

**UNIVERSITY OF DIYALA**

**BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS  
IN  
CLASSIC CHILDREN'S STORIES**

**A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL  
OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION / UNIVERSITY  
OF DIYALA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
LINGUISTICS**

**BY**

**MUNA HASEEB HWAYED AL-JURANI**

**SUPERVISED BY**

**ASST. PROF.  
KHALIL ISMAIL REJIA AL-HADIDI ( PH .D . )**

**2004 A.D.**

**1425 A.H.**

# ***Chapter One***

## ***Introduction***

### **1.1 The Problem and Its Significance**

Children's literature is a basic branch of literature that plays an effective role in the formation of child's thinking and behaviour especially if it is invested correctly and reasonably . Through literary works written for children some essential and desirable goals can be achieved such as edification , admonition , and instruction all mixed with the sweetness of entertainment . Linguistically , the main characteristics of children's literature are the simplicity of language and the direct presentation of ideas and messages . These are necessarily required to meet the child's comprehensive faculty .

This study is generally concerned with the grammatical simplicity of children's literature language and specifically with the investigation and analysis of the basic sentence patterns ( henceforth BSPs ) used in classic<sup>1</sup> children's stories ( henceforth CCSs ) . It aims at determining the frequency of the occurrence of each BSP in order to know whether there are degrees of diversity in the occurrences . Then the most , less , and the least ( or rarely ) frequent BSPs used in CCSs will be identified statistically and accordingly the essentialities of the patterns will be specified . The study also tries to present syntactic and semantic justifications for the findings arrived at .

### **1.2 Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that :

- 1- all the basic sentence patterns ( seven BSPs ) are used in these stories ,
- 2- there are obvious degrees of diversity in the uses of these patterns, and

- 3- the grammatical simplicity of a pattern determines largely and wholly the frequency and in turn the essentiality of the pattern in the stories .

### **1.3 Aims of the Study**

The study aims at :

- 1- examining the occurrence of BSPs in CCSs ,
- 2- showing in systematic and statistical ways the frequency of occurrence of each BSP in a selection of CCSs ,
- 3- specifying the most , less , and the least frequent BSPs and in turn their essentialities in CCSs , and
- 4- presenting syntactic and semantic justifications for the results.

### **1.4 Limits of the Study**

For the purpose of investigation and analysis , the present study makes use of twenty four selected classic stories<sup>2</sup> which represent four best-known and outstanding collections of CCSs written or rewritten for children . These collections are *Tales from the Arabian Nights* , *Tales of Ancient Greece* , *Tales from Shakespeare* , and *Andersen's Fairy Tales* .

These works are characterized by the popularity among both children and adults alike , their remarkable cultural and literary status , and their important edificational , instructional and entertaining significances .

### **1.5 Grammatical Model**

This thesis depends mainly on *A Comprehensive Grammar Of The English Language* (1985) by Randolph Quirk , Sidney Greenbaum , Geoffrey Leech , and Jan Svartvik as the theoretical framework of the investigation and analysis . Quirk et al ., (1985 ) devise a model of BSPs that involves seven patterns represented by

the functional elements .A.S. Hornby's *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2000) is taken also as a major reference in identifying the verb class or subclass in the selected sentences .

## 1-6 Procedures of the Study

To achieve the aims of the study , the following procedures are to be followed :

- 1- presenting a general theoretical survey of BSPs in English ,
- 2- shedding light briefly on the identification, historical background , and categories of children's literature ,
- 3- identifying the corpus of the study through :
  - a) selecting randomly six stories from each collection ,
  - b) selecting randomly and intentionally one page or sometimes two pages from each story , and
  - c) pinpointing 20 basic sentences in the selected page(s) ,
- 4- specifying the frequency of occurrence of each BSP in each CCS , group , and the whole sample statistically ,
- 5- determining the most , less , and the least frequent BSPs and in turn the essentiality of each BSP in the sample , and
- 6- discussing the results by presenting syntactic and semantic justifications for them .

## Notes to Chapter One

- 1- Holman ( 1979 , 7 : 24 ) states that the terms “ ‘classical ’ and especially ‘ classic’ may be applied to an object or period of excellence in any civilization”. In this study the term *classic* is applied to the first option . i.e. , an object of excellence and not to a period of time .

- 2- The titles of these stories are mentioned in Table ( 4-1 ) .

