

THE EFFECTS OF VARIED TEXT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSE  
FORMATS ON THE READING COMPREHENSION

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THE EFFECTS OF VARIED TEXT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSE  
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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Master of Arts.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### THE EFFECTS OF VARIED TEXT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSE FORMATS ON THE READING COMPREHENSION

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This research study examines the effects of varied text structures and response formats on Turkish university students' reading comprehension test performance. More precisely, it deals with investigating the effects of awareness of rhetorical organization on reading comprehension and on testing of comprehension through different procedures.

First, a short review of the relevant research on the text structure and response formats and their effects on reading comprehension is presented. Then, the results of a reading experiment are given. In this experiment, four groups of upper-intermediate level EFL students (100 students) read two English passages written in "description" and "cause-effect" rhetorical organization formats. Then, their comprehension of the texts was tested through a cloze procedure and a multiple choice test. The tests were carried out on first year university students from different departments at the English Language Department of Başkent University during the 2006-2007 Academic Year Fall Semester.

After the research period finished, the data collected throughout the research period were transferred into MS Excel and SPSS spreadsheets and analyzed using the statistical procedure of the paired samples t-test. Relying on the analysis of the data, the hypotheses formulated for the study were weighed against the results in order to see if they were confirmed or rejected.

The study showed significant difference between the varied text structures and subjects' reading comprehension test performance. However, there was not any significant difference between the different response formats and the subjects' reading comprehension test performance. Finally, the thesis ends with an interpretation and discussion of the results of the study.

**Keywords:** Reading comprehension, rhetorical organization, language testing, proficiency

## ÖZ

### DEĞİŞİK METİN YAPILARININ VE YANIT TÜRLERİNİN OKUMA ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Yılık, Mehmet Ali

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Bu araştırma değişik metin yapılarının ve yanıt türlerinin üniversite düzeyindeki Türk öğrencilerin okuma sınavındaki başarıları üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Daha açık bir şekilde ifade etmek gerekirse, bu araştırma, metin yapılarının farkında olmanın, okuduğunu anlama ve bunun test edilmesi üzerine etkilerini değişik yöntemler kullanılarak incelemektedir.

Araştırmada öncelikle metin yapıları, yanıt türleri ve bunların okuduğunu anlama üzerine etkilerini konu alan araştırmalar kısaca gözden geçirilmiştir. Daha sonra bir okuma deneyinin sonuçları verilmiştir. Bu deneyde, dört grupta ileri düzey yabancı dil öğrencileri (Yüz öğrenci) tanımlama ve sebep-sonuç metin yapıları ile yazılmış iki İngilizce metni okumuşlardır. Daha sonra, öğrencilerin bu metinleri anlama seviyeleri çoktan seçmeli ve boşlukları uygun bir kelimeyle doldurma esasına dayanan kısa cevaplı test olmak üzere iki farklı yanıt türü içeren sınavlarla ölçülmüştür. Bu sınavlar 2006-2007 akademik yılı güz döneminde, Başkent Üniversitesi İngilizce Hazırlık Bölümü'nde

değişik bölümlerden gelen birinci sınıf öğrencilerine uygulanmıştır.

Araştırma dönemi bittikten sonra, toplanan veri Microsoft Excel ve SPSS tablolarına aktarılmış ve bağımlı iki örneklem t-testi istatistik yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan bu analize dayanılarak, çalışma için oluşturulan varsayımlar elde edilen sonuçlarla karşılaştırılmış ve bu varsayımların sonuçlarca doğrulanıp doğrulanmadığına bakılmıştır.

Araştırma, değişik metin yapılarının deneklerin okuma sınavı başarısını etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Fakat, değişik yanıt türlerinin deneklerin okuma sınavı başarısı üzerinde bir etkisi olmadığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu tez sonuçların yorumlanması ve tartışılması ile son bulmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okuduğunu anlama, metin yapısı, dilin test edilmesi, yeterlik

To my parents

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0. Presentation**

This chapter provides the necessary framework for the study by giving its background first. Then, it continues with the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms and finally it ends with a brief note on how data was analyzed.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Reading skill forms the backbone of this research study since it builds on exploring its effects on comprehension through different media. Therefore, to start with, a brief investigation of reading comprehension is necessary at this stage. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) describe reading as an interactive process between the text and the reader's prior background knowledge which has to be known as reader's *schema*. *Schema*, in other words, can also be explained as the background knowledge which the interpretation of a text depends on (Cook, 1991).

To understand the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension, it is useful to draw a distinction between *content schema*, which is what we know about people, the world, culture and the universe and *formal schema* which consists of our knowledge about discourse structure (Brown, 2001).

As will be discussed later in the study, rhetorical organization of a text interacts with reader's formal schemata to affect reading comprehension (Carrell, 1985).

As a result, in understanding a text, which has its own rhetorical organization and formal schema, the readers are said to possess background knowledge about, and expectations of, differences in structure of fables, simple stories, scientific texts, newspaper articles, poetry, and so forth (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). In this case, when the reader fails to activate his formal schema during reading, it results in poor comprehension. This failure of not being able to activate formal schema can be a result of the reader's not having the necessary information about the formal schema used in the text or the writer's avoidance of the necessary clues about the text format.

