

The Impact Of Compound Sentences With Adversative Conjunctions On Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: The article analyzes the difficulties encountered by 5th-grade students in the process of reading and understanding compound sentences connected by negative conjunctions. The research was conducted in three stages: in the first stage, experimental materials consisting of various sentence types were compiled, and the comprehension level of compound sentences with negative conjunctions was assessed; in the second stage, students' contextual comprehension skills were examined on the basis of negative conjunctions used within a text; in the third stage, their ability to interpret a compound sentence with a negative conjunction presented independently of context was tested. The results show that students make significant errors in fully grasping the meaning of the negative construction "neither...nor." These errors were found to negatively affect the holistic understanding of the text. The study highlights the role of negatively connected compound sentences in reading comprehension competence and offers important methodological conclusions for mother-tongue education.

Keywords: Compound sentences with negative conjunctions; neither...nor construction; reading comprehension; contextual understanding; 5th-grade students; methodological implications; mother-tongue education.

Introduction: Today, developing students' skills in reading and comprehending texts accurately, consciously, and analytically is one of the most urgent tasks. In the process of teaching the mother tongue, the instruction of language units should serve the purpose of understanding meaning. In this regard, grammar is viewed as a tool for the conscious use of language. Reading comprehension is linked not only to a student's vocabulary but also to their ability to understand syntactic units—particularly the structure and semantic relations of compound sentences.

Compound sentences require a high level of analytical thinking and the ability to correctly identify the logical relations between clauses. In particular, compound sentences connected by negative conjunctions represent a complex syntactic structure, and fully understanding their meaning requires students to grasp the grammatical function of negation, the semantic load carried by conjunctions, and the contrast between clauses.

METHODS

The study aimed to determine the level at which 5th-grade students understand compound sentences

connected by negative conjunctions. The research was carried out in three stages. At each stage, students' skills in recognizing grammatical units, interpreting logical relations between clauses, and understanding the meaning of negation were evaluated.

Stage 1.

In order to determine 5th-grade students' acquisition of various sentence structures, experimental material was first prepared based on different sentence constructions. Questions were posed about different parts of these sentences, converting them into interrogative forms. For example: "The cat meowed" (subject + predicate) → "What did the cat do?"

A total of 150 sentences ranging from simple to complex structures were compiled. The simple and compound sentences were presented to students in mixed order. The sentences were shown to the students via a projector, and they were instructed to read and understand them. After the sentence was read aloud again, the projector was switched to a blank slide. A question related to the displayed sentence was read twice, and students were asked to record their answers on worksheets.

Reading and listening comprehension differ in that they involve two different types of signals processed through different sensory channels. Each has its advantages. In reading comprehension, it is possible to control the amount of incoming information, and segmentation of the signal is generally easier. Listening comprehension, on the other hand, is richer due to the presence of intonation.

According to J. Carroll, listening comprehension involves acoustic, phonetic, and phonological levels, while reading comprehension consists of symbol, letter, and word levels. Since our goal was to assess students' comprehension performance, both reading and listening comprehension skills were utilized.

Stage 2.

This stage of the study was conducted using the "Saddinisa" chapter from Khudoyberdi To'xtaboyev's Sariq devni minib. Using the text, students' comprehension of certain grammatical, lexical, and syntactic units was assessed based on several parameters. One of the questions focused specifically on understanding the meaning of compound sentences

connected by negative conjunctions. This stage aimed to evaluate students' skills in identifying how negative conjunctions affect semantic relations.

Stage 3.

In this stage, students were given a sentence taken from Gulxan magazine, presented independently of any context. The purpose was to assess several skills: understanding the grammatical meaning of negation in the absence of context, interpreting the contrast introduced by the conjunction, and drawing accurate conclusions about the meaning of the sentence.

RESULTS

The study revealed that 5th-grade students experience considerable difficulty in reading and listening comprehension of compound sentences connected by negative conjunctions. During the experiment, students frequently failed to fully grasp the semantic load of negative conjunctions.