## ***Chapter Two***

### ***Theoretical Background***

#### **2.1 The Sentence**

It is surprising that grammarians , who have offered innumerable definitions of the sentence , do not agree on a comprehensive and satisfactory one on what Leech et al., ( 2001 : 463 ) consider “ the largest structural unit in terms of what the grammar of a language is organized.” Most of these linguistic definitions of the sentence show the influence of Leonard Bloomfield who pointed to the structural autonomy or independence of the notion of sentence ; it is “ not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic forms” ( Crystal , 2003 : 414 ) .

Here are the most recognizable definitions which are largely related to the present study :

#### **1- The Traditional / Notional Definition**

A sentence is “ the expression of a complete thought ” (Fries, 1952 : 9 ; Eckersley and Eckersley , 1960 : 318 ; and Palmer , 1971 : 71 ) . This definition is known by its vague characterization , i.e. , it does not specify exactly what a complete thought is .

#### **2- The Practical / Formal Definition**

A sentence is a “string of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop” ( Fires , 1952 :9 ; Greenbaum , 1991 : 11 ; and Parrott , 2001 : 251 ) . This practical definition is related only to written statements and ignores completely spoken language and other types of sentence , e.g :

(2-1) Children are innocent .

### 3- The Phonological Definition

A sentence is “ any stretch of speech between silence and one of the two terminals ( falling Pitch ) / ↘ / and ( rising Pitch ) / ↗ / , or any stretch between two such terminals” (Sledd , 1959 : 167 ) . This definition is considered weak since it defines a sentence in terms of sound only regardless of its written form , and sometimes intonation is not easily heard , e.g:

( 2.2 ) We wish them peaceful life . ↘  
 ( 2-2 ) a Do you wish them peaceful life ? ↗

### 4- The Logical Definition

Strang (1971:73) and Greenbaum (1991:22) define a sentence logically as being consisted of a complete subject ( henceforth **S** ) and a complete predicate ( henceforth **Pred** ) . These two parts have internal but no external grammatical relations and they have semantic relationship since **Pred** expresses something about **S** , e.g :

<u>S</u>	<u>Pred</u>
(2-1) Children	are innocent .
(2-2) We	wish them peaceful life .
(2-2) The beautiful birds	are flying highly .

All the above definitions share an important defect that they do not account for what is called ‘ *sentence fragments* ’ – very normal and common structures used to express different senses , e.g: *good night* , *congratulations* , *thanks* , *fire* , etc.

### 5- The Structural Definition

Quirk et al., (1985 : 42 ) and Carnie ( 2002 : 27 ) argue that “ a sentence consists of one or more clauses , which consist of one or more phrases , which consist of one or more words , which consist

of one or more morphemes .” This definition represents the grammatical hierarchy beginning with the smallest structural unit , i.e. , morpheme , and ending with the largest structural grammatical unit , i.e. , sentence . Therefore , Crystal ( 2003 : 414 ) describes it as “ the detailed structural descriptions of contemporary linguistic analysis .” The structural definition admits that a sentence fragment that consists of only one morpheme (e.g: *thanks*) is a complete sentence .

In assertion to what has been mentioned at the beginning of this section no one of these five definitions satisfy grammarians in explaining what the term ‘ *sentence* ’ means . But this study will be satisfied with them and concentrate on the notion of the sentence that is involved in these definitions , i.e. , a sentence is that which expresses a complete thought , begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop , is pronounced with final falling intonation , consists of a complete **S** and a complete **Pred** and both constitute only one independent clause .

## 2.2 Sentence and Some Notions

### 2.2.1 Sentence Grammaticality

Greenbaum ( 1991 : 12) , Haegeman & Gueron ( 1999 : 17-8 ) and Glauner ( 2002 : Ch : 12 , p: 1 ) argue that whenever a sentence is formed according to the general rules of internal grammar of the speaker’s language it is considered grammatical ; and a sentence that is not formed according to these rules is ungrammatical . Most grammarians believe that the determination of the sentence grammaticality depends mainly on the native speaker’s intuition . But Glauner (ibid) presents another way of determining sentence grammaticality , that is “ *Noguchi tag question test*” which attributed to *Rei Noguchi* , the author of *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing : Limits and Possibilities* (1991 ) . According to this test a sentence that can have a tag question ( auxiliary + pronoun ) will be grammatical , e.g :

(2-4) The children are playing joyfully in the park ,aren’t they ?

