

## The Relationship Between Syntactic Knowledge and Speaking and Writing Proficiency Among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners

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### Abstract

Today's world requires non-native English speakers and writers to speak and write acceptably and correctly in any communication. Hence, speaking and writing are two crucial skills in teaching and learning English. Different factors affect the proficiency of these productive skills among English learners. This study investigates the relationship between the syntactic knowledge of EFL intermediate students and their proficiency in writing and speaking to find whether the syntactic knowledge of students can affect their productive skills. In order to conduct this research, 50 Intermediate male and female students, between 18 to 25 years old, were selected. Four tests, including one placement test and one syntax test from Oxford University Press for intermediates—in the form of multiple-choice tests, i.e. one writing test, and one speaking test, were used. The data consisted of four sets of scores. The main aim was to calculate the correlation between syntax, writing and speaking. For the current study, a correlational/descriptive design was selected because the data was quantitative; and based on the scores of students, the researcher decided to discover the relationship between syntax scores and writing and speaking scores. The Pearson correlation and t-test proved that there is not any meaningful relationship between syntax and writing as well as syntax and speaking. Moreover, the results of this study showed that the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency is not different from the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency.

**Keywords:** productive skills, speaking proficiency, syntactic knowledge, writing proficiency

### 1. Introduction

When a student intends to start learning a new language, the main four skills, i.e., speaking, writing, reading, and listening are involved. Therefore, a very reasonable way to teach a foreign language for teachers is to prepare students to practice the four skills in different amounts and combinations (Dixon, 2005). Rao (2007) believes that if one concentrates on just one skill, other skills will be interrupted. Therefore, one should work on the four skills at the same time so that one would get the best results. Language skills are divided into two main groups: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking). The components of these skills in each group are interrelated. This interrelation along with their mutual effect can cause the development of their real application in the process of practical teaching.

Among the four skills, productive skills are used when one intends to say or write something. The importance of speaking is to the extent that those who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Mccarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004). The main purpose of all language teaching methods should be to create the ability in learners to use a language effectively and accurately in communication (Davies & Pearse, 1998). When students intend to acquire and learn a new language, they learn it passively; however, later they come to produce monologues, dialogues, and so many other types of spoken stuff which

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are created by themselves (Jeyagowri, 2018). In order to produce linguistic forms, in comparison with receptive skills, one should put more energy so that one can be as efficient as possible. As a result, when someone begins to learn a foreign language, their subconscious exposure is for both productive and receptive skills.

Hughes (2013) defines speaking as the interpersonal function of language through which meaning is produced and transferred. The important point to consider is that it cannot be claimed that all language learners are able to speak fluently and accurately after many years. It is because they do not have the necessary knowledge for speaking and communication. According to Nunan (1999), in order to speak a language, except the first language, mastery of syntax and enough vocabulary are essential elements. Another aspect is that when speaking in productive skills is discussed, the speaking task is performed by students under various conditions. According to Nation and Newton (2009), performance conditions can influence speaking performance. Nation and Newton (2009) believe that there are four kinds of performance conditions: amount of support, performance standard, time pressure, and planning. Language structure is made by grammatical points which are the building blocks of the message to be conveyed. Before someone starts to speak, the syntactic outline has to be formed in their mind. Swan (2001) mentioned that if someone knows the way of building and using particular structures, it ensures to communicate ordinary types of meaning successfully. Lack of these structures makes it hard to make comprehensible sentences. In the process of speaking, learners should know not only the way of constructing special points of language which consists of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, but also the identity why, when, and how to produce language. Hence, speaking has its own skills, structures, and conventions, which are different from writing (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Florez, 1999).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Today, in the period of the global village, there is a particular need for learning English because it is vastly used in all parts of life in the world. It is a truth that knowing the skills of productivity helps to create a strong base for companies, and they will promote their business in an international dimension. In addition, there is a great request for people having acceptable language skills in English. Thus, there is more request for English around the world, and most people indicate much interest in learning it. On the other hand, it is compulsory for second or foreign language learners to concentrate firstly on the fundamental skills of the language. Productive skills, including speaking and writing, are a category of these four skills. The importance of learning to speak is to the extent that those who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004).

