An Analysis of the Problem-Causing Structures of Simple Sentences for Turkish University Students

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Abstract

A simple sentence is the first type of sentence one learns to speak. It is the first type of a sentence that children learn to speak, remaining by far the most common type of sentence in the spoken and written language of people of all ages. The basic English language sentence is called a simple sentence. Primarily, it requires a subject and a verb. It can be as short as one word, or it may appear in any of these five combinations: Subject + Verb, Subject + Verb + Object, Subject + Verb + Complement, Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object, and Subject + Verb + Object + Complement. But there is a 6th type of simple sentences with extended phrasal modifiers that can occur at the beginning of the sentence, mid-sentence, or at the end of the sentence which confuses the students. In this article, the possible combinations of simple sentence elements will be explored and specific examples will be put forward by additional example simple sentences. In many grammar books, the structure of simple sentences is explained through five types of occurrences. However, there is a 6th type, which is often neglected in textbooks that will be described in this paper. In relation to this topic, the difficulties caused by phrasal modifiers at the beginning of the sentence, mid-sentence, and at the end of the sentence in the structure of simple sentences will also be demonstrated in teaching writing. The sample sentences given in this article can be converted into speaking sentences via Audacity and Text-to-Speech programs.

Key terms: simple sentence, phrasal modifier, dangling modifier, parsing

1. Introduction

A sentence expresses a complete thought. It is the basic unit of a spoken or written entity in communication. Linguists have problems in agreeing how to define the word "sentence." (Wishon and Burks, J., 1980; Aarts and Aarts, 1988; Williams, J. 2005; Teschner and. Evans, 2007). In this research, a clear-cut definition of a simple sentence will be handled as follows: a sequence of related words in a syntactic formation whose first word starts with a capital letter and whose last word is followed by an end punctuation mark (period/full stop, question mark or exclamation mark. In written and oral communication, sentences come in a variety of shapes, styles, and sizes in written and spoken utterances such as simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. Some sentences consist of only a single main clause. That is, they are **simple sentences** and have only one main verb, one subject, and one predicate, though they may include different kinds of modifiers. Yet different kinds of modifiers, coming at the beginning of sentences, in the middle of sentences, and at the end of sentences get to be very confusing to non-native learners of English. We ordinarily include some additional words that explain the subject. The sentence or a part of a sentence that contains a subject and a verb and constitutes a complete thought is called an independent clause.

2. The Definition of a Simple Sentence

There are many definitions of a sentence. Every grammarian, it seems, has his own definition (Wishon and Burks, 1980: 2). A sentence composed of one clause is called a simple sentence, and its structure is the same as that of a clause (Jackson, 1982: 93). One way to categorize sentences is by the clauses they contain. The classification in the analysis of sentences is made according to how many clauses there are in the utterance, not according to the form in which a thought is put. Sentences, then, have a structure described in terms of clauses (Jackson, 1982: 92-93). A sentence is a group related of words which begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (.), question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!). A similar definition is given by Teschner and Evans (2007: 225) as "any sense-making piece of writing that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, with three dots, with a question mark or an exclamation point. In a simple sentence there is one main clause and no subordinate clauses (Demirezen, 1998: 1). It contains a single statement, question, or command.

A simple sentence has one independent clause. (Jackson, 1982: 92). It has a single subject and predicate by describing only one thing, idea or question, and has only one verb, and contains only an independent (main) clause. Any independent clause can stand alone with a full meaning as a sentence. It has a subject and a verb with which it expresses a complete thought. A simple sentence is a main clause in itself; in other words, a simple sentence is always an independent sentence that is a sentence capable of occurring on its own (Aarts and Aarts, 1988: 80). It does not contain an embedded or a subordinate clause in its structure. A useful way to begin identifying clauses in sentences is to count main verbs. For each main verb there will be a clause and in each simple sentence, there has to be a subject a verb.

3. Basic Element Types of a Simple Sentence and Its Configurations

A simple sentence has one independent clause that can stand on its own with a complete meaning. In many cases, the simple sentence structure starts with the subject. The subject is commonly the noun and its modifiers, but this isn't always the case A simple sentence is an independent clause which must have a verb. There are five basic simple sentence structures in English; each type adds more elements one by one to the simple sentence.