If the tag question does not work this indicates that the sentence is ungrammatical as shown by the above asterisk , e.g :

- \* The children the park in playing .
- \* The children playing in the park .

## 2.2.2 Irregular and Non- Sentences

In the previous two sections , the yardstick of identifying the regular sentences has been explained ; that is , they must consist of two parts : **S** and **Pred** , and be formed according to the general rules of the speaker's grammar . Greenbaum ( 1991 : 13 ) and Glauner ( 2002 : ch : 12 , P : 1 ) state that sentences that do not conform to these two conditions will be :

- 1- either *irregular sentences* that are viewed as directly derivable in their interpretations from regular sentences , such sentences are called *sentence fragments* , e.g :

- In London . as an answer to Where do you live ?
- Yes . as an answer to Are you a teacher ?

- 2- or *non-sentences* that cannot be analyzed grammatically as regular sentences , but they may be perfectly normal in usage such as social expression ( e.g : *Hallo* ) , labels ( e.g : *Pure Lemon Juice* ) , notices ( e.g : *No Smoking* ) , etc.

## 2.3 Classification of Sentences

### 2.3.1 Semantic Classification of Sentences

Gleason (1965 : 317 ) , Quirk et al. , ( 1985 : 78 ) , Shaw ( 1986 : 33-4 ) , among others , classify sentences semantically into four types :

- 1- **Declaratives ( or Statements )**

These sentences are used chiefly to convey information . They are pronounced with a final falling intonation and written with a



capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end . Declaratives are the most common and basic sentences in which **S** is always present and normally precedes the verb ( henceforth **V** ) , e.g. :

( 2-5 ) Love is blind . ↘

## 2- Interrogatives ( or Questions )

These are used chiefly to request information . Structurally , they usually require **S** – operator <sup>1</sup> inversion . Quirk et al . , ( 1985 : 806 ) divide questions into three main kinds according to the type of answer they require :

(i) Yes/ No questions that require only affirmation or rejection , e.g :

(2-6) A: Have you finished your work ? ↗  
B: Yes , I have .

(ii) Wh-Questions that require a reply supplying an item or items of information , e.g. :

(2-7) A: What is your job ? ↗  
B: My job is a teacher .

(iii) Alternative questions that require as a reply one of two or more options , e.g :

(2-8) Would you like to go for a walk or stay at ↗  
home ?

## 3- Imperatives ( or Commands )

These are used to make the hearer do something . Structurally , they lack overt **S** and begin with the base form of **V** referring to some future actions . They , like interrogatives , are not basic but transformations of declarative sentences , e.g :

(2-9) Help your friends !

#### 4- Exclamatives ( or Exclamatory)

These are used chiefly to express strong feeling and structurally they , like interrogatives , are introduced by *What* or *How* , without S- operator inversion , e.g :

(2-9)                      What beautiful birds fly !

### 2.3.2 Syntactic Classification of Sentences

Quirk et al. , ( 1985 : 78 ) , Nash ( 1986 : 20-1 ) , Haegeman and Gueron ( 1999 : 23 ) , among others , classify English sentences syntactically into four types :

#### 1. Simple Sentence

A simple sentence is the one that consists of only one independent clause that has no grammatical relationship with what precedes or follows it . According to the logical definition mentioned earlier a simple sentence ( independent or superordinate clause ) is composed of **S** and **Pred** that contains at least one finite **V** only , e.g :

(2-11) The clouds disappeared .

(2-12) The farmers made the land green .

Stageberg ( 1981 : 247-8 ) , Shaw ( 1986 : 34 ) , and Alexander ( 1988 : 9-10 ) state that simple sentences can be expanded without changing their basic grammatical structure as follows :

- (i)                      Modification : The use of modifiers to describe , limit , intensify , and / or add to the meaning of the sentence elements or to the whole sentence , e.g :

(2-13) The beautiful little girls are planting three kinds of different colourful flowers in the garden actively this moment .

- (ii)                     Coordination : Words or groups of words are joined together functioning as only an element in the sentence , e.g:

it wants to .

- (2-22) The racing car went out control and hit the barrier several times before it came to stop on a grassy bank.

