

WCES 2012

The recognition difficulty of extended compound sentences for Turkish first year english language education students

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Abstract

Turkish First Year English Language Education students have serious problems in recognition and production of extended compound sentences, which carry extra phrases. Therefore, they cannot write extended compound sentences whose extended fragments lead them to think that they are not handling the compound sentences but something else. In order to explore this problem, 55 Turkish first year English Language Education students will be given a questionnaire including 25 multiple choice test questions each of which will include simple, extended compound sentences, complex, and compound-complex sentences as alternatives. Students will be asked to identify the compound sentences. In this paper, the reasons of non-recognition of extended compound sentences by Turkish first year English Language Education students will be investigated.

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Keywords: compound sentences, extended compound sentences, parsing, conjunctions, primer style, interrupters

1. Introduction

Effective writing, being a complex process that allows students to explore thoughts and ideas, requires the recognition and practice of sentence types. In English, there are four types of sentences as organizational patterns that enable the readers to follow the flow of ideas: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences (Demirezen,1993). The readers can understand and experience the writer's intended meaning and premise within such sentence types. Coordinate and correlative conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs are recursive processes, and as mechanics of writing, they help students learn to produce cohesive and coherent sentences in paragraphs, compositions, and essays on their way to become self-sponsors of their own writings by further exploiting the conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammatical agreement, and the like. There are several approaches to teaching writing that are presented by (Raimes, 1983), which are the Paragraph-Pattern Approach, the Controlled-to-Free Approach, the Free-Writing Approach, the Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach, the Process Approach, and the Communicative Approach. The purpose of this article is to explore the ESL/EFL learners' recognition of the identification of the basics of compound sentences and their expanded forms.

2. Aim of the Research

The purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to explore the identification of extended compound sentences, and (2) to determine whether the extended compound sentences confuse the perception of the compound sentences by the first

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year students of the Department English language education at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. This article will try to answer this question: Is a compound sentence the same as an expanded compound sentence?

2.1. Data Collection

The participants of this research are the 55 first year students of the department of English language education, the Faculty of Education at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. 10 males and 45 females, age range varies from 18 to 19. In this research, a pretest and posttest are implemented. The 55 participants are given a pretest questionnaire including 25 questions with 5 alternatives on simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex and are asked to identify the compound sentence as the correct alternative. In the first week of the month, 6 hours of teaching and practices of these four types of sentences with PowerPoint took place. The same PowerPoint was given to the students for self-study.

In last week of the month, after the elapse of 3 weeks, the already implemented pretest was reused by keeping the correct alternatives in their former positions but correct answers were converted into extended compound sentences in three ways, in sentence-initial, sentence-medial, and sentence-final positions by means of participial, participle, noun, adjective adverb, appositive, gerundive, verbal phrases and were given to the students as a posttest. The aim was to measure whether extended compound sentences confused the minds of the students or not.

2.2. Data Analysis and Results

3. Table 1. Test Results

Groups	n	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test Std. Deviation	Post-Test Mean	Pre-Test Std. Deviation
Control Group	8	16.8	2.5	17.1	2
Experimental Group	39	16.9	2.58	19	2.47

The reliability coefficient was calculated and Cronbach’s alpha value is found .991 for the pre-test and post-test indicating that the instrument can be considered as a highly reliable tool. The experimental group (n=39), which received a 6 hour intense training, displayed an increase of 2.1 in scores in the post-test. The control group (n=8), which was not provided with the intense training, did not perform significant improvement in the post-test and their scores found to be increased only by 0.3.

4. Table 2. T Test

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Exp Pre-Test	40,816	38	,000	16,92308	16,0837	17,7624
Cntrl Pre-Test	26,802	15	,000	16,81250	15,4755	18,1495
Exp Post-Test	48,021	38	,000	19,00000	18,1990	19,8010
Cntrl Post-Test	34,250	15	,000	17,18750	16,1179	18,2571

5. Table 3. One-Sample Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Exp Pre-Test	39	16,9231	2,58930	,41462
Cntrl Pre-Test	16	16,8125	2,50915	,62729
Exp Post-Test	39	19,0000	2,47088	,39566
Cntrl Post-Test	16	17,1875	2,00728	,50182

Table 2 and 3 reveal that there is a meaningful difference between the results of the tests between the control and experimental groups. In Table 3, it is observed that there is a significant difference in the standard deviation values between the experimental and control group post test scores. Therefore, we can speculate that the treatment

procedure, the use of six hours extra teaching by power-point and extra home-work designs, has contributed to the perception of extended compound sentences by the students.