In both cases, there is a mismatch between what the writer anticipates the reader can identify and what the reader is able to do (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). In the case of writer's not providing the necessary clues there is not much to be done. However, in the situation where the reader cannot identify the rhetorical structure due to his limited formal schema, can be worked on and improved.

Thus, it can be said that the formal schema which the reader employs to comprehend the text acts like an outline which guides the reader in organizing the text during encoding into memory and retrieving information in stored memory about the text, which is why this reader fails to comprehend (Carrell, 1984a).

Another crucial point related to the basis of this study is the rhetorical organization types and their relationships with comprehension. Meyer (1975, 1985) proposes his content structure analysis in which idea units are organized in a hierarchical manner on the basis of their rhetorical relationships. The rhetorical relation at the highest level in the hierarchy is called the top-level rhetorical organization and this characterizes the text. The top-level rhetorical structure is identified as one of the following: *listing, comparison/contrast, temporal sequence, cause-effect, and problem-solution* (Meyer, 1975).

As Meyer's research has shown, each type of text structure represents a different formal schema of ways writers organize and readers understand the topics. Raising the awareness of the readers of different rhetorical structures of texts would help them identify text structures, facilitate their comprehension, and avoid the mismatch between the writer and the reader. Meyer and Freedle (1984) claim that ideas are more easily remembered when presented in tightly-organized texts than loosely-organized texts because of the close link between the ideas. This has been supported by other researchers such as Carrell (1984), Goh (1990) and McGee (1982).

When the test performance on reading through different formats is concerned, Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996), came up with a framework of language ability. He proposes *test method facets* and lists factors which can affect test performance. 1) testing environment; 2) test rubrics; 3) the nature of the

input; 4) the nature of the expected response; and 5) the interaction between the input and the response.

That different text structures affect comprehension, being the first variable in this research study, corresponds to the nature of the input in Bachman's framework. That different response formats affect test performance, being the second variable in this study, matches with the nature of the expected response according to Bachman (1990).

These two variables can affect comprehension and test performance because rhetorical organization of reading materials and the method of testing are very crucial in reading comprehension tests (Bachman, 1990).

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The underlying problems of this study are:

1. Does rhetorical organization affect reading test performance?
2. Does test format affect reading test performance?
3. Do the students score better when they are provided with an objective response item or a subjective response item?

### 1.3. Research Questions

Research questions formulated are:

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the varied text structures and Turkish students' test

performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English?

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the different response formats and Turkish students' test performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English?

- Is there a difference between students' test scores when they are provided with an objective response item and a subjective response item as varied response formats?

These three research questions serve the need to explain if the variables in this study that different text structures affect comprehension and that different response formats affect test performance are valid.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

For many students reading is the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in EFL or ESL. Considering English has become the most widely used language across countries, most English learners around the world are EFL learners and reading in order to follow international sources on nearly any topic is one of the important reasons why students learn the language.

What is more, at advanced proficiency levels in a second language, the ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension has long been recognized to

be as important as oral skills, if not more important (Eskey, 1970).

In EAP situations, especially in higher education in English-medium universities or other programs that make extensive use of academic materials written in English, reading is paramount. In the setting of this study, Baskent University, the main goal of the English Language Department is to provide the students with necessary reading skills to help them follow and understand international journals, books, articles etc in English.

If second language learners are not proficient readers, they cannot perform well. Thus, for at least these three groups of students (those in EFL settings, those at advanced levels of proficiency, and those with a need for English for academic purposes), effective reading in a second language is critical. Thus, professionals in second language education (teachers and test developers) should be concerned with approaches that can improve the reading skills of learners.

Moreover, they should be interested in developing the best measures to determine students' actual performances in tests since such measures are used to make important decisions about the students. At Baskent University, reading skill plays a crucial role in students' performance as exemption from preparatory class, starting departments according to the results of the proficiency exam of the university in which the reading section accounts for 40 points out of 100 (the rest of points in the exam are: grammar 40 and vocabulary 20 points) and even success or failure in courses are dependent mainly on reading skills.

Therefore, the results out of this study may have far-reaching effects on all components of the language teaching process, including the teacher, his students, curriculum and test designers and administrators as well.

#### 1.5. Definition of Terms

*Text structure* refers to the various patterns of ideas that are embedded in the organization of text or in other words, the organizational pattern an author uses to structure the ideas in a text. Common patterns of text structure are expository, cause-effect, comparison-contrast, problem-solution, description, and sequence. The text structures dealt with in this study are description and cause-effect.

*Response format* refers to the media used to measure students' reading comprehension. The media or the response formats employed in this study to determine how well or poor a student comprehends a text are a cloze test and a multiple-choice test.

*Language proficiency* refers to the level of competence at which an individual is able to use language for both basic communicative tasks and academic purposes. More clearly, it refers to the degree to which the student is able to use a language, including the measurement of productive and receptive language skills-speaking, writing, listening and reading and language areas-grammar and vocabulary including pragmatics or language use within various social circumstances.