## 2.4 Simple Sentence Structure

It has been mentioned previously that the core of this study is the simple sentences , so this section will focus on the internal structure of these sentences . Traditionally , a sentence is divided into two major parts : **S** and **Pred** . The former defines the topic of the sentence , i.e. , it names what the user of the language is thinking of or talking about , and the latter makes an assertion or a statement about the former ( Quirk et al. , 1985 : 78-9 ; Leech and Svartvik , 1994 : 26 ; and Thakur , 1998 : 105 ) , e.g. :

<u>S</u>	<u>Pred</u>
(2-23) Mary	arrived lately to home yesterday .
(2-24) The boys	are playing football in the playground .
(2-25) She	becomes a teacher after four years of studying.

Crystal ( 2003 : 366 ) sums up this semantic relationship between **S** and **Pred** in two words, “ topic / comment” or “ given/ new” . All the grammarians agree that **Pred** is more essential and complex than **S** since it contains the most important element in the sentence , that is **V** which enables **Pred** to stand alone with meaningful content as in imperatives ( e.g : *Go ahead !* ) . And semantically , **Pred** carries the new and important information about the topic , that is , **S**. Although this twofold distinction in the sentence analysis is made by traditional grammars , it is still common nowadays .

Other approaches make a further consideration of the simple sentence structure in distinguishing **S** from a series of other functional elements of structure which are : **V**, **Object** , **Complement** ,

- (2-14) Music and poetry can open hearts but not purses .

The simple sentence without any kind of expansion will be the core of the present study in examining BSPs theoretically in [ 2-7] later .

## 2- Compound Sentence

A compound sentence consists of two or more equal status simple sentences joined together by *coordinating* conjunctions (e.g: *and* , *but* , etc.) or *correlative* conjunctions ( e.g : *either ...or* , *neither ... nor* , etc. ) , or *semi-colon* ( ; ) ( Greenbaum , 1991 : 14, and Glauner , 2002 : ch:15 , P : 1 ) , e.g :

- (2-15 ) Mary watches TV *and* her children play in the garden .

- (2-16 ) The visitor *either* speaks French , *or* understands it .

- (2-17) We fished all the day ; we got only this little fish .

## 2- Complex Sentence

A complex sentence consists of two unequal status simple sentences one of them is the independent ( or superordinate ) clause and the other is the dependent ( or subordinate ) clause functioning as an element of the independent clause . Complex sentences are frequently used in written language and usually formed by using *subordinators* ( e.g : *that* , *when* , *if* , *as* , etc. ) or without them , e.g :

- (2-18) That he will stay with his family *is great* .

- (2-19) *They asked their father* to take them to the zoo .

- (2-20) *You can borrow my car* if you need it .

## 2. Compound-Complex Sentence

A compound-complex sentence consists of two or more coordinate independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses functioning as elements of the independent clauses , e.g :

- (2-21) The duck is a flat-footed animal and it swims when

and *Adverbial* ( henceforth **O** , **C** , and **A** respectively ) . The final three elements ( **O** , **C** , and **A** ) are grouped under the term “ Complementation <sup>2</sup>” that is needed to complete the sense of **V** , so its presence or absence is wholly and largely determined by **V** of the sentence .

Consequently , English sentence structure can be analyzed into five functional elements and each one of the final three elements is classified into two sorts ( Quirk et al , 1985 : 79 ) :

### Sentence elements <sup>3</sup>

1-	Subject		<b>S</b>
2-	Verb		<b>V</b>
3-	Object	-direct object	<b>Od</b>
		-indirect object	<b>Oi</b>
4-	Complement	- subject complement	<b>Cs</b>
		- object complement	<b>Co</b>
5-	Adverbial <sup>4</sup>	-subject-related Adverbial	<b>As</b>
		-object– related Adverbial	<b>Ao</b>

Here are seven examples identifying the presence of the above seven functional elements with eliminating optional **A** :

- (2-23) Mary ( S ) arrived ( V ) .
- (2-24) The parents (S) are making (V) a party ( Od) .
- (2-25) She ( S ) becomes ( V ) a nurse ( Cs) .
- (2-26) Her friends ( S ) are ( V ) there ( As ) .
- (2-27) They(S) give (V) her (Oi) beautiful flowers (Od).
- (2-28) The people (S) consider (V) Mary (Od) angelic (Co).
- (2-29) Her mother (S) puts ( V ) the flowers ( Od ) in the vase ( Ao) .

It is obvious in the above examples that **S** and **V** are constant elements present in all simple declarative sentences, whereas the presence of other elements is various according to the requirement of **V**.

