



## Sentence Length and Complexity in Ernest Hemingway's "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife"

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Date of Article</p> <p>Received : 2022/3/20</p> <p>Received in revised form: 2022/5/12</p> <p>Accepted: 2022/6/30</p> <p>Available online: 2022/9/22</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Sentence length, Sentence complexity, Ernest Hemingway.</p>	<p>Stylistics is a field of linguistics that is specialized in analyzing literary works linguistically. It aims to find the uses and meanings of literary writings. The present paper aims at assessing Hemingway's "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" in terms of sentence length and complexity. Its main goal is to demonstrate how the use of linguistic structure inside any literary piece may be exploited as a technique for revealing hidden messages. Halliday's (1985) approach is used to analyze sentence length and complexity in this paper. The researchers discovered that varying the length and complexity of sentences helps to clarify the core themes. It is also concluded that the most dominant type of the sentences used in Hemingway' 'The Doctor and the Doctor's wife' is the simple one. Most of the simple sentences are short ones.</p>

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### Introduction

Stylistics is defined as the study of literary discourse from a language perspective. Widdowson (1975) claims that stylistics is a combination of linguistics and literary criticism, rather than being self-contained. This field of study tries to find out how linguistic tools might have effect in literary works.

One aim of stylistics is to make critical judgments about excellent versus bad styles by analyzing language habits with the aim of finding, describing, and then classifying the linguistic elements of a text (Crystal and Davy, 1969: 10).

In English grammar, sentence length refers to the number of words in a sentence. Sentence length has an important effect on the reader of a text. Sentence complexity, on the other hand, also has an important role in any text. Sentences are either simple, parataxis or hypotaxis. A simple sentence consists of one independent clause. While, the other types consist of more than one clause. Such clauses are usually independent in the case of parataxis and mix between dependent and independent in the case of hypotaxis.

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The current paper is primarily concerned with how stylistic analyses aid a deeper and better comprehension of the meaning and interpretation of a literary text. It explores sentence length and complexity in one of Ernest Hemingway's short stories, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife". Halliday's (1985) approach is used to analyze sentence length and complexity in this paper.

## 1. Theoretical Background

### 1.1 Sentence Length and Complexity

The number of words in a sentence is referred to as sentence length in English grammar. It is used in most readability formulae to determine its complexity. However, in some cases, reading a short sentence is more difficult than reading a long one. (Brookshire, 2015: 232).

Long sentences are generally thought to be more hard to read than shorter ones. As early as 1921, sentence length was proposed as a readability metric (Kitson, 1921). Then some measures of sentence length has appeared in almost every reliability formula (Schlesinger, 1968: 71). Sentence length is a key feature that makes understanding specialized conversation more difficult. Longer sentences are used to encapsulate written specialized texts than in general English (Gotti, 2008: 85).

Concerning sentence complexity, it is usually identified by the number and the kind of clauses in a sentence (Connelly, 2013: 236). Sentences are either simple, parataxis or hypotaxis. Halliday differentiates between parataxis and hypotaxis. A simple sentence has one independent clause. That is, it does not have another clause working as one of its elements. A simple sentence is not necessarily simple in a nontechnical sense. It may be very

complicated because its phrases are complex but it is still simple since it has one predicate, therefore one clause (Mather et al, 2009: 145). Parataxis is defined as the linking of elements of equal status. (Hacker, 1999: 21). Hypotaxis is a syntactic subordination (as by a conjunction) opposed to parataxis (Collins, 1991:68).

## 2. Model of Analysis

Halliday (1985: 192-216) states that a sentence can be viewed as a clause complex, which consists of a head clause and other clauses that alter whether paratactically or hypotactically. The logical subtype of the ideational meta-function's logical subtype is organized in the mode of combination.

The logical interdependency between phrases where the interdependents are of equal status is referred to as parataxis. When two clauses are related paratactically, the major one begins (1) and the secondary one continues (2). The logical interdependency between sentences where the interdependents are of unequal status is referred to as hypotaxis. As a result, one of the clauses can be thought of as a Head that is modified by the other. When two phrases are coupled hypotactically, the primary one is dominant (A) and the secondary one is dependent (B).