## 1.6. Data Analysis

A multiple-choice test and a cloze test were conducted in October 2006. Data from these tests were calculated using the paired samples t-test procedure. The results of the tests were entered into SPSS tables and the calculations were made. The level of significance was set at  $p = , 05$ . There is further discussion of analysis and interpretations of the results in chapter four.

## **CHAPTER II**

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. Presentation

In this chapter, the theoretical background of reading comprehension, rhetorical organization, language testing (objective and subjective items) and proficiency are discussed more in detail with regards to their relationship with the research study and different views of writers and researchers in the related areas are summarized.

#### 2.1. Reading and Reading Comprehension

One very significant focus of this study is reading comprehension. First, different approaches to reading are dealt with and then this section ends with the favored interactive approach to reading in this study.

Recently, the accepted theory of ESL reading has changed dramatically, from a bottom-up model, to reading as an interactive process.

In bottom-up processing readers must first recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical clues, discourse markers) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanisms to impose some sort of order on these signals. Reader selects the signals that make some sense and construct meaning. (Brown, 2001)

Goodman (1976) introduces the idea that reading, far from being passive, is an active process, with an emphasis on both active and process. In presenting his macro model of the reading process, Goodman situates reading within the broader context of communicative, meaning-seeking and information processing. He further highlights both the psycholinguistic aspects of reading (how language and thought interact), as well as the sociolinguistic aspects of reading (language operating in a social context including writers as well as readers). In a way, Goodman's model sets the stage for approaching reading as an active process.

Widdowson (1979) has discussed reading in this light as the process of combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text. In this view, the reading process is not simply a matter of extracting information from the text, rather, it is one in which the reading activates a range of knowledge in the reader's mind that he or she uses, and that, in turn, may be refined and extended by the new information supplied by the text. Reading is thus viewed as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983).

Goodman (1976) further expresses that reading is a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. Resulting from this, there is an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thought.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) advocate the idea that reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader's prior background knowledge-reader's schema. In other words, schema is the background knowledge which the interpretation of a text depends on (Cook, 1991). Schema comprises of two categories. Content schema is our knowledge of people, the world, culture and the universe, while formal schema consists of our knowledge about discourse structure (Brown, 2001).

## 2.2. Language Proficiency

Another crucial point to be explored and defined is the language proficiency in regards to reading comprehension. Davies (1995) defines proficiency as a general type of knowledge or competence in the use of a language, regardless of how, where or under what conditions it has been acquired. Bachman (1990) comes up with a broader explanation of *communicative language ability* instead of the term proficiency and describes it as consisting of both knowledge, or competence and the capacity for implementing or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use.

He organizes his framework of language competence into two categories which interact with each other: (1) organizational competence including grammatical competence, namely, vocabulary, morphology, syntax and textual competence meaning cohesion and rhetorical organization and (2) pragmatic competence which includes illocutionary competence covering speech acts, language functions and sociolinguistic competence meaning sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety, register,

sensitivity to naturalness and ability to interpret cultural references.

Organizational competence comprises those abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional context, and ordering them to form texts (Bachman, 1990) Thus, organizational competence, precisely the rhetorical organization here, is the aspect of language proficiency or *communicative language ability* that is claimed to have an effect on reading comprehension of the students in this study.

### 2.3. Rhetorical Organization

Another fundamental issue in this research study is rhetorical organization. Meyer (1975) states that rhetorical pattern is part of the macrostructure of a text and it contains the logical organization of the text which the writer has used to represent the intended meaning. Meyer (1975) has recognized five groups of rhetorical relations in expository text:

- Listing*: a listing of items or ideas where the order of presentation of the items is not significant.
- Comparison/contrast*: a description of similarities or differences between two things.
- Temporal sequence*: a sequential relationship between ideas or events considered in terms of the passage of time.
- Cause-effect*: an interaction between at least two ideas or events, one considered a cause or reason and the other an effect or result.
- Problem-solution*: this is similar to the cause-effect pattern in that two factors interact, one citing a problem, the other a solution to that problem

Sharp (2002) expresses that the importance of these structures in reading comprehension has shown that the structure of text and how adeptly a reader recognizes that structure affects the amount of information the student remembers.

Kobayashi (2005) explores these different organization formats and explains that the link between the ideas is weakest in collection, where ideas are loosely associated with each other around a common topic. Time sequence is another type of collection, for example when recounting events in chronological order. In the causation relation, the ideas are related both in terms of time (i.e. one event happens before another) and causality (i.e. the earlier event causes the latter). Finally, the response (problem-solution) relation involves more inter-relationship between ideas in that a solution is suggested in response to the existing causality.

Comparison and description are on a different plane from the others because they are based on a hierarchy or subordination of ideas. In a description relation, ideas are arranged in a hierarchical manner: "one argument is superordinate and the other modifies this superordinate argument" (Meyer, 1985: 20). The comparison relation has at least two subordinate arguments which are linked by an element of comparison. This means that there is more interlinking in the comparison relation than in the description relation.

In ESL/EFL reading research, several studies have been carried out to find the effects of text structure on reading comprehension

and a number of methods have been used to test comprehension- recall being one of the widely used one. However, the effect of different response formats on comprehension of rhetorically organized texts with the same subject is not a well-researched area.