## 2.5 Syntactic and Semantic Characteristics of Sentence Elements

### 2.5.1 Subject

Quirk et al.,(1985 : 725) and Leech and Svartvik ( 1994 : 325 ) mention the main syntactic characteristics of **S** in the following points:

- 1- **S** is normally realized by a noun phrase ( henceforth N ) or a dependent clause with nominal function , e.g:

(2-30) *Mary / She / The young lady*  
invites John .

(2-31) *That he always helps others / Helping others* is a good deed .

- 2- **S** normally precedes **V** in declarative sentences and immediately follows the operator in questions ( except 4 below ) , but it is absent grammatically-not semantically- in imperatives . In passive voice **S** is postponed finally and converted into a prepositional phrase ( henceforth Prep. P ) introduced by the preposition ( henceforth Prep. ) *by* , e.g:

(2-30) a Does *Mary* invite John ?

(2-30) b Invite John !

(2-30) c John is invited ( by *Mary* ) .

3-**S** determines the following items :

- (i) The form of **V** ,i.e. , **S** requires a number concord with **V**

(e.g: I am / work .. , Mary is / works .. , They are / *work* )

(ii) The form of **Od** if it is a reflexive pronoun , e.g:

(2-32) *She* enjoys *herself* .

(2-33) *The boys* imagine *themselves* pilots .

(iii) The number and person of **Cs** when the latter is N .

(2-34) *Mary* is *my sister* .

(2-35) *Mary and Jane* are *my sisters* .

3. **S** can be identified by asking questions introduced by **Who** or **What** according to its type , e.g:

(2-30)d **Who** invites John ?

(2-31)a **What** is a good deed ?

4. Greenbaum ( 1991 : 34 ) specifies the most typical semantic roles of **S** as follows :

(i) agentive (2.36) *They* are working .

(ii) identified (2-37) *John* is my best friend .

(iii) characterized (2-38) *The garden* looks beautiful .

## 2.5.2 Verb

Although Hornby (1976 : 1 ) indicates that there is no useful or adequate definition of the term **V** , Strunk and White ( 2000 : 92 ) define it as being “ a word or group of words that expresses the action or the state of being of the subject ”.Quirk et al., (1985 :62,96) and Crystal ( 2003 : 490 ) state the following main characteristics of **V** :

1-V is the most essential element in the sentence since it presents in all types of regular sentences and determines wholly and largely the occurrence of other elements ( a part from **S** ) and in turn provides a distinction among BSPs .

# خلاصة الرسالة الموسومة

## أنماط الجملة الأساسية في قصص الأطفال الكلاسيكية

يعد أغلب النحويين دراسة أنماط الجملة الأساسية واحداً من أهم المواضيع في أي تحليل منظم للغة . أن هذه الأنماط المحدودة العدد هي نماذج نحوية لمجموعة غير محدودة العدد من الجمل المنطوقة والمكتوبة ذات البنية الصحيحة . بمعنى آخر تشير هذه النماذج إلى الأنواع الأساسية للكلمات التي ترتبط بنيوياً بالجملة لكي تنقل معنى باللغة الإنكليزية .

أن هذه الدراسة محاولة لبحث وتحليل مدى استخدام أنماط الجملة الأساسية في لغة قصص الأطفال الكلاسيكية من أجل تحديد تكرار النمط ومن ثم أساسيته في تلك اللغة . لغرض تحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم التحقق من صحة الفرضيات الآتية :

- 1- أن جميع أنماط الجملة الأساسية تستعمل في هذه القصص .
- 2- هناك درجات تفاوت واضحة في استعمال هذه الأنماط .
- 3- تؤثر البساطة النحوية للنمط تأثيراً كبيراً وشاملاً في تقرير تكرار النمط ومن ثم أساسيته في هذه القصص .

من خلال تبني نموذج لأنماط الجملة الأساسية والتحليل الإحصائي للبيانات ، استنتجت هذه الدراسة أن النمط الأول ( فاعل + فعل ) والنمط الثاني ( فاعل + فعل + مفعول به ) هما الأكثر تكراراً وأساسية أتباعاً في قصص الأطفال الكلاسيكية . أما النمط الثالث ( فاعل + فعل + تكملة ) أقل تكراراً وأساسية وأن الجمل الوصفية أكثر عدداً من الجمل التعريفية . بينما الأنماط الأقل تكراراً أو التي استعملت بندرة فأنها الأقل أساسية وهي كالاتي