1. Subject + Verb

The subject tells who or what about the verb. A verb, instead, shows action or state of being.
I swim.
Joe swims.
Jack walks.
The plane crashed.
Harry Potter is missing.

Simple sentences with subject and verb structures are very common in English sentence structure. They are made with intransitive verbs which do not require an object.

2. Subject + Verb + Object [(S+V+ (O)]

Some verbs have an object which is generally always a noun or pronoun. The object is the person or thing affected by the action described in the verb. An object as a single complement follows a verb immediately. When compared with the first case (1), it is seen that having an object in a sentence is optional.

Joe became a doctor.
Dogs chase cats.
The jury accepted his story.
We don't accept credit cards.
Cyclists should always wear bike helmets.
I drive a car.
Larry plays the guitar.
They ate dinner.
Ruth composes music.

3. Subject + Verb + Complement

The complement **completes** the meaning of the subject. That's why it is described as the **subject complement**. This type of clause uses a special type of verb, **linking verbs**, such as *be (am, is are) become, remain, seem, feel, look, grow, turn, appear, taste, sound,* and *smell.* Subject complements are generally made from the linking verbs. The following examples represent this fact:

I am busy.	John is a student.
They look sick.	Speaking skills are important.
The coast is clear.	Cherries are red.
Silvia laughed merrily.	She is clever.
The game became difficult.	My sister looks disappointed.
Mother looks tired.	She became wealthy.
Monkeys like bananas.	Giraffes are animals.
She became a writer.	This remedy does not seem plausible.

4. Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

Many times, the indirect object is found by asking To whom? or To what? after the verb and the direct object.
I gave her a gift.
She teaches us English.
He taught others the secret code.
The teacher gave the children homework.
Hacettepe University paid her the ultimate compliment.

Direct Object and Indirect Object Relationship

Objects come in two types, direct and indirect. Due to the nature of the verb, there may be two objects in English sentences, which go unheeded. Many sentences carry double object constructions which are confusing to many students.

Occupying Object Cases

Due to the nature of transitive and intransitive verbs, sentences can carry two objects, direct and indirect, at the same time. The direct object is the word or expression which answers the question "*who"* or "*what"* placed after the verb. Also, the direct object names that toward which the action of the predicate is directed, by referring to a person or thing affected by the action of the verb. A direct object is a single complement that follows immediately after a verb.

I hate **LIARS.**
The cat climbed **A TREE.**
The kidnappers demanded **A RANSOM**.
The thief smashed **THE WINDOW WITH A STONE.**

The term "object" is generally restricted to complements which carry accusative case- i.e. to nominal or pronominal complements. The object may be the complement of a transitive verb:

Will you help ME?
The thematic role of the theme of the sentence carries the direct object.

Indirect Object

The indirect object is a noun or its equivalent used as the modifier of a verb or verbal to name the person or thing for whose benefit an action is performed (http://classiclit.about.com/library).

I gave *every student* a question
Freud gave **his sister** a psychotherapy session

Direct Object and Indirect Object Together

Indirect objects are placed immediately after the verb. Direct objects that are noun phrases follow the indirect object. The indirect object is the second recipient of the action of a transitive verb Teschner and Evans, 2007: 222). That's why some sentences contain two complement types in forms of direct object and indirect object, or vice versa. The indirect object refers to a person or thing who receives the direct object.
The thematic role of the goal of the sentence is traditionally called indirect object, as seen in the following examples:

He gave me a gift
They named my son Utku.
I will send him a letter.
They offered Jack the job.
He called MARY A FOOL.
The army gave JACK a medal. (Demirezen,1998: 2).
They will get the teachers a car.
My grandfather will give me them.
Dad gave **me a dollar.**
Jack gave Mary a ring.

Functionally, both the direct and indirect objects are characterized by their ability to function as subjects in a corresponding passive:

Active: Next year Mr. Brown will teach us Turkish.
Passive: Next year we will be taught Turkish by Mr. Brown.

Active: The science jury has awarded him a scholarship.
Passive: He was awarded a scholarship by the science jury.