On the other hand, writing is a crucial complex skill, and if students practice it, they can maximize consciousness and awareness of the structure of sentences while they are speaking. There are some factors important in learning to speak and write, and one of them is syntactic knowledge, which plays a crucial role in both. The probable relationship between syntax and speaking is not necessarily as much as the relationship between syntax and writing. In the process of learning productive skills, it can be seen that some students who are considered good at speaking fluently are not proficient enough in syntactic points. They can easily convey their meaning to their audience while they do not use syntax flawlessly. On the other hand, when it comes to writing, disobeying the syntactic rules is usually more revealing. Therefore, the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking and writing proficiency of language learners is potentially a field of research in ELT which is going to be investigated in this research. In the next two sections, research questions and will be discussed. Regarding the issue under investigation the following questions will be examined:

**Research Question One:** Is there any relationship between the syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

**Research Question Two:** Is there any relationship between the syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

**Research Question Three:** Is the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency different from the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency?

### 3. Review of Literature

Language plays an important role in improving students' intelligence and helps students gain success in every subject at school. In the globalization era, English is not only a universal language but also as a tool to communicate in oral and written form to understand and figure out information, mind, feeling, science, technology, and culture. In the English teaching-learning process, there are four skills that should be mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In the process of teaching language, whenever a teacher wants to build a great basis for teaching, there are certain numbers of items that should be considered. It is notifiable to know that one of the most important parts of this process, among students of all age groups, is to teach productive skills, including speaking and writing. Although there are differences in lesson planning for speaking and writing, both of them are employed for the primary goal of communication. During people's communication, it can be seen that role of productive skills is always the focus. Of the two productive skills, speaking proficiency should be hard for students to indicate a high amount of fluency and accuracy in the path of being proficient in the English language. It is always suggested to teachers to consider this point that it has many advantages if a teacher allows his students to know this fact that in the process of learning to speak and write, it takes time to be proficient in fluency and accuracy and become more familiar with different aspects of spoken and written language. One of these advantages is that their stress will be lowered and they can improve themselves gradually without any hurry. Hence, it is important to let them know that, for example, when a person is talking with another one, there is not enough time for planning a proper response, but there is the chance of correcting sentences immediately. The next productive skill is writing, which is almost a neglected skill but it is not less significant than speaking. Although the written language is somehow more difficult than speaking, being proficient in writing helps students to be more ready for their future educational projects. In summary, teaching productive skills is significant, since written and spoken communication are fundamental life skills.

### 4. Related Studies

Munby (1978) believes that oral proficiency has a nature of involving all components and developing communicative competence at the product level. On the other hand, Baruah (1985) talks about the relevance of writing components and their difficulty to understand. He says that these components are very important and crucial. Some of these examples are spelling different words in the correct form, the ability to recall acceptable and suitable words and use them in sentences, the ability to write alphabet letters at an appropriate speed, being able to use correct punctuation marks, the ability to use connectors and signals of sentences such as definite articles, pronouns and so on, and being proficient and master to organize ideas and beliefs in a logical sequence.

In his research about the teaching of writing, Keith (2001) discovered an important correlation between writing and speaking. He concluded that almost all of the exercises like

the information gap in spoken language are able to be a little bit refined by asking the learner to write down sentences instead of stating them. Therefore, he inferred that the process of writing, in comparison with spoken language, is time-consuming; but it was revealed that there are a few differences in this area on the basis of general, functional, and linguistic approaches which students used. In this research, the correlation between speaking and writing in some areas was investigated, but the role of syntax which exists in our study was not inspected.

Cleland and Pickering (2006) strived to discover some mechanisms which are used by students when they want to build certain syntactic examples in both speaking and writing. For syntactic examples in speaking, they described it as the tendency of the speaker to the repetition of previously used syntactic structures. After they applied three different tests using syntactic priming, they discovered that there is a close similarity between syntactic operations used in both speaking and writing. It is considerable to know that their study results have a similarity to the research of MacArthur et al. (2008), in which there was a significant relationship between the syntax in terms of density and embedding used in speech and writing. In this study, the focus was only on the mechanisms which are used during building syntactic structures, but in our research, the relationship of speaking and writing with the whole syntax is investigated not just mechanisms.