The percentage-based results are presented in the following table (not included here).

T/r	Sentences	Questions	Right	Wrong
1 stage				
1	Yesterday it neither rained nor was the weather warm.	What was the weather like yesterday?	44	56
2	Lola was unable to find the book she was looking for at the bookstore, nor did she purchase any other works of art.	What book did Lola buy at the bookstore?	53	47
3	My aunt, whose face was dry, neither responded to my greeting nor was she able to hug the little girl who ran towards her.	How was my aunt?	44	56
2 stage				

1	<i>The weather was neither too cold nor too hot.</i>	Which of the following options best describes the content of this sentence? A) The weather was sometimes cool, sometimes hot. B) The weather was neither cool nor hot. D) The weather was sometimes cool, sometimes hot. D)E) The weather was sometimes cool, sometimes hot.	28	72
3 stage				
1	Aojamol neither receives nor shares the love of others.	Can a baby be kind to others? Yes. No	56	44

General Results

The overall findings indicate that 5th-grade students experience considerable difficulty in understanding compound sentences connected by negative conjunctions.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study demonstrate that compound sentences with negative conjunctions pose a significant syntactic challenge for 5th-grade students in the process of reading comprehension. The causes of these errors are analyzed below.

In Stage 1, 56% of students answered the first question incorrectly. Responses such as "rain," "it rained," "warmed," "warm," "rainy" show that learners had not fully grasped the negating function of the neither...nor

construction. A similar pattern was observed in the next example. Since the question targeted a specific sentence element, only 53% of students provided correct answers. Those who responded incorrectly frequently wrote phrases like "artistic work," "fiction book," indicating that they had not fully acquired the negative meaning conveyed by the neither...nor structure.

In the subsequent example of this sentence type, the comprehension rate was again low: 56% of students wrote answers such as "bad," "dried up." These responses suggest that students forgot part of the clause and relied solely on guessing the overall meaning. The phrase "madori qurigan" ("exhausted") was unfamiliar to many, preventing them from understanding the intended meaning. As noted in reading research, "When a word is too difficult, the

child must predict what might be happening; otherwise, the flow of information stops. Prediction helps preserve meaning.”

Similarly, when sentences contain participial constructions, the full meaning cannot be understood until the end of the sentence, which negatively affects overall comprehension. The increased cognitive load on working memory contributes to misunderstanding.

In Stage 2, students misinterpreted the structure “ham...ham emas” (“neither...nor”) by treating it as if it were “sometimes...sometimes” or “at times...at times,” perceiving it as an alternating action. This question required understanding how conjunctions and negation influence meaning. Seventy-two percent of students drew completely incorrect conclusions, indicating that they had not fully comprehended the meaning of the sentence within the text. Misinterpreting a single sentence within a text negatively affects comprehension of the overall content. Shanahan emphasizes the importance of sentence-level knowledge in reading comprehension, arguing that a student’s ability to understand a text depends not only on vocabulary and text structure but also on the ability to correctly interpret grammatical complexity at the sentence level.

In the final experimental stage focusing on negative-conjunction compound sentences, 44% of students responded incorrectly. One reason is that in such sentences, the predicate appears in a positive form, which misled the students. Many focused on the second clause and assumed that the subject “could share with others,” overlooking the fact that the neither...nor structure negates both actions.

CONCLUSION

Across all three stages, a significant proportion of students failed to correctly interpret the meaning of this syntactic structure. In particular, the high rate of errors in understanding the dual-negative meaning of the “neither...nor” construction indicates that its semantic features are not yet fully developed among learners. Although compound sentences with negative conjunctions may appear simple from a structural standpoint, their semantic interpretation proves difficult for students.

Therefore, teaching such constructions through varied contextual examples and tasks aimed at promoting independent analysis can enhance students’ comprehension. This study provides a foundation for developing practical recommendations to improve teaching methods for this syntactic unit in the future.

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