The following represent the conjunctive adverbs:

therefore	consequently	hence	consequently	instead
both	however	also	likewise	later
moreover	furthermore	then	meanwhile	however
so	otherwise	besides	else	seriously
later	nevertheless	accordingly	thus	earlier
afterwards	indeed	nevertheless	still	nonetheless,
conversely	otherwise	thus	furthermore	besides
moreover	similarly	nonetheless	briefly	finally
firstly	secondly	personally	subsequently	indeed
again	accordingly	similarly	previously	finally
incidentally	next	eventually	certainly	perhaps
unfortunately	apparently	absolutely	dangerously	efficiently

In addition, the following very commonly occurring conjunctive adverbs must be studied in relation to punctuation, specially positioned at word-initial, word-medial, and word-final positions in forms of expanded phrases. It must be noted that the conjunctive adverbs given below may also be used as **interrupters** instead of sentence connectors. If they are used as interrupters, they do not need a semicolon; instead, they will usually be set off by commas. In addition, both a semicolon may be used between two related sentences, and a period may also be used with or without the transition words listed below: these facts in relation to punctuation, curtailing their perception, are not noticed by the students.

The following examples illustrate this fact:

It is snowing today; I will, therefore, need my snowboard. (an interrupter)
 It is snowing today; therefore, I will need my snowboard. (an interrupter)
 It is snowing today; thus, I will need my snowboard. (an interrupter)

Turkish students who took the pretest and post-test in this research were not good at recognizing the above-mentioned list of conjunctive adverbs and interrupters because the functions of the conjunctive adverbs in writing are mostly overlooked in the writing courses of the first year student at the departments of English Language Education in the Faculty of Education at Hacettepe University. They seem to have confused the sentences that carry conjunctive adverbs with the adverb clauses. It must be noted that especially the conjunctive adverbs cause the use of **primer style**, choppy sentences, fused sentences, and run-on sentences, which must be avoided in effective writing. Thus, it can be stated that a good knowledge of the use of conjunctive helps writers to improve and vary their style as a writing skill.

3. Discussion

Frequent use simple sentences would quickly grow monotonous and also sound like it had been written by someone scanty writing experience. Therefore, it is a must to use other types of types like compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Compound sentences can be exploited, and to added further variety to writing they can be expanded by adding phrases to the beginning, middle, and end of them.

3.1 Remedial corrections

By using some remedial corrections compound sentences can be made lengthy. The sentence length is effective because extended compound sentences, being sentence elaborations, present ideas more effectively and clearly, and illustrate the meaning or purpose visibly. Then, extended compound sentences are elaborated sentences; therefore their teaching requires special attention. Students must be taught how to expand a compound sentence into an expanded compound sentence within correct sentence fluency.

Expanding compound sentences into extended compound sentences makes writing stronger and more persuasive, but it can endanger their identification in terms of types and can make their perception and understanding difficult. If they are used judiciously, they can improve the background of the students' perception and sophistication in sentence writing skills.

3.2 *The importance of sentence writing in department of English language education*

Vocational schools like English language education departments are professional institutions. In such schools the writing skill gains more importance because most of the students cannot achieve the speaking skill adequately. Therefore, writing must start from first things first. English sentences are built upon the foundation of simple sentences. In daily life, students are taught the simple sentence first and then learn compound sentence. Actually, in English language, there are four basic sentence types, namely simple, compound, complex, and compound complex sentences (Demirezen, 1993). These four types of sentences, which are building blocks of writing skills, can be structured in various forms and lengths, but each sentence type seeks to accomplish something different as a writing skill. It must be noted that trying to accomplish the writing of these sentences is still a difficult ordeal even for many natives of English language education.

Sentence writing introduces students to the mechanics of writing starting at the most basic sentence level, which is the simple sentence. Basic structures are given and supported with writing activities familiarizing learners with the parts of speech and basic spelling and punctuation, leading the way to effective writing. Knowing the different sentence types is essential for all students because they have a better understanding of the different sentence types with which they also develop the ability to demonstrate more sophisticated writing.