Jong (2008) conducted a series of studies for discovering the best path for promoting fluency of students. The results showed that those students who apparently had better syntactic knowledge, in contrast with their peers, spoke with higher articulation rates and longer fluent runs. Although there are many other factors that have an important influence on this, such a result states that the syntactic knowledge of students is related, to some extent, to their speaking fluency. The concentration of this study was only on fluency in speaking and its relationship with syntactic knowledge, but both fluency and accuracy are the focus of our research.

A similar study to the current study was conducted by M.A. Mushin (2015) in Indonesia in which the correlation between students' grammar knowledge and their writing ability was calculated. In collecting data, the writer used a test as an instrument in order to calculate the proficiency of students in grammar and writing. In this study, the researcher, for the grammar test, used 25 multiple-choice items and 10 fill-in-the-blank items; and for the writing test, a written test was used. After the data was collected from 23 students, the researcher obtained the correlation between the grammar ability and writing skill of the students, whose number was 0.43. This number showed a moderate meaningful relationship between the grammar ability and writing proficiency of students.

Fathali and Sotoudehnama (2015) examined the influence of guided writing practice on the speaking proficiency of Iranian EFL students. They had a pretest-posttest controlled group whose approach was quasi-experimental. They chose two classes whose level was elementary and whose students had been selected by the institution based on the placement test results. In order to examine the homogeneity of the students as a pretest of the study, a Key English Test was administered to them. The quantitative analysis of the post-test using an independent t-test showed that both the writing and speaking proficiency of the experimental group had noticeably been enhanced. In addition, when the semester was over, a semi-structured interview examined the experimental group learners' tendencies toward the function of writing practice in increasing their speaking skills. The content analysis of the interview transcripts demonstrated that the learners retained positive attitudes toward the guided writing worksheets at the end of the term, though they did not have an identical attitude at the beginning. This study was just on the effect of guided writing practice

on speaking, but syntax, which is considered in our study, was not taken into consideration.

Another research was done in Indonesia in 2018 by Kusumawardani. The aim was to know the relationship between speaking fluency and grammar competency. For speaking fluency, the researcher, working with 34 participants, asked each one to answer a set of questions in the form of an interview in 5 minutes. Every rating had 25 scores, and the maximum score was 100; which means that students could answer the question correctly and the minimum score was 25, which means students can answer the questions with limited time. For the grammar test, the students had 45 minutes to choose the best answers to 20 questions. The result was that there is no correlation between English grammar competence and speaking fluency. The focus of this study in comparison with our study was just on the relationship between speaking fluency and grammar competency, where writing was not examined, while we included writing in our study, too.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Participants

To measure if there is a relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing and speaking proficiency, a correlational/descriptive design should be used because the data is quantitative; and on the basis of scores of students, the researcher wants to discover if there is a relationship between syntax scores and writing and speaking scores.

The participants of this study were 50 EFL students selected by two institutes from different levels. They were both male and female selected based on placement test results. These 50 EFL intermediate students who were from two institutes in Kashmar city, Khorasan province, Iran, were grouped into classes by two institutes named Isic and Gooyesh Melal. Participants were selected from two institutes because Covid-19 protocols had created an exceptional condition in classrooms of the institutes in which just a limited number of students could attend the class. Therefore, because of the shortage of students in one institute, the researcher had to administer the tests in two separate institutes among intermediate students. The range of students' age was between 18 to 25. It should be mentioned that there was a combination of all levels in the two institutes among which intermediate students were selected by the placement test. The period that they were studying and learning English was between winter 2021 to spring 2021.

### 5.2. Instruments

The instruments used in this study were four tests including a placement test, a syntax test, a writing test, and a speaking test. The first test that was used and administered among participants was a placement test. Since the researcher intended to conduct the study among intermediate students, the placement test was administered with the aim of extracting intermediate students. The placement test was Oxford Placements Test, which comprises two sections including 40 grammar and vocabulary multiple-choice tests as well as a reading test including a text and 5 multiple-choice questions that should be answered by participants in 45 minutes based on the Oxford criteria.