Some Characteristics of Indirect Objects
As a constituent of the simple sentence, the indirect object constituent is substitutable by a ***to-phrase*** following the direct object constituent:

The company offered Jack the job.
The company offered the job to jack.

However, the indirect object constituent cannot be replaced with a small group of verbs like ***to strike, to fine, to forgive, to save, to envy, to spar, to charge***, etc. In addition, the indirect object constituents are often omissible, as appears from the sentences like:

The Johnsons sent (us) flowers
Mary gave (him) a bottle of whisky. (Aarts and Aarts, 1988: 137).

Subject + Verb + Object + Complement
I left the door open.
We elected him president.
They named her Jane.
We consider Tarzan intelligent.

Confused Areas in the Analysis and Writing of Simple Sentences

Some sentences can take double or multiple subjects, verbs, and objects. Many students think that a sentence with double or triple subjects, verbs, and objects are not simple sentences but are compound sentences or other types of sentences.

Double or Triple Structures in Subjects, Verbs, and Objects

Frequently in a simple sentence, there may be two or more predicates to the same subject, two or more subjects of the same predicate accompanied by several modifiers and complements, which are purposely combined into single statements (Delahunty and Garvey, 2010: 326-330). Such extended simple sentences confuse the students by seeming to be compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences, but they are not.

Double or Triple (or even more) Subjects
Even if we join several nouns with a conjunction, or several verbs with a conjunction, it remains a simple sentence.

Sam and Jack play basketball every day.
Alice and John are my best friends.
John, Fred, and Arthur are good friends.
Food, oil, and gas supplies were shut off during the fighting.
Humans, dogs, and whales are mammals.
Tony and I have always been incompatible.
The Wheel, the plow, the loom, and metal working were basic. (Wishon and Burks, 1980: 10).
Double or Triple (or even more) Verbs

Compound and triple verbs can take place in simple sentences. Even if you join several several verbs with a conjunction, it still remains a simple sentence.

Alice **came and saw** me.
Lucy **cooked lunch and ate** it.
The dog **barked and growled** loudly.
The bear **howled and scratched** ferociously
Cathy fell off her bike and bruised her legs badly.

Jane **goes** to the library and **studies** Chemistry every day.
They **milked the goats and made** goat cheese and butter.
The gunmen shot and killed twelve people and wounded three others.
A pilot suddenly **emerged** from the plane, **walked** through the crowd and **came** directly to me.

The double predicates in simple sentences are very confusing to students:

The political party ***broke up, and returned*** to the more important concerns of the election. The prisoner ***shook*** **his head**, ***shouldered*** **the thorny cross**, and ***raised*** **his head** up to the sky.

Double or Triple (or even more) Objects
Even if you join several objects with a conjunction, it is still a simple sentence.

Alice saw **Jack and John.**
John sent **cards and letters.**
I would also have ***voyages and travels***.
Jane sent **posters, cards,** and **letters.**
There were **two men and a woman** in the car.
Tarkan **is a talented singer, writer, and actor.**
He caught **his *son* and her *daughter*** in his arms.
The price includes **your flight, hotel,** and **car rental.**
Every morning at breakfast, I eat **eggs, bacon, and toast**.

It must be noted that NO commas separate compound elements (subject, verb, direct object, indirect object, subjective complement, etc.) in a simple sentence.

5. Subject + Verb + Object + Complement

I left the door open.
We elected him president.
They named her Jane.
Johnny painted his front porch white.
That student called the teacher a genius.
The team elected George its president.
The sunlight made the sky red.
Studying French keeps him busy.

In most grammar books, these five combinations of simple sentences are given (Delahunty and Garvey, 2010; Evans, 2007; Aarts and Aarts, 1988; Demirezen, 1998; Teschner and Evans, 2007; Jackson, 1982; Wishon and Burks, 1980), but the 6th possibility of simple sentences with extended elements is not mentioned in grammar books.