## 3. Data Analysis and Discussion of Sentence Length

When the talk is about the analysis of sentence length, it is clear that short sentences obtain the domain in Hemingway's story "The Doctor and the Doctor Wife". Most of the simple sentences are short. Some sentences are very short that are formed from two or three words. Example:

1-Listen, Doc. Sentence No. (53).

2- He was happy. Sentence No. (60).

In the first sentence, the writer forms his order from imperative verb and abbreviation of the word doctor ( Doc.). The second example is declarative which consists of three words, the subject, the verb, and the complement that is an adjective.

Some sentences in the short story are long; the number of words is ( 23, 31, 45). The longest sentence in the story is formed from 60 words, this sentence is:

3-They had drifted up onto the beach and if nothing were done about them sooner or later the crew of the Magic would come along the shore in a rowboat, spot the logs, drive an iron spike with a ring on it into the end of each one and then tow them out into the lake to make a new boom. Sentence No (10).

In opposite to example ( 1 and 2) , example No (3) is very long and it is formed from 60 words. Here, Hemingway varies his ordinary style and uses some clauses and many phrases in order to convey the idea to his readers in a smooth way .

The following table shows the number of words and its percentage in this short story:

2 to10 Words	2 to 20 Words	2 to 30 Words	2 to 40 words	2 to 50 words	2 to 60 words
79	39	9	1	1	1
Senten ces	Senten ces	Senten ces	senten ce	senten ce	senten ce
60.75%	30%	6.9%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%

It is clear from the above table that the percentage of the number of words that Hemingway tends to use short sentences more than long ones. As it is shown that 60. 75% of sentences, their words are between (2 to 10)

words, whereas 30% of them are between (2 to 30). The reason behind this is Hemingway's style in writing is accurate and understandable so that the idea will be clearer and shorter than its fact. He tries to give his readers the core idea without making them drifted with details. These short sentences carry the theme of the story to the mind of reader in an easy way.

#### 4. Data analysis and Discussion of Sentence Complexity

"The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" is one of Hemingway's short stories. He uses all types of sentences but not in an equal way. His use of simple sentences is more than other types. The reason of using simple is to make his text clearer. The number of simple sentences is (100). Some of them is very short (two words only) and other are long. These simple sentences are statements, questions and orders. The simple sentences are numerous in the dialogue between the characters of the story especially in order.

Examples of simple sentences:

4- It's driftwood. Sentence No (27) in the story. This sentence is simple that consists of three words: one subject, one verb and a complement. It is statement and it is very short.

5-Dick kneeled down in the sand and looked at the mark of the scaler's hammer in the wood at the end of the log. Sentence No (36) in the text. It is one of the longest sentences in the story. It is formed from 24 words. There is one subject, two verbs, object and preposition phrases.

6-" Listen, Doc." Sentence No (53). It is a simple and order which consists of two words only.

Hemingway uses some parataxis sentences, their number is ( 9 ) only. He uses the connectors and, but and the comma to connect two sentences.

Examples on parataxis sentences:

7-Dick picked up the axes and Eddy took the saw down from the tree.  
Sentence No. ( 71)

Here, there are two sentences combined by 'and' it has two subjects ( Dick and Eddy), two verbs ( picked up and took) and complements.

8-Eddy laughed but Billy Tabeshaw looked very serious.

Sentence No (67) has two subjects (Eddy and Billy Tabeshaw) two verbs ( laughed and looked) which are connected by ' but'.

9- "Give me the book, I'll put it in my pocket."  
Sentence No (127)

The two sentences are combined by a comma. The writer connect his sentences in a clear style.

The use of hypotaxis sentences is more than the use of parataxis ones. Hemingway uses hypotaxis sentences nineteen in the story. He uses ( as, where x3, that x 4, if x 5, who x 3, because, as well as, and when) to connect independent clauses with dependent ones. The need for clarifying, defining, or giving reasons for things lead the writer to use hypotaxis sentences.