A study by Carrell (1984b) shows the effects of four different English rhetorical patterns on the reading of ESL readers. In her study, 80 subjects with the same language proficiency level read texts written in the format of *causation*, *problem-solution*, *collection of descriptions*, and *comparison-contrast*, wrote immediate recalls, delayed recalls and answered fill-in-the-blank type questions as the response formats. The study showed that more tightly organized patterns of *causation*, *problem-solution*, and *comparison-contrast* generally facilitate the recall of specific ideas from a text more than more loosely organized *collection of description* pattern.

In another study, Carrell (1985) reports the results of a study where twenty-five intermediate level ESL students participated. The first group of fourteen students received training on top-level rhetorical organization and the strategy for using that information as a basis for reading and recalling expository text. However, the other group of eleven students received no such training. Each group was asked to read two passages (in collection of descriptions and comparison-contrast format); then, as for the testing of comprehension they were to write an immediate recall, and identify each text's overall organization by answering an open-ended question. The results indicated that training on the top-level rhetorical organization of expository texts (comparison-

contrast format) significantly increased the amount of information the students could recall.

However, Sharp (2002) reports a study carried out with 490 Chinese teenagers (mean age 14.1) across four different proficiency levels. They read four rhetorically different texts written in description, cause-effect, listing and problem solution. After reading they completed a questionnaire (as a distraction task) and wrote immediate recalls and after that a cloze test was implemented. The most loosely organized text (*description*) scored significantly higher. *Cause -effect* scored lowest and appeared to be the most difficult to comprehend. Resulting from these response formats he concluded that the rhetorically different texts affect reading comprehension.

In one of her studies again on rhetorical organization, Carrell (1991) reports a study carried out with forty-five high-intermediate proficiency ESL students who produced written recalls of both *comparison-contrast* and *collection of description* texts. In addition, two different measures of awareness were included: (1) *use of organization* in written recall, and (2) *recognition* of organization in response to a probe question. The results of the recall protocols revealed that there were differences in the quality of information recalled as a function of test structure. In terms of relationships between awareness and recall, subjects who used the structure of reading passages to organize written recalls showed superior recall both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Kobayashi (2005) came up with similar results and conclusions like Sharp (2002) in his research study conducted on a total of 735 Japanese university students across 3 different proficiency groups. They read two sets of four texts written in association, description, causation and problem-solution and answered questions for each text in 3 formats: cloze, open-ended questions and summary writing. Performances of the students were highest in association texts and lowest in problem-solution texts. Furthermore, there seemed to be a clear distinction between cloze tests and the other two formats in their interaction with types of text organization. This difference was statistically significant. In other words, it showed that test performance is affected by text type and response format.

The above studies indicate that knowledge of the rhetorical organization of a text influences the comprehension and that different response formats on such text structures have an effect on test performance. However, what rhetorical organization format is easy for the students to comprehend and score higher is contradictory in the above studies. Moreover, most studies use recall protocols as a response format ignoring the fact that it is not a common and practical means of testing comprehension Sharp (2002).

Thus, to what extent text organization and response formats affect students' test performance needs to be worked on in a more detailed way. Moreover, most of the studies in this area are done on ESL students addressing a need to conduct a research study in an EFL setting. Therefore, to study such variables in this experiment, four groups of upper intermediate

level EFL students read two English passages written in "description" and "cause-effect" rhetorical organization formats. Description format is regarded as the easiest text organization format and cause-effect or problem solving is considered to be more difficult by some researchers among which are Kobayashi (2005) and Sharp (2002). Others; however, think the opposite (Carrell, 1985, 1991).

Then, their comprehension of the texts is tested through a cloze procedure and a multiple choice test. The rationale behind the choice of the response formats are discussed in detail in the materials part of the study.

#### 2.4. Response Formats

The final vital point to be discussed is the response formats. Clark (1972) (cited in Bachman 1990) defines a response as "any physical activity on the part of the student in reaction to the stimulus materials" and categorizes them into two types: (1) multiple-choice in which one simply selects from among two or more alternatives. Bachman (1990) refers to them as the selected response which can involve simply selecting the correct answer from among several alternatives, or the identification of an incorrect alternative, as in a sentence with several different words or phrases underlined, only one of which is incorrect.

In other tests, this response type may require the actual location of a problem or error from among a wide range of alternatives and (2) free response in which the student makes a spoken or written response which is defined as the constructed response by

Bachman (1990) in which the response consists of the production of a language sample in response to the input material.

No matter which type of response is employed in testing, expected response can be specified by our test design and selection of appropriate test items.

Moreover research supports the intuitive hypothesis that constructed response types will generally be more difficult than selected response types (Samson, 1983, Shohamy, 1984a cited in Bachman 1990). The selected response corresponds to the objective test item used in this study-the multiple-choice item, and expected response matches with the trait of the subjective item used in this research study-the cloze test. Then, a discussion of these two test items is necessary.

#### 2.4.1. Objective Items

Alderson et al (1995) states that objective testing refers to items such as multiple-choice, true-false, and error-recognition, amongst others, where the candidate is required to produce a response which can be marked as either correct or incorrect. In objective marking the examiner examines the candidate's response to the response or range of responses that the item writer has determined is correct.