6. Simple Sentences with Extended Elements: An Overlooked and Neglected Structure

In addition to these five structures, in the anatomy of the simple sentence, there is a 6th type of simple sentence, and it is this type that is neglected in the analysis and writing of simple sentences. Therefore, the rest of this article will describe this structure which has not been properly explored. The 6th type of simple sentence is called simple sentences with extended phrasal elements. These phrasal elements may be **adjective phrases, adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, gerundive phrases, participle phrases, verbal phrases, infinitive phrases,** and they may precede, come in-mid sentence position, or follow the simple sentence structure. Because simple sentences are expanded and lengthened by these phrases, they are confused with other sentence types like compound and complex sentences: this is a problematic area of grammar and teaching writing, which is very much overlooked and neglected. So, phrasal modifiers as extended forms in sentence stylistics can appear in three positions relative to the independent clause: in the initial position, the medial position, or the final position. It must be noted that "a simple sentence" consists of one main clause only. However, this does not mean that the sentence has to be very short, as can be seen in the sentence, "The waitresses are basking in the sun like a herd of skinned seals, their pinky-brown bodies shining with oil" (Verspoor and Sauter, 2000:35).

The following represents the related examples:

- **Beginning Phrases: Preceding the Simple Sentences:**

Initial phrase of a sentence is an **introductory modifier,** which is usually a signal for a comma. These must come right before the nouns that they describe. The phrases are followed by commas. However, unless an introductory prepositional, participial or any other phrase is unusually long, we seldom need to follow it with a comma. It is this type of sentence that is not mentioned in teaching writing books.

At peace at last, the old man died.
Above all, I would like to thank my parents.
In an ideal world, no one would ever get sick.
After a terrible accident, the car was repaired
At an early age, John became an opium addict.
After a few drinks, he started to slur his words.
Compared to his salary, mine is small potatoes.
Every morning at breakfast, I eat eggs, bacon, and toast.
While coming to class this morning, I witnessed a robbery.
Lying out on the beach, I watched the beautiful waves of the ocean.
Being a man of few words, his message was short and to the point.
Sitting at my computer, I looked out the window from time to time.
Waiting near a bus stop, John's mother had a serious heart attack.
Peeking through the leaves of the trees, I saw the badly ruined house.
After his wife's death, Pete shut himself off from the rest of the family.
Before leaving the house, Mr. Brown remembered to turn off the lights.
Opening the mysterious box, Suzan gasped at the sight of the huge spider.
At the midpoint of the study, all those taking part were interviewed again.

So, the simple sentences with extended phrases are easy to confuse because their separate elements from the main clause look like separate sentences, being in an extended location especially in the form of long, infinitive, prepositional, participle, or participial phrases while accompanying the main clause. They may even look like **compound** or **complex sentences** to students with little knowledge of sentence structure. Here are more simple sentence examples of this type:

Being the most commonly occurring vowel sound in English, the schwa phoneme has a pivotal role in the communication process.
Flying his new kite on a windy day, Larry lost it in the branches of the trees of Hyde Park.

Afraid to move in front of the hungry lion, Jane froze in terror.
Grumbling over the injustice of working on a Sunday, the workers rioted the whole day. **While addressing the artistic benefits of music**, we must also mention its use educational applications.
By examining ways of practicing these prosodic features, teachers make classroom speech more like normal speech.

B. Occurring in Mid-sentence Position
Medial phrasal modifiers split the independent clause, separating the subject and the predicate:
My wife, ***burning the roasted turkey***, looked terribly embarrassed.
The prime minister, **weighing about 150 pounds**, was about 50 years old.
Jane, ***waving good-bye to Tarzan***, drove away in an incredible high speed.
My brother, ***dancing at our older sister's wedding,*** met his future wife.
My new Attorney**, Jerry Hamilton,** came back to my office for a consultation.
Those slanders, **on top of the physical damage**, had almost destroyed me in court.
The car, ***sliding out of control toward the building***, will likely hit the living room of the house.
The astronauts ***chosen to ride the space shuttle to the Moon*** are afraid of long-distance travel.

