliary verbs and a strict word order, but in French, questions typically need the component *est-ce que* or verb-subject inversion (e.g., *Veux-tu...?*). Conversely, Greek refrains from using redundant verbs to generate questions; rather, questions can be signalled by intonation via the incorporation of questioning elements (Philippaki-Warburton, 1994). Because of this distinction, Greek students tend to skip auxiliary verbs when producing interrogative sentences. In a comparable manner in French, Greek students typically

trouble to comprehend the inverted pattern and might misuse the common phrase *Tu désires du thé?*, that, although suitable in casual circumstances, is not deemed suitable in scientific or formal language (Hawkins & Towell, 2015).

By combining literature instruction alongside focused composing tasks, teachers may assist Greek speaking students gain an additional sophisticated comprehension of question patterns in English and French. That strategy additionally improves grammar proficiency, nonetheless it additionally boosts contextual awareness, allowing students to discriminate among both official and unofficial modes. This understanding seems especially important in written assignments, in which accuracy in questioning formulation has expressive significance. Finally, using real written literary works to talk about word order and grammar gives students the conceptual precision and diversity of culture they need to understand questions in an international setting (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Using Literature to Illustrate Syntactic Complexity

A different effective educational strategy involves the graphical deconstruction of syntax using literature sections that enables learners to study morphological and syntactic processes in natural settings. A beneficial instance may be derived from the first phase of the work of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*: "*Dans cette maison, on vit heureux, on vit bien.*". A grammatical study of that line reveals many key characteristics for Greek speaking French instructors. Initially the term sequence distinction among *Dans cette maison* and *On vit heureux* demonstrates the adaptability of predication in sentence initial location, which can vary beyond Greek syntax. Secondly, the objective expression *on vit* is translated simply a third person singular in French, but it possesses no immediate counterpart in Greek (Ralli, 2002). Thirdly, the positioning of the adverbial phrase *bien* at the conclusion of the statement remains essential, as Greek learners could erroneously move adverbials positioning regulations compared to their native language, creating phrases that include *Καλά ζει κάποιος σε αυτό το σπίτι* rather than the more natural one: *Σε αυτό το σπίτι ζει κάποιος καλά.*

As contrasted with their Greek textual counterpart, which includes the line in Nikos Kazantzakis' *Zorba the Greek*: *"Σ' αυτό το σπίτι οι άνθρωποι γελάνε δυνατά, τρώνε πολύ." ("In that place of residence, individuals giggle strongly, they feast a lot."), learners will be allowed to perceive the grammatical variations with greater precision. Greek's extensive inflected structure allows for variable topic assignment, and formal topic phrases (οι άνθρωποι) are frequently avoided whenever the object of reference seems accessible through background (Holton, Mackridge, & Philippaki-Warbuton, 2012). As a result, French demands explicit topics including on, regardless of whether used for an objective purpose. That comparison method merely reveals distinctions between sentence structure and topic presentation, however it additionally focuses on the way adverbial phrases fit together throughout languages.

Another point must be taken into consideration when discussing teaching a foreign language through literary texts: the errors produced by learners with textual templates. This improves the researcher's rigorous methodology by combining linguistic teaching and learning concept with real evidence. This additionally makes room for remedial input, comparisons between peers, and activities to overcome unfavourable transfers in Greek. That combined emphasis on errors assessment and real material guarantees that learners not just identify and correct morphological errors, yet, additionally they can acquire the larger linguistic input which underlie the English and French word order constructions (Lado, 1957; Odlin, 1989).

Conclusion

Incorporating texts from literary works when teaching syntax gives learners the chance to interact with real, sophisticated language in a relevant setting. By examining and altering syntax in texts, learners not simply improve their grammatical skills, but they also gain a better understanding of the way words operate in everyday speech. Literary texts function as a link across knowledge and application, enabling learners to implement grammar principles in ways that are simultaneously cognitively difficult and visually interesting.

Integrating literary texts while teaching word order lets learners use words in an authentic manner. Today some teachers implement syntax-based teaching apps in their lessons trying to make the instruction cognitively interesting, enabling learners to reflect carefully concerning the way words function throughout both English and French.

For Greek speaking students, including works of literature into the classroom lesson is similarly effective, especially when compared to English and French. By evaluating compositional patterns in actual works of literature, Greek students of English and French may see the manner in which the two languages generate sense via word order.

The contrastive analysis of structure between Greek, English and French, especially via texts from literature, provides significant understanding regarding every linguistic distinct trait or problem. Through evaluating syntactical components within genuine circumstances, learners get a deeper understanding of the fundamental grammar concepts which control phrase building. Texts from literature offer a broad and eclectic supply for linguistic usage, demonstrating the way semantics may be used equally traditionally as well as flexibly.

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