

## DIFFERENCES IN SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is twofold, firstly to investigate whether adolescents reach the linguistic level corresponding to their age and secondly to compare their syntactic abilities in written narrative and non narrative texts. Syntactic development in adolescence refers to the development of syntax under normal circumstances during the period of adolescence, namely between the age of eleven or twelve and early adulthood. During this period, adolescents in secondary schools learn to produce narrative and non narrative texts. Narrative texts are those that reflect specific, mostly past experiences and put an emphasis on humans' actions and experiences. On the other hand, non narrative texts focus on a broad field of description or on the development of concepts, beliefs, arguments and information without relying on narration, things which make them more demanding than the narrative type of texts. Given the above, we carried out a large-scale survey in order to investigate the syntactic abilities of Greek adolescents. In particular, 2 groups of 300 adolescents (14.5 and 16.6 mean years of age respectively) were asked to produce two texts, one narrative and one not narrative on a current topic. Our results showed that older adolescents exhibited better syntactic abilities compared to early ones. However, an unexpected high performance in non narrative texts was produced by early adolescents. This finding shows that the production of complex texts may be related to unexpected language performance.

**Keywords:** Syntax, adolescence, narrative texts, non narrative texts.