#### 2.4.2. Subjective Items

Alderson et al (1995) define subjective testing as items or tasks where examiners cannot make judgments which are simply

correct or incorrect. Rather, they must assess how well a candidate completes a given task, and for this they need a rating scale.

Thus, scoring is the key issue here between objective and subjective test items. There is only one single correct answer in multiple-choice items so there is no subjectivity of the raters involved in this type of test items. However, a cloze test-the first response format in the study, requires more judgment on the scores and results in more subjectivity compared to the multiple choice test-the second response format in the study.

This also brings the question of practicality and reliability. Multiple-choice items are far more practical than cloze tests in terms of implementation. As for reliability, inter-raters are needed to establish reliable marking of the students' performance.

## 2.5. Conclusions

This chapter addressed the theoretical background of the study touching on several issues related to the study. To start with, reading comprehension is examined discussing the former bottom-up approach and the recent interactive approaches to reading emphasizing the schema theory. Later, a discussion on language proficiency is present giving a detailed exploration of Bachman's (1990) communicative language ability in which text structure is explicitly exposed as part of the communicative language ability.

After that a part on text structure is present where different text structures are explained, which is followed by references to former research studies that employed different text structures and looked into the effects of varied text structures on reading comprehension using different response formats. Finally, there is a part on language testing and response formats in particular objective and subjective items with regards to their relationship with the research study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Presentation**

This chapter gives information about the overall design of the study, the participants, research questions and hypotheses, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. In other words, chapter three is about how the research study was conducted.

#### **3.1. Design of the Study**

The design of the study was eclectic. It was descriptive, quasi-experimental, and quantitative. Since it investigated a phenomenon occurring naturally in a learning atmosphere and the data was collected first hand, it had a descriptive nature comprising predetermined hypotheses. Therefore, it was more deductive in this sense and had a hypothesis-testing nature rather than a hypothesis-generating one. Establishing the existence or non-existence of the phenomenon was the main aim. However, it should be stated that at this stage that although the study started with some predetermined hypotheses, the phenomenon it described was not artificially elicited or manipulated in any way.

The study was also descriptive because the group in which it was conducted was already formed and the researcher had no impact

on the formation of the group in which to conduct the present study. In other words, there was no randomization of the subjects in terms of their ages, proficiency levels, educational backgrounds or academic departments.

Because of this, the study was quasi-experimental as well since the subjects were not assigned specifically for the purposes of the research. This situation was welcomed by the researcher as the study was thus conducted under conditions closer to natural educational contexts. It is thought that the quasi-experimental parameter of the study design helped come up with more representative and reliable results for the phenomenon researched.

In addition to these, the study was quantitative because the collection of the data required a certain amount of quantification, for it involved counting and processing the correct answers from the tests given to the students. The study was quantitative also because its descriptive parameter made it inevitable to analyze the collected data through certain statistical procedures and techniques.

As for the details of the study, the researcher had already formed groups (classes) of first year students in a natural setting. Thus, no randomization was needed in terms of their ages, proficiency levels or educational backgrounds. Moreover, there was the criterion to only take into account the results of the subjects who have an English proficiency result between 60 and 75, which made it possible to have a variety of students from different departments.

Then, the subjects were assigned to four groups respectively in each classroom where the researcher made use of two texts organized in description and cause-effect formats each of which were followed by a cloze test and a multiple-choice. Therefore, four test booklets were prepared; namely, Booklet 1A: Reading text organized in description format followed by a cloze test, Booklet 1B: Reading text organized in description format followed by a multiple-choice test, Booklet 2A: Reading text organized in cause-effect format followed by a cloze test and finally Booklet 2B: Reading text organized in cause-effect format followed by a multiple-choice test.

In earlier studies, Meyer (1980), Carrell (1984b, 1985) used recall as the common response format testing the comprehension but it is not a common method in language testing. Cohen (1994) states that it is based on the assumption that there is a direct relationship between what readers comprehend from a text and what they are able to recall and that it is less valid than the current testing formats such as cloze and multiple choice tests.

Unlike Cohen's view, Kintsch and Yarborough (1982) investigated the effects of two subjective test items- open-ended questions and cloze tests on reading comprehension. They found the open-ended questions were more effective in measuring the understanding of main ideas of the text whereas cloze tests only touched upon local understanding and did not reflect the reader's overall understanding.

Heaton (1990) states that objective tests such as multiple-choice items are undoubtedly one of the most widely used ones and that they can provide a useful means of teaching and testing in various learning situations. However, it is not a frequent response format employed in research studies on this subject although it is a frequent testing tool in classroom tests and proficiency tests.

Cohen (1994) writes that the cloze has been used as a measure of readability, global reading skills, grammar and other skills and language areas and that it is a reliable, valid and an integrative measure of discourse. Therefore, these two response formats were chosen in this study not only to demonstrate whether response formats have an effect on reading comprehension but also check whether subjective items or objective items better test reading comprehension.

There were 9 items in multiple-choice tests each with 3 alternatives and the number of deletions for the cloze tests was 17. Starting point for the deletions was supposed to be the fifteenth word; moreover, deletions were not on a regular basis of deleting the following fifth word for description format and every sixth word for cause-effect format. Alderson et al. (1995) states that the major problem with nth word deletion in cloze tests is that the choice of the first deletion can have an effect on the validity of the test, since once that first word is deleted; all the other deletions automatically follow.

