

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND READING COMPREHENSION

Diyora Qobilova

1st year student at Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

Zunira Almatova

1st year student at Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

Sabrina Mengqobilova

1st year student at Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the relationship between sentence structure and reading comprehension, highlighting how syntactic organization influences the reader's ability to understand written texts. The study discusses the role of sentence structure in meaning construction, the challenges posed by syntactic complexity, and the contribution of structural clarity to reading fluency. Findings suggest that learners who possess a stronger awareness of clause relationships, word order, and logical connectors demonstrate higher levels of comprehension and process texts more efficiently. The paper emphasizes the importance of teaching sentence structure within both grammar-focused and reading-writing courses, as it forms the foundation for effective communication and critical interpretation of academic texts.

KEY WORDS: sentence structure; syntax; reading comprehension; syntactic complexity; reading fluency; clause relationships; academic reading; grammar instruction.

Reading is one of the most important skills for students and learners of any language. Understanding a text requires more than just knowing the words; it depends heavily on how sentences are constructed. Sentence structure, which is the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence, affects how easily readers can understand the meaning. Poorly structured sentences make reading difficult, while well-organized sentences help readers understand ideas quickly and correctly. Sentence structure affects comprehension in many ways. Complex sentences, unclear organization, and missing connectors can confuse readers. On the other hand, clear sentence patterns, logical connectors, and strong grammar knowledge make comprehension easier. This article will explain the main aspects of sentence structure, provide examples, and show how it affects reading comprehension for students.

SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY AND COGNITIVE LOAD

Syntactic complexity refers to how difficult a sentence is because of its grammar. Sentences with multiple clauses, long phrases, or passive voice can be hard to understand. Readers need to hold many ideas in their working memory at the same time, which increases cognitive load.

Example:

"The research conducted by the committee, which was recently established to study environmental problems, revealed several important findings that need immediate attention."

In this sentence, the reader must understand the main idea and all the extra information. This makes reading slower and harder.

"The committee recently studied environmental problems. Their research revealed several important findings that need immediate attention."

Short sentences reduce cognitive load, making comprehension easier. Students can practice breaking long sentences into smaller parts to understand the meaning better. Studies show that students who read texts with simpler sentence structures understand the material faster and remember it better. Language learners especially benefit from shorter, clearer sentences.

Sentence Clarity and Organization

Sentence clarity is about how easy it is to understand the main idea. Clear sentences have a predictable order of subject, verb, and object. Sentences that follow this pattern are easier for students to read and understand.

Example of unclear sentence:

"Several important findings that need attention were revealed by the research conducted by the committee, which was recently established to study environmental problems." Even though this sentence is grammatically correct, it is confusing because ideas are mixed.

Simpler version:

"The committee was recently established to study environmental problems. Their research revealed several important findings that need attention."

Organized sentences guide the reader through the text. Using clear structures helps students focus on the meaning, not on decoding the sentence. Teachers often encourage students to identify the main clause and supporting clauses to improve clarity. Practicing sentence analysis with texts from textbooks or articles helps students recognize patterns and improves comprehension over time.

THE ROLE OF LOGICAL CONNECTORS

Logical connectors are words that link ideas in a sentence or paragraph. They show relationships like cause, contrast, result, or addition. Common connectors include because, although, however, therefore, and as a result.

Example without connectors:

"The policy was ineffective. The committee suggested a new approach."

"The policy was ineffective; therefore, the committee suggested a new approach."

Connectors make reading easier because they show how ideas relate to each other. Students who learn to recognize connectors can predict what comes next and understand the text more quickly.

Additional explanation: In academic texts, connectors are very important. They help readers follow arguments, understand evidence, and see the connections between ideas. Without them, even correct sentences can feel incomplete or confusing.

Grammar Awareness and Reading Skills

Grammar awareness means knowing how sentences are built, including different types of clauses, verbs, and sentence patterns. Students with strong grammar knowledge can quickly find the main idea, supporting details, and relationships between ideas.

Example:

"If the committee approves the plan, the project will start next month."

Knowing the if clause helps the reader understand the condition. Students who understand grammar can also guess the meaning of unknown words from context. Grammar awareness is not only important for reading but also for writing. Students who know grammar can construct sentences that are clear and easy to understand. Teachers often combine reading and grammar practice to help learners improve both skills.

Sentence Types and Reading Comprehension

Different types of sentences have different effects on comprehension. Simple sentences contain one idea and are easy to read. Compound sentences have two or more main clauses joined by connectors and show relationships between ideas. Complex sentences include one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses, showing cause, reason, or condition.

Example:

The committee studied environmental problems.

The committee studied environmental problems, and they suggested new solutions.

The committee studied environmental problems because the city needed better policies.

Students should practice recognizing sentence types because this helps them understand how ideas are connected and which parts are most important.

Practical Tips for Students

To improve reading comprehension, students can:

Break long sentences into smaller parts. Identify main clauses and subordinate clauses. Look for logical connectors to understand relationships between ideas. Practice reading different sentence types. Combine grammar and reading exercises.

These practices help students read faster, understand more, and remember ideas longer. Reading comprehension is not only about knowing words but also about understanding sentence structure.

The Importance of Sentence Structure in Education

Teachers should teach sentence structure to help students improve reading and writing. Using clear examples, exercises, and short texts, students can learn to recognize clauses, connectors, and sentence patterns.

Example: Students can take a long sentence from a textbook, break it into smaller sentences, and rewrite it clearly. This activity improves understanding and helps with writing skills.

Reading comprehension improves when students understand how sentences are built. They can then focus on the meaning rather than decoding complicated grammar.

Conclusion

Sentence structure has a strong influence on reading comprehension. Complex sentences increase cognitive load, while clear sentences with connectors and grammar awareness improve understanding. Students can practice reading by recognizing sentence types, connectors, and clauses. Teachers can support this process with exercises and clear examples. By understanding sentence structure, students can read faster, remember more, and enjoy reading. Sentence structure is not just a grammar topic; it is a key tool for understanding texts and learning effectively.

References

1. Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
2. Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. McGraw-Hill.
3. Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and Researching Reading* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
4. Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course* (2nd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.
5. Anderson, N. J. (1999). *Exploring Second Language Reading: Issues and Strategies*. Heinle & Heinle.
6. Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. Routledge.