The second test was a syntax test, again by Oxford University Press, that aimed to measure the syntactic knowledge of students. It contained 40 multiple-choice questions to be answered within 40 minutes according to test instructions by Oxford. The third test was a writing test in which the researcher gave each student a paper to write three paragraphs about the following topic in at least 250 words: «*In three paragraphs, explain about three significant ways of learning vocabulary*». The time of writing test was 45 minutes (15 minutes for each paragraph).

The fourth test was a speaking test in which students were asked to answer a question in 3 minutes. They should answer this question by talking about it, and simultaneously their voices were recorded by the researcher. The speaking question was: «*In three minutes, speak about three important ways of improving speaking skills*». It should be mentioned that two determined raters did the process of scoring both writing and speaking. Since the number of raters in the current research was two, there were two sets of scores for both speaking and writing. Thus, it should be measured if there was any consistency between these sets of scores. In order to do this, the reliability of these scores as well as Cronbach's alpha measure was calculated. In the next section, the procedure of administering the four tests will be discussed.

### 5.3. Procedure

To administer the placement test, the researcher spread the sheets between the students of these two institutes. This process was done on two separate days; one day in one institute, and another day in the other institute. After the sheets of all students in two institutes were gathered, they were scored by the researcher based on the answer keys of Oxford. Based on Oxford, those students who answered more than 31 questions correctly were placed in an intermediate level and were allowed to take the subsequent test, i.e., the syntax test. In the final results, 50 students were selected randomly and were determined as intermediate based on the placement test.

The syntax test like the placement test was administered on two separate days in those two institutes. Then, the sheets were gathered, and the score of each student was calculated by the researcher based on the answer key. Both speaking and writing tests were administered on two separate days. One day for half of the participants (25 participants) in one institute, another day for the other half of the participants (25 participants) in another institute. The scoring of writing sheets was based on TOEFL iBT (Independent Writing Rubrics). The scoring of sheets was done by the two raters mentioned before. The scoring of speaking sheets by these two raters was based on TOEFL iBT (Independent Speaking Rubrics).

As to the writing test, the researcher, first of all, administered writing tests in the first institute inside the class. The writing sheets were given to participants and they were asked to answer the question written on the paper. The raters decided not to choose a question from Oxford because it was not simple and proper for our culture, so they changed the question. They decided to choose this question so that all participants can find the topic simple, and so that they would have more information about it. Moreover, the topic was related to the English language.

Administering writing and speaking test were done consecutively. At first, a writing test was administered among the participants. All sheets were spread among them, and they were asked to write three paragraphs about the topic in 15 minutes. Any participant who finished the writing test participated in a speaking test, in which students were assigned to speak about the answer to a question in 3 minutes. The voices of participants were recorded by the researcher. Finally, these voices were scored by two raters that rated writing tests too.

## 6. Results

Since intermediate students participated in the current study, the aim of the placement test was to select 50 intermediate students from 62 students.

Table 1: Statistics of Placement Test

Number of students	62
Maximum score	58
Highest score possible	60
Minimum score	39
Lowest acceptable score	39
Gender	Male & Female
Intermediate participants extracted	50
Number of questions	50 Vocabulary and grammar questions, 10 reading questions

As Table 1 shows, in this study, there were 62 students of which 50 were selected by the placement test. The placement test contained 50 vocabulary and grammar questions whose total score was 50 and 5 reading questions whose scores were from 10 based on Oxford criteria. The participants of the placement test were a combination of males and females. After intermediate students were determined, they attended the next three tests including the syntax test, speaking test, and writing test.

#### 6.1. Syntax test

After the syntax test was administered among 50 intermediate participants, the following information was obtained (Table 2):

Table 2: Statistics of Syntax Test

N Valid	50
Missing	0
Mean	16.0900
Std. Error of Mean	.24315
Median	16.0000
Mode	16.00
Std. Deviation	1.71931
Variance	2.956
Skewness	.104
Std. Error of Skewness	.337
Kurtosis	-1.013
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.662
Range	6.00
Minimum	13.00
Maximum	19.00
Sum	804.50

These statistics were obtained from 50 scores of syntax tests administered among intermediate students. The syntax test contained 40 multiple choice questions whose sources were from Oxford. The time determined by Oxford to answer the questions was 40 minutes. Based on the Oxford criteria, the score of this exam was calculated from 20.