Therefore, there has to be a balance between the function words deleted and the content words deleted to have a reliable and

valid cloze test. Cohen (1994) supports this idea expressing that rational deletion cloze depending on a linguistic criteria is more valid and reliable than fixed-ratio deletion referring to Bachman's study on EFL University students (1985) in which she found that the rational-deletion cloze was a better measure of the reading of connected discourse.

To sum up, this study aims at demonstrating whether different rhetorical organization formats affect reading comprehension. According to Meyer and Freedle (1984) ideas are more easily remembered when presented in tightly-organized texts (cause-effect organization type in this study) than loosely-organized texts (description organization format in this study) because of the close link between the ideas. This has been supported by other researchers Carrell (1984), Goh (1990) and McGee (1982).

Furthermore, the study intends to answer whether variety in response formats (a cloze test and a multiple-choice test) of the same text organized in cause-effect and description formats have an affect on test performance of students in reading.

### 3.2. Participants

The research study was conducted in the 2006-2007 Academic Year Fall Semester at the English Language School of Başkent University from September to November.

100 Başkent University EFL students (four groups consisting of 25 students) participated in this study: 37 males and 63 females. They were upper-intermediate level first year students enrolled in

different departments at Baskent University. They were all native speakers of Turkish and passed a one-year English Preparatory Program before they passed to their departments. The students' ages range from approximately 18 to 22. As for the educational backgrounds of the subjects, there were four main types of high schools from which they graduated, namely the Anatolian High Schools, Foreign Language High Schools, State High Schools, and Private High Schools.

All the students in four groups have the same proficiency levels in English varying between 60 and 75 in the proficiency exam of Baskent University. To prove statistically that there was not a significant difference between the English proficiency levels of the four groups the means of the two classes' Progress Test results were compared.

Table 1 below shows that there is not a huge difference among the mean scores of the four groups and the standard deviation values of the groups, which means that the four groups are homogeneous in terms of their proficiency levels.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the proficiency results of the students across 4 groups out of 100 :

	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Variance
Gr. 1A	25	15,00	60,00	75,00	67,400	1,0066	5,0332	25,3333
Gr. 1B	25	15,00	60,00	75,00	67,960	1,1083	5,5414	30,707
Gr. 2A	25	15,00	60,00	75,00	66,080	1,1985	5,9925	35,910
Gr. 2B	25	15,00	60,00	75,00	67,760	,8685	4,3424	18,857
Valid N	25							

### 3.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions formulated are:

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the varied text structures and Turkish students' test performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the different response formats and Turkish students' test performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English?

- Is there a difference between students' test scores when they are provided with an objective response item and a subjective response item as varied response formats?

The following null hypotheses were formulated in order to address the aim of this study:

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no interaction between reading comprehension test performance and text organization.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no interaction between reading comprehension performance and response format.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no difference between the objective response items and subjective response items in terms of assessing students' reading comprehension.

### 3.4. Instruments

The reading texts organized in description and cause-effect formats are taken from Sharp (2002) entitled "Chinese L1 Schoolchildren Reading in English: The Effects of Rhetorical Patterns". The texts were all about "Healthy Diet". They were organized in different rhetorical formats and were general enough for the students to have an idea about it. However, the text was specific enough for any individual student to have read about it before. Since this study investigates the effects of formal schema rather than the content schema, the students were expected to activate their formal schemata more than their content schemata. The texts were appropriate to serve this aim.

As Sharp (2002) writes reading ease is an important issue when providing the students with appropriate texts. The following mean scores were calculated through the on-line Flesch Reading Ease tool on the Wikipedia website- an on-line encyclopedia. The mean score for the text organized in cause-effect format was 63, 77 and for the text organized in description format was 65, 84 (within the range of standard level- 58.5-69.9) on the Flesch Reading Ease Formula, which is one of the most widely recognized readability indices. This readability test is designed to indicate how difficult a reading passage is to understand. In the Flesch Reading Ease test, higher scores indicate material that is easier to read; lower numbers mark harder-to-read passages For

instance, Reader's Digest magazine has a readability index of about 65, Time magazine scores about 52. Moreover, this test has become a U.S. governmental standard.

Each reading text (Appendix A) was accompanied by a cloze and multiple-choice test forming the four booklets administered to the students. The multiple-choice tests each had 9 items with 3 alternatives and the number of deletions for the cloze tests was 17.

### 3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Academic Board of English Language School of Başkent University requires any researcher to ask for permission before conducting a study on the students. Therefore after the Academic Board gave their permission, the dates for the implementation of the tests were determined. The researcher prepared the test items in cooperation with his advisor.

100 subjects who participated in this study have the same proficiency levels in English varying between 60 and 75 in the proficiency exam. Thus, considering they have the same language ability, they were first given the reading texts of the Booklets 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D (Appendix A) and instructed to read them in detail in eighth minutes to be able to answer the comprehension questions to be given on a separate sheet.