C. Following the Simple Sentences:
I lay awake, **tossing and turning.**
To err is human, **to forgive divine**. (A. Pope)
Ruth apologized**, looking sheepish.**
Her name is Becky**, *short for Rebecca.***
My methods worked**, at least for others.**
The plane crashed, ***killing all 200 people.***
He marched off, **whistling a merry tune.**
She stood up, ***still feeling a little bit shaky***.
He was just sitting there, **staring into space**.
She caught sight of Alec, ***waiting in a doorway***.
God's glorious sunshine enveloped me, **healing every wound.**
He was bronzed and athletic, **with manly features and a steady gaze.**
The police spotted the rioters, ***throwing rocks at the passing cars.***
Ali agreed, **hoping that he would once again receive two pots in return**.
He was bronzed and athletic, **with manly features and a steady gaze.**
One day, Nasreddin Hodja was up on the roof of his house, **filling in a hole in the tiles.**
The enormous lion snatched up the larger pieces meat, ***leaving the crumbs for the cubs.***
Jane, skidding into a parking spot at the supermarket, **slipped when getting out of her car.**
Nokia is a trade company of Finland, **contributing to the telecommunication of the world.**
The statue of Kemal Atatürk seemed to be alive**, illuminated with the rosy glow of heaven's glory all around it.**

D. Both Beginning and Following Simple Sentences
This type is the most difficult one because dangling modifiers may cause problems for the writer.
During the court battle, he had lost everything, **even his luxury car.**
Above all things, I wanted to be pleasing to her**, even during the low moments.**
At ten o'clock the next morning, I was still in bed**, writing down all the important issues. In my excitement at hearing the good news,** I reached out of my open window and grabbed the officer's neck**, giving him a big hug.**
With my ears ringing and my consciousness already blurring, I lifted my head up just as the thief's boots swung on my head**, knocking me against the wooden floor once more. Almost immediately,** a strange numbness coursed through my body**, spreading from my neck and through my limbs.**
During the coming years, I would continue my education**, receiving a Master's degree in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin.**

E. A Couple of Phrases Beginning a Sentence:
As a case of stylistics in advanced writing, writers may even put a couple of phrases in the beginning of the sentence, but the writers must be careful with such structures, which create semantic pitfalls and modifier confusions.

Quite frankly, after being cheated by the same firm for the second time, I got mad.
With my son out of danger, with our family together and mending, my former courage and zest for life returned in giant steps.
Many times in the past, **after an especially grueling day**, I had stopped there for a drink to pick up my falling mood.
Four times a day for three days, early in the morning before going to the office, and in the evening at dinner time, I drove to the same hospital.
Instead of depending upon my family's fortune and their inexhaustible resources, at the age of sixteen, I was determined to become a success on my own.

F. A Couple of Phrases Ending a Sentence:
Again, using a couple of phrases one after another can create a suitable atmosphere for the intrusion of dangling modifiers.

I would need every bit of encouragement**, each fiber of strength, and lots of determination to make it through the coming months.**
I complained about the parking lot**, thinking of the narrow pathway leading to the hospital, and the only slightly wider road at the foot of it.**
Her memoirs became resource material for a project of Hacettepe University**, providing insight into the "death syndrome experienced by many people approaching the end of life.**
Mid-sentence Position:
The stone steps of the Ephesus theatre, **having been worn down by generations of visitors**, needed to be replaced (a participial phrase).
My favorite teacher, **a fine football player in his own right**, has won several state-level competitions.
The pond in the Maltepe Region of Ankara, **frozen over since early January**, is now safe for ice-skating for everybody.

End-of-Sentence Position:
The enormous lion snatched up the larger pieces meat, ***leaving the crumbs for the cubs***
He was just sitting there, **staring into space**.
Nokia is a trade company of Finland, **contributing to the telecommunication of the world.**
Ali agreed, **hoping that he would once again receive two pots in return.**
One day, Nasreddin Hodja was up on the roof of his house, **mending a hole in the tiles.**

Cautionary Remarks:
Now that you know you have the simple sentence type at your disposal, effective communication requires that you write sentences that say exactly what you mean. But there is a serious danger in writing simple sentences with extended elements: the dangling modifiers, which create pitfalls in teaching writing, are troublesome for poor writers. It must be borne in mind that dangling modifiers are potential ambiguity carriers.

Dangling Modifiers and Simple Sentence Relations
Dangling modifiers, also known as "danglers**,** floaters, hanging modifiers, floating modifiers" are common in the informal standard use of English, coming in different forms in the word-initial, word-medial, and word-final positions. A dangling modifier is a dependent structure which refers to a wrong word in a sentence. The problem with a dangling modifier involves a descriptive phrase, referring to a noun or pronoun that follows in one of these environments. Structurally, the term has a modifier part and dangling part. If modifiers are nouns used properly, the results are grammatically funny, ludicrous utterances. Professional writing does not accept the confusion created by dangling modifiers.