Examples on hypotaxis sentences:

10-If no one came for them, they would be left to waterlog and rot on the beach. Sentence No (12).

11-I don't care who you steal from. Sentence No (42).

12- I really don't think that anyone would really do a thing like that. Sentence No (108).

Also, the writer mixes between parataxis and hypotaxis only twice in sentence No (101):

13- "Well, Dick owes me a lot of money for pulling his squaw through pneumonia and I guess he wanted a row so he wouldn't have to take it out in work."

In this parataxis-hypotaxis sentence, the two independent clauses are combined by 'and' and the dependent clause by the subordinate ' so'.

The second use of parataxis-hypotaxis sentence is the example No (3) in section 3( sentence No 10) which is the longest sentence in the short story. Its main clause is connected by 'and' with if clauses ( independent and dependent).

The percentage of the use of the sentences as shown in the table:

No	Type of sentence	No. of frequency	Percentage
1	Simple sentence	100	76.92
2	Parataxis sentence	9	6.92
3	Hypotaxis sentence	19	14.6
4	Parataxis-hypotaxis sentence	2	1.5

From the preceding analysis, it is obvious that Hemingway's use of simple is dominant. The percentage of simple sentences is 76.92%. The simple sentences make the idea of the text obvious and flows from one step to another in an ordinary way. The linguistic structures and the message of the story are twins in that they cannot be separated from each other. The message is expressed in a clear way in using simple sentences. Even though, there are parataxis and hypotaxis sentences which support and clarify the writer's intentions.

In brief, the use of simple and short sentences is parallel, most of his short sentences are simple and this a return to his minimalistic style which focuses on surface elements without explicitly discussing the hidden themes through economic words with very little context or interpretation. According to Hemingway's view, the sentences should give us surface ideas and we should discover the deeper meaning of the story through implicitly. All his sentences and especially the dialogue between his characters (the sentences are short and simple) explore the theme of masculinity versus femininity and the relationship between them.

### Conclusions

The present study reaches the following conclusions:

- 1- Hemingway uses all types of sentences in 'The Doctor and the Doctor's wife', and he intends to vary in the length of these sentences from short sentences consist of two words to long ones consist of sixty words.
- 2- The most dominant type of the sentences used by Hemingway is the simple one. It is indicated that Hemingway tries to achieve his literary aims by using this type of sentences more than the other ones.
- 3- Most of the simple sentences are short ones.
- 4- It is also found out that Hemingway's use of hypotaxis is more than parataxis and both of them refer to the complexity of sentences.
- 5- There is frequent occurrence of simple and short sentences in the dialogue between the characters of the short story and especially in the orders.

6- It is concluded that varying the length and complexity of sentences helps to clarify the core themes.

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طول الجملة وتعقيدها في قصة همنغواي " الطبيب وزوجة

الطبيب"

رغدة نعيم خضير

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الملخص:

علم الأسلوبيات هو مجال من مجالات علم اللغة متخصص في تحليل الأعمال الأدبية لغويًا. يهدف هذا العلم إلى إيجاد استخدامات ومعاني الكتابات الأدبية. ان الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تقييم القصة القصيرة "الطبيب وزوجة الطبيب" للكاتب هيمنجواي من حيث طول الجملة وتعقيدها. ان الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو توضيح كيف يمكن استغلال استخدام البنية اللغوية داخل أبنص أدبي كأسلوب لكشف الافكار التي يريد الكاتب ايصالها الى القارئ. تم استخدام نظرية هالدي (1985) لتحليل النص من حيث طول الجملة وتعقيدها. استنتج الباحثون ان تغيير طول الجملة وتعقيدها يساعد في توضيح الموضوعات الأساسية للنص. وقد استنتج أيضا ان النوع الأكثر شيوعا من الجمل المستخدمة في قصة هيمنجواي "الطبيب وزوجة الطبيب" هي الجمل البسيطة والتي كانت معظمها قصيرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

طول الجملة, تعقيد الجملة, ارنست همنغواي