The reading texts of the four booklets 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D were collected and the subjects were given the second sheet of the booklets 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D on which there was a brief

questionnaire as the distraction task telling the students about the aim of the questionnaire followed by either a cloze or a multiple choice test considering the same order of distribution of the reading texts of the booklets 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D. The subjects were given 10 minutes to complete this task.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Data from the test scores were analyzed through the t-test procedures to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in the comprehension of the students according to the type of texts they were given accompanied by different response items.

After the collection of data from the subjects, the researcher analyzed them and transferred the results into Microsoft Excel and SPSS spreadsheets to make the analysis easier. The following chapter gives a detailed analysis of the data obtained from the subjects and test developers.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0. Presentation**

In this chapter, the discussion of how data was analyzed is presented. The data is interpreted in relation to the hypotheses formulated for the study and the aim in this chapter was to make it clear whether they were accepted or rejected in the light of the analyzed data.

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of different text organization formats and varied response formats on students' performance in reading comprehension. Moreover, whether subjective test items or objective test items were more effective in testing students' performance in reading comprehension was the third question.

#### **4.2. Data Analysis Procedure**

The statistics program SPSS was used to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the cloze tests and the other descriptive statistics. Scoring of the multiple-choice tests was more practical compared to the cloze tests because judges were needed for marker reliability in cloze tests. Such cloze tests in Booklets 1A and 2A both had 17 items to be analyzed and two teachers in the

Preparatory School of Başkent University were invited to conduct the analysis.

The raters gave one point for every correct and acceptable answer (other correct alternatives fitting the context) disregarding spelling and punctuation mistakes since the intention of these cloze tests is not to test vocabulary, grammar, spelling or punctuation but key words that lead to comprehension. Moreover, alteration of meaning or adding a non-existent idea was not given any points. These grades were converted to 100 to make calculation easier.

#### 4.2.1. Analysis of inter-raters' judgments of the results of the cloze tests

Correlation could be explained as the relationship or association between sets of scores. Nunan (1989) explains that if the variables are highly positively correlated, the result obtained will approach 1.0. If there is no relationship whatsoever, the result will approach zero and if there is a strong negative correlation, the figure will approach -1.

In this study, the correlation between the judgments of the two raters (both English instructors at Başkent University) on the scores of the cloze tests is sought.

The Pearson correlation values of the two raters of the items in the cloze test in Booklet 1A (description format) were  $r=1,000$  and  $r=, 995$ . This can be interpreted as there is a strong

correlation between the judgments of the two raters on the scores of the cloze tests in Booklet 1A (description format).

Table 2 Correlations of raters in Booklet 1A (description format)  
Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	8,8400	3,4723	25
Rater 2	8,8000	3,3789	25

  

Correlations			
	Rater 1	Rater 2	
Rater 1	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000 , ,000	Rater 2 ,995 ,000
Rater 2	N Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	25 ,995 ,000	25 1,000 ,
	N	25	25

The Pearson correlation values of the two raters of the items in the cloze test in Booklet 2A (cause-effect format) were  $r=1,000$  and  $r=,998$ . This can be interpreted as there is a strong correlation between the judgments of the two raters on the scores of the cloze tests in Booklet 2A (cause-effect format).

Table 3 Correlations of raters in Booklet 2A (cause-effect format)

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	9,5200	5,0093	25
Rater 2	9,5200	4,9592	25
Correlations			
Rater 1	Pearson Correlation	Rater 1 1,000	Rater 2 ,998
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,	,000
	N	25	25
Rater 2	Pearson Correlation	,998	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,
	N	25	25

#### 4.2.2. Results of Group 1 (Booklet 1A-description)

A brief note on descriptive statistics is necessary here to be able to interpret the data presented below. Nunan (1989) explains that two basic but highly important concepts in descriptive statistics are central tendency and variability. Central tendency means the extent to which a set of data group or cluster. Variability, on the other hand, shows the extent a set of data disperse from the average.

Probably the most important measure of central tendency is the mean. It is the data element which is obtained by adding the present data together then dividing the result by the number of subjects in a set of data.

Variability refers to the extent which scores of subjects depart from the average or the mean. The measures of variability are the range, the standard deviation and the variance. The range is the difference between the highest and the lowest score in a set of data. The variance is a measure of how data points differ from the mean. Finally, the standard deviation is the square root of the variance.

Descriptive statistics of the cloze test items were calculated on the basis of giving 1 point for every correct alternative and then converting the grades to 100. Table 4 and Table 5 show the descriptive statistics of Booklets 1A and 2A respectively.

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Table 4 Descriptive Statistics the results of Booklet 1A

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	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Variance
Group 1A	25	79,38	11,76	91,14	52,69	4,26	21,30	453,86
Description								
Cloze Test								
Valid N	25							

---

Table 4 shows that the average score of the subjects in the cloze test of the description format is 52,69. This is the lowest mean value among the four groups. The difference between the highest and the lowest scores in this test is 79,38 and how much the scores disperse from the mean is evident by the standard deviation value 21,30

#### 4.2.3. Results of Group 3 (Booklet 2A-Cause-effect)

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Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of the results of Booklet 2A

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	Std. Dev	Variance
Group 2A	25	66,66	33,33	99,99	75,54	4,00	20,02	401,15	
Cause-Effect- Cloze Test									
Valid N	25								

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Table 5 shows that the average score of the subjects in the cloze test of the cause-effect format is 75,54. This is a higher mean value than the other cloze test on description format. The difference between the highest and the lowest scores in this test is 66,66 and how much the scores disperse from the mean is evident by the standard deviation value 20,02.