3.3 *Variety in Sentence Beginnings, Mid-positions, and Sentence Endings*

Sentences are the first goal in writing. Sentence formation is one of the key ingredients to grammar instruction as well. Students often start to write with simple sentences, and then progress to use more complex sentences. They attempt to write compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences in paragraphs, compositions, and in short essays. There are rules that govern sentence building within a few basic sentence patterns classified by their structure as simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Simple sentences are important in writing because they are the building blocks in the writing process, but while writing, even though some ideas are best expressed with simple sentences, we can't start every sentence the same way. In other words, using simple sentences all the way through would sound monotonous, childish, even foolish, choppy and unsophisticated. In addition, the use of only simple sentences may be strange to read. For example, a term paper built entirely of simple sentences will appear childish, immature, and be boring to read because it is impossible to convey what you mean to say just by using simple sentences. Using short simple sentences is the symptom of primer style. A **primer style**, which is the use of too many short simple sentences, must be avoided. Yet, it does not mean that clear, simple sentences are not effective and can be used whenever they are appropriate in the context

3.4 *Attention to compound sentence writing*

Writing can be made more interesting and more attention taking by using compound sentences additionally. Students must use a variety of sentences types so as to make their writing interesting and lively. Using too many simple sentences will sound clumsy, choppy and immature while too many long sentences will be difficult to read, hard to understand, and meaning can get lost in them. Extended compound sentences get to very difficult to perceive. Therefore, subordinating and coordinating one clause to another establishes a more varied relationship between ideas by showing the fact that one idea depends on another in some way logically (Ramage, et al., 2006.) But whenever necessary, students should periodically incorporate more compound sentences if the situation seems appropriate.

Paying attention to differences

By grasping the difference between the four sentence types (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex), it is possible to write with sentence variety. Sentence variety helps to make writing more interesting and reader-friendly. Achieving variety in sentence writing helps both to enrich the style of one's writing and to improve the effectiveness of written and spoken communication on the readers. The students must be very insistent about making a forceful, appealing and convincing approach to writing their thoughts in different types of sentences by taking care on proofreading their sentences and refactoring them over and over again until they convince themselves that their sentences in a composition or essay are grammatically correct and effective.

4 Why is it important to know whether a sentence is compound or not?

If a student knows how to write a simple sentence, it is possible for him to administer strict mechanical "rules" for writing compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. It is not possible to write a compound-complex sentence without a compound sentence which naturally takes place in the structure of compound-complex sentences. And with just these four sentence types, it is possible to write good, attention taking compositions and essays, with good sentence variety, perfectly acceptable for academic work in a *mature* critical writing style.

4.1 Sentence identification

Before writing compound sentences, sentence identification must be achieved. Sentence identification test or quizzes can reinforce the perception of students in the use of coordinators and punctuation in compound sentences. One of the distinguishing features that differentiate a student from the others is the style of writing. Writing style makes any student to uniquely recognizable. It is the student's writing style that can attract the audience to his writings; therefore, it is very important for students to have a good style of writing.

5. Conclusion

The main finding in this research is that when sentences become large with many elements, students find them very difficult to comprehend. Used within a mixture of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences when divided into various lengths, compound sentences can be extremely effective as they are capable of focusing the reader's attention on a particular point, but may also be problem-causing units within their expanded forms. The matter of the fact is that sentences have to be combined by means of related junctures and especially by conjunctive adverbs to avoid the monotony of just using simple sentences.

Within a sentence, ideas can be connected by compounding various sentence elements and by subordinating or coordinating one clause to another. Forming sentences and learning about sentences leads to a better style of writing and to good writing skills. The use of compound sentences gives much strength to writing and makes our ideas much clearer to the audience. Using properly extended compound sentences adds variety to writing, keeps the audience interested, and can generate the impact sought with a more precise emphasis. Apart from using complex and compound-complex sentences, the use of compound sentences can add a great deal to any writing (Meyers, 2000). So, using expanded compound sentences while writing paragraphs, compositions, and essays is not mandatory, but when done correctly adds interest by creating greater variety to the style of the writing.

Good sentence writing must be clear and concise, and logically get to the point. Clarity is the first principle of good writing. Readers and audiences need to understand the writing. Also, concise writing is crucial for two reasons: it improves clarity and reduces the risk of reader frustration because concisely written sentences reduce the number of grammatical errors as much as possible (Barnet and Bellanca, 2005). Good writers will exploit different kinds of sentences to make their writing style interesting and fluid in relation to writing their thoughts. One of these kinds of sentences is the compound sentence which assists to improve and vary their style. Students, using compound sentences in relation complex and compound complex sentences, will be the most effective writers in conveying their messages and will earn the highest points, respect, credibility and consideration. Teacher modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and finally applications to the student's own writing in terms of proof reading must be carefully handled in the sentence writing courses of vocational schools.

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