

Abstract

In this quantitative study, the researcher tries to shed some light on the usage of relative clauses (subject, direct object, and indirect object, object of preposition, possessive, and object of comparison, restrictive, non-restrictive, and reduced) as rich and complex syntactic structure in modern English literature through the study of some modern English plays to know the most and least frequent types of relative clauses (RCs) used and to prove that modern English language attempts to use the easier types of relative clauses to combine sentences.

This study investigates the frequency, categorization and percentage of each occurrence of relative clauses in George Bernard Shaw's plays *Major Barbara* and *Arms and the Man* to know the most and the least frequent types of RCs used. To achieve this purpose, the researcher analyzed two plays *Major Barbara* and *Arms and the Man* written by George Bernard Shaw to investigate the frequency of occurrence of all the relative clauses in the two plays.

There are four questions in the study: Is there a high frequency of relative clauses as subordination devices?, are the relative clauses on the upper level hierarchy more frequent than the lower level?, is there a lower frequency of occurrence for relative clauses on the level of Keenan's hierarchy?, and in the light of the Shaw's plays, what are the implications of such analysis and study on the teaching of relative clauses in English in an EFL context?

The results of the study in the two plays indicate that the subject relative clause (RC) occurred 235 times (71.865%), direct object RC occurred 67 times (20.489%), indirect object RC occurred 6 times (1.834%), object of preposition RC occurred 7 times (2.140%), possessive RC occurred 12 times (3.669%), and object of comparison did not occur at all (0%). This means that the subject RC and the direct object are the dominant types of the relative clauses respectively. This proves that the subject RC and

the direct object RC are considered the upper level hierarchy and are more frequently used in modern English literature. Then, the other kinds of the relative clauses such as indirect object, object of preposition, possessive and object of comparison are considered the lower level and are less frequently used. Besides, the results indicate that modern English playwrights attempt to use the easier types of relative clauses, the subject and the direct object, to combine sentences.