### 6.2. Speaking Scores

The second variable was speaking proficiency whose statistics of scores have been covered in the following table:

Table 3: Statistics of Speaking Test

N Valid	50
Missing	0
Mean	12.1300
Std. Error of Mean	.25547
Median	12.0000
Mode	12.00
Std. Deviation	1.80648
Variance	3.263
Skewness	.286
Std. Error of Skewness	.337
Kurtosis	-.165
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.662
Range	8.00
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	16.00
Sum	606.50

In the speaking test, participants were asked to answer a question in 3 minutes, and simultaneously, their voices were recorded. Based on the TOEFL criteria, the scores of participants were calculated from 16.

### 6.3. Reliability of Speaking Scores

There were three variables in the present study including syntactic knowledge, writing, and speaking proficiency. Therefore, there were three sets of scores obtained from 50 participants, and each set contained 50 scores. Since the number of raters in the current research is two, there are two sets of scores for both speaking and writing. Thus, it should be measured if there is any consistency between these two sets of scores. In order to do this, the reliability of scores of speaking and writing by means of Cronbach's alpha measure should be calculated. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. Technically speaking, Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test, but it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency). In Table 4, statistics for the reliability of speaking scores have been shown:

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of items
.813	2

As Table 4 shows, the value for Cronbach's alpha for scores of speaking is 0.813. Based on this table, this value proves that the internal consistency of speaking scores is good and scores are reliable. In addition, there is no excluded score from the total scores and 100% of scores are valid.



#### 6.4. Writing Test

In the writing test, participants were asked to write three paragraphs about the determining question in 30 minutes (almost 10 minutes for each paragraph). After the data was collected, the following statistics were obtained:

Table 5: Statistics of Writing Test

N	Valid	50
	Missing	0
Mean		3.0200
Std. Error of Mean		.17955
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.26958
Variance		1.612
Skewness		-.039
Std. Error of Skewness		.337
Kurtosis		-.999
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.662
Range		4.00
Minimum		1.00
Maximum		5.00
Sum		151.00

#### 6.5. First Research Question

The first hypothesis of the current study was: there is no relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency of EFL intermediate students. The statistics about the relationship between the syntactic knowledge of intermediate students and their writing proficiency can be seen in Table 6:

Table 6: Correlation between syntax and speaking scores

	Syntax	Speaking
Syntax Pearson correlation	1	.139
Sig. (2-tailed)		.335
N	50	50
Speaking Pearson correlation	.139	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	
N	50	50

In Table 6, the sig value shows whether two variables have a meaningful (positive) relationship or negative relationship. N stands for the total number of scores of participants. In Table 6, the Pearson correlation is .139 and the sig value is .335. When the sig value is higher than 0 and below +0.05, the correlation is meaningful. As Table 6 shows, 0.335 is greater than 0.05, so it is questionable and the correlation exists but it is not high enough.

The below table shows the Interpretation of the Pearson correlation.

Table 7: Interpretation Correlation

Correlation Value (r)	Interpretation
0,00 - 0,199	Very weak
0,20 - 0,399	Weak
0,40 – 0,599	Enough
0,60 – 0,799	Strong
0,80 – 0,100	Very strong

### 6.6. Second Research Question

The second hypothesis of the current study was: there is no relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The statistics about the probable relationship between the syntactic knowledge of intermediate students and their writing proficiency can be seen in Table 8:

Table 8: Correlation Between Syntax and Writing Scores

		Syntax	Writing
Syntax	Pearson correlation	1	.191
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.184
	N	50	50
Writing	Pearson correlation	.191	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.184	
	N	50	50

In Table 8, the Pearson correlation is .191 and the sig value is .184. Based on Table 7, 0.184 is interpreted as a very weak correlation, so the correlation between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency exists but it is not again considerable.