On the one hand, a modifier describes, clarifies, or gives more detail about a concept. A participial modifier sometimes can describe the attitude or mood of the speaker, even when the speaker is not existent in the sentence A dangling modifier, on the other hand, is a word, phrase, or a clause which modifies that word or words it modifies without clear-cut or logical boundaries in the structure of a sentence. In other words, a modifier is said to be dangling when the intended word to be modified does exist in the sentence. The dangling modifier dangles in the beginning, mid-position or at the end of the sentence because it has no word to modify. For example, most commonly, the dangling problem involves a descriptive phrase at the beginning of a sentence, referring to a noun or pronoun that follows. The following sentences illustrate some cases of dangling modifiers:

Having finished the homework, the lights were switched off.
"Having finished" is a participle expressing action, but the doer is not the lights (the subject of the main clause): lights don't finish assignments. Since the doer of the action expressed in the participle has not been clearly stated, the participial phrase is said to be a dangling modifier. Here's the key: the noun or pronoun should come immediately after the descriptive phrase. If not, the description 'dangles' and the connection is nonsensical, or curtailed, causing the reader to be momentarily confused.

The correct form will be:

Having finished his homework, Jack switched off the lights.

Some of the frequently occurring kinds of dangling modifiers are verbal phrases, prepositional phrases and participle phrases, and participial phrases.

Dangling Verbal Phrases:

The writer's intended meaning is distorted if s/he attaches carelessly the modifier to another word or words that appear in the same sentence, as seen the following examples:
To make her report more accurate, all the references were rechecked.
(The verbal phrase has no word it can logically modify.)
Revised: **To make her report more accurate**, Karen rechecked all references.
(The subject of the main clause was changed from 'references' to 'Karen', a word the verbal phrase can modify.
http://www.sponsoravillage.ca/english-2020/dangling-modifiers/
Dangling Prepositional Phrases
Dangling prepositional phrases occur where the preposition is separated from the words they modify, leading to ambiguity.
I once shot an elephant in my pajamas. (confusion!)
I once, whilst in my pajamas, shot an elephant. (better...)
(http://changingminds.org/techniques/language/syntax/phrase.htm)
Incorrect: After unlocking the door, the dog refused to go out. [Dangling prepositional phrase]
Correct: After I had unlocked the door, the dog refused to go out.
Incorrect: In the English speaking club, the speech texts were revised.
Correct: In the English speaking club, we revised the speech paragraphs.
Dangling Participles:
Incorrect: Being crowded in the car, the trip was uncomfortable. [Dangling participle phrase.]
Correct: Being crowded in the car, we were uncomfortable.
Follett (1966 :117) provides yet another ludicrous example:

Leaping to the saddle, his horse bolted.

"Leaping to the saddle" acts as a dangling participle because the horse did not leap to the saddle, but the man did. In this example, the noun or pronoun intended to be modified does not even take place the sentence.

Dangling Participials

A participial phrase is usually attached to its subject. The following participial phrases need rewording. Incorrect forms given below are all in dangling positions:

Incorrect: Trying out his new running shoes on a woodland trail, a bear crossed Tom's path. This example implies that the bear was breaking in a pair of new shoes, not Tom.
Correct: As Tom was trying out his new running shoes on a woodland trail, a bear crossed his path. (http://www.suite101.com/content/misplaced-modifiers-a121122).
Incorrect: **Walking down Oxford Street**, the buildings were beautiful.
(If the subject is missing or when the participle attaches itself to another object in a sentence, the phrase is apparently "hanging" on nothing or on an entirely inappropriate noun (the buildings.) **Correct: Walking down Oxford street** (participle), the man (subject) saw the beautiful buildings (object).