### 6.7. Third Research Question

The statistics about the third hypothesis of the current study can be seen in Table 9:

Table 9: Statistics of the Third Hypothesis

		Speaking	Writing
Syntax	Pearson correlation	.139	.191
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	.184
	N	50	50

The third hypothesis of the present study was: the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency is not different from the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency. Table 9 shows the comparison between the correlation of the syntactic knowledge of students with their speaking and writing proficiency. The p-value for speaking is .139 and for writing is .191. Moreover, the sig value for speaking is .335 and for writing .184. Based on Table 9, there is a correlation between syntactic knowledge and speaking as well as syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency, but this correlation is significant either.

## 7. Discussion

A study by Priyanto (2012) was conducted with the aim of obtaining the correlation between English grammar competence and speaking fluency of eleventh-grade students in sman 1 . The population was all eleventh-grade students in SMAN 1. The results of this study showed that the correlation between grammar competence and speaking fluency of eleventh-grade students in SMAN 1 was 0.44. Based on the correlation of criteria established by Bartz, it was found that the value of the  $r$  coefficient that was acquired as the result of correlation analysis between grammar competence and speaking fluency of eleventh students in SMAN 1 can be categorized as moderate and the correlation was significant. In comparison with Priyanto's study, the present study did not show a meaningful relationship between the syntactic knowledge of students and their speaking proficiency. It should be mentioned that in Priyanto's study, just fluency was measured while in the present study, overall speaking was measured.

A similar study to the current study was conducted by M.A. Mushin (2015) in Indonesia in which the correlation between students' grammar knowledge and their writing ability was calculated. In collecting data, the researcher used a test as an instrument in order to calculate the proficiency of students in grammar and writing. In this study, the researcher, for the grammar test, used multiple choices which consisted of 25 items and 10 fill-in blanks, and for the writing test, a kind of instrument namely a written test was chosen. After the data was collected from 23 students, the researcher obtained the correlation between the grammar ability and writing skill of the students which this number was 0.43. This value showed a moderate meaningful relationship between the grammar ability and writing proficiency of students. In comparison with M.A. Mushin's study, the present study did not show a meaningful relationship between the syntactic knowledge of students and their writing proficiency, because the correlation number in the current study was 0.191 and M.A. Mushin's study which was 0.43. In fact, M.A. Mushin's study shows a moderate correlation but the present study indicates a very weak correlation which cannot be considered significant.

## 8. Conclusion

This study aimed to measure the existence or non-existence meaningful relationship between the syntactic knowledge of intermediate EFL students and productive skills proficiency. In the current study, three null hypotheses were going to be assessed to see whether they should be accepted or rejected.

In the first hypothesis, it was mentioned that there is no relationship between the syntactic knowledge of Intermediate EFL students and their writing proficiency. To know if this hypothesis should be confirmed or rejected, the Pearson correlation between syntax and writing scores was calculated. The correlation value for these two variables was .191 which showed a relationship between syntax and writing scores but it was not meaningful. In fact, it was revealed that when Intermediate EFL students want to improve and develop their writing proficiency, it is not recommended to focus more on syntactic knowledge. They should consider syntax as an important factor, but based on the results of the current study, it cannot have much influence on their writing skill.

The second hypothesis was: there is no relationship between the syntactic knowledge of Intermediate EFL students and their speaking proficiency. In order to measure if this hypothesis should be accepted or rejected, the Pearson correlation between syntax and speaking scores was 0.139 which showed a relationship between syntax and speaking scores but it was not meaningful. In fact, it was proved that when Intermediate EFL students want

to improve and develop their speaking proficiency, it is not recommended to focus more on syntactic knowledge. They should consider syntax as an important factor, but based on the results of the current study, it cannot have much influence on their speaking skill.

The last hypothesis of the present study was: the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency is not different from the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency. Based on the correlation number between syntactic knowledge and writing and speaking proficiency, the third hypothesis was accepted. The P value between syntax and speaking was 0.139, while between syntax and writing was 0.191. In fact, it was revealed that the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing proficiency was not different from the relationship between syntactic knowledge and speaking proficiency. It means that the syntactic knowledge of EFL students had not any significant influence on writing and speaking skill.

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The authors they not have any conflicts of interest to declare.

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