Another example: **Incorrect**: **While driving around Kızılay Square last night, a tree began to fall toward the municipal bus**. (It sounds like the tree was driving, the meaning of the sentence, therefore, is left "dangling." A **correct** form would read: **While Jack was driving around Kızılay Square last night, a tree began to fall toward the municipal bus.** Also, Strunk and White (2000) give the following example**: Being in a dilapidated condition, I was able to buy the house very cheap."** Here, the author apparently intends to mean that the house was dilapidated. But his sentence boils down to mean that "I", probably the speaker or the writer, was in a dilapidated condition.

Bernstein (1985: 128) gives another example of a ridiculous sentence: "**Roaring down the track at seventy miles an hour, the stalled car was smashed by the train**." "Roaring," as a participle, modifies the word "car", which is the grammatical object of the main clause; in fact, it is the train which is roaring down the track. But the participial phrase is pointed to the grammatical subject of the sentence, "car". The writer, in a ludicrous expression, is saying that "the stalled car," which really isn't moving at all, is doing the "roaring" down the track. The correct form of the sentence is: **"Roaring down the track at seventy miles an hour, the train smashed the stalled car."**

In brief, in order to avoid the ambiguity or confusion generated by misplaced or dangling modifiers, the modifier should be placed as close as possible to whatever it is intended to modify.

4. Conclusion

All guided writing and academic writing are based on sentences. Sentence structure is the order of the elements in a sentence, a group of words that expresses a complete thought. Simple sentences provide the most common way of communicating in written English. In addition, simple sentences are the smallest sentence unit that we use in writing. A simple sentence is the most basic type of sentence that contains only one independent clause. It is used the most in everyday speech. It has usually has a subject and a predicate, both of which may have modifiers.

Phrasal modifiers are used primarily in narrative-descriptive writing to provide details and images. In addition, phrasal modifiers can appear in three positions relative to the independent clause: in the initial position, the medial position, and the final position (Williams, 2005:95). Sometimes phrases like **adjective phrases, adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, gerundive phrases, participle phrases, participial phrases, verbal phrases, infinitive phrases** precede, come in mid-sentence position, or follow the simple can accompany the simple sentences. Using phrases as modifiers provides a variety of sentence style which, in turn, by confusing the learners, make them seem to be not simple sentences, but compound or complex sentences.

The length of a simple sentence varies: it can be one word, or it can be quite long by being extended into participial and participial, or prepositional phrases.
"**Melt**!
Ice **melts**.
The ice **melts** quickly.
The ice on the river **melts** quickly under the warm March sun.
Lying exposed without its blanket of snow, the ice on the river **melts** quickly under the warm March sun.
(http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/sntstrct.html)

As you can see, a simple sentence can be very short or quite long. Long simple sentences with accompanying extended phrases, especially with participial phrases, should not confuse students. In written English and teaching writing, simple sentences can be very effective for drawing a reader's attention to an issue or for summing up an argument, but they have to be used with care: putting down too many simple sentences consecutively can make your writing seem immature by its excessive length. Travel writers, memoir writers, and newspaper reporters seem particularly prone to dangling offences.

There are also entertaining effects of dangling modifiers. For example, **dangling modifiers** can be hilarious. But while we all like to amuse the readers, surely it is better if this is done intentionally." (Boulter, 2010). Here is another example:

"Once recognized, a writer or editor can easily fix the dangler, and the result is a clearer, sharper sentence. "WAIT! IT'S A TRICK!" That sentence has a classic dangler! The participle phrase 'once recognized' doesn't refer to what immediately follows, 'a writer or editor.' One solution:

"Once recognized, a dangler is usually easy to fix, and the result is a clearer, sharper sentence." (Corbett, 2008).

"Dangling modifiers are very common in literature. The one pitfall that must be avoided is unconscious humor … The dangling modifier is a venial sin at most, but if you commit an unintentional howler, you are liable to be ridiculed."
(*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, 1994).

Consequently, it must be noted that dangling modifiers are trouble giving dilemmas to your writing by confusing your readers and obscuring your meaning due to a lack of connection. In incorrectly formed simple sentences with dangling modifiers, the communication suffers because the utterances are meaningless (or mean something other than what you intend to mean), vague, curtailed, funny, ludicrous, or exaggerated. So they must be restated and the words they need to be added in order to make sense. A writer or editor can easily fix a dangler, and the result is a clearer, sharper, and more academically written sentence.

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