#### 4.2.4. Results of Group 2 (Booklet 1B-description)

As for the multiple-choice items, descriptive statistics were calculated as well on the basis of giving 1 point for every correct alternative and then converting the grades to 100. Table 6 and Table 7 show the descriptive statistics of Booklets 1B and 2B.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of Booklet 1B

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev	Variance
Group 1B	25	94,08	5,88	99,96	55,97	5,85	29,29	858,22
Description Multiple- Choice								
Valid N	25							

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Table 6 shows that the average score of the subjects in the cloze test of the cause-effect format is 55,97. This is a higher mean value than the cloze test on description format; however, it is still less than the multiple choice tests on description and cause-effect formats. The difference between the highest and the lowest scores in this test is 94,08 and how much the scores disperse from the mean is evident by the standard deviation value 29,29.

#### 4.2.5. Results of Group 4 (Booklet 2B-Cause-effect)

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics of Booklet 2B

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean Std. Error	Std. Dev	Variance	
Group 2B Cause- Effect-Multiple- Choice	25	44,44	55,55	99,99	83,99	3,21	16,06	257,97
Valid N	25							

Table 7 shows that the average score of the subjects in the cloze test of the cause-effect format is 83,99. This is the highest mean value of all the tests. The difference between the highest and the lowest scores in this test is 44,44, which means that even the low achiever subjects in this group performed quite well. How much the scores disperse from the mean is evident by the standard deviation value 16,06.

#### 4.3. Analysis of the Findings for Research Question 1

The first research question of this study investigated whether rhetorical organization affects reading test performance of the students. To reach a sound and reliable conclusion on this question, first, the mean scores of the subjects who did the two

cloze tests from the texts organized in description (1A) and cause-effect formats (2A) were compared. Then, the mean scores of the subjects who did the two multiple choice tests from the texts organized in description (1A) and cause-effect formats (2A) were compared. Table 8 and Table 9 are the supports for the view that different text organizations affect reading comprehension.

Table 8

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Gr. 1A Description Cloze Test	52,6952	25	21,3040	4,2608
	Gr. 2A Cause-Effect- Cloze Test	75,5480	25	20,0288	4,0058

Paired Samples Test		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Paired Differences	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Groups 1A-2A	-25,536	5,1072	1,0072	-33,3936	-12,3120	-4,475	24	,000

As Table 8 shows the preset significance level, 05 is bigger than the significance level obtained from the results of the subjects in Group 1A who have read description text format and answered the cloze test designed for this particular type of organization and

2A who have read cause-effect text format and answered the cloze test designed for this type of organization. As a consequence, this result out of Table 8 is the first support for the researcher to be confident enough to reject the first null hypothesis that states there is no interaction between reading comprehension test performance and text organization.

Table 9

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Group 1B Description Multiple-Choice	55,9776	25	29,2954	5,8591
	Group 2B Cause- Effect-Multiple- Choice	83,9916	25	16,0615	3,2123

  

Paired Samples Test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Groups 1B-2B	33,6757	6,7351	41,9146
		6,7351	14,1134	-4,1594
			24	,000

Table 9, similarly shows that the preset significance level, 05 is bigger than the significance level obtained from the results of the subjects in Group 1B who have read description text format and answered the multiple-choice test designed for this particular type of organization and 2B who have read cause-effect text

format and answered the multiple-choice test designed for this type of organization. As a result, this finding out of Table 9 is the second support for the researcher to be confident enough to reject the first null hypothesis that states there is no interaction between reading comprehension test performance and text organization.

#### 4.4. Analysis of the Findings for Research Question 2 and Research Question 3

The second research question of this study explored if there was a significant relationship between the type of response format the subjects used for the first text (description) Group 1A and 1B and the second text (cause-effect) Group 2A and 2B and their reading comprehension test performances. This analysis also addresses to the third research question which seeks whether objective test items-multiple choice or subjective test items-cloze tests are better tools on reading comprehension. To state if such a significant relationship exists, the scores of the subjects from the cloze and the multiple-choice test were calculated and then compared from the first text. The same procedure was conducted for the second text. The results are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Pair 1	Group 1A Description Cloze Test	52,6952	25	21,3040	4,2608				
	Group 1B Description Multiple-Choice	55,9776	25	29,2954	5,8591				
Paired Samples Test									
Paired Differences	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Pair 1	Groups 1A-1B	-32,3066	3,2824	6,4613	Lower -16,6178	Upper -10,0530	-5,508	24	,616

As Table 10 shows the preset significance level, 05 is smaller than the significance level obtained from the results of the subjects in Group 1A who have read description text format and answered the cloze test designed for this particular type of organization and 1B who have read again description text format but answered the multiple-choice test designed for this type of organization. As a consequence, this result out of Table 10 is the first support for the researcher to fail to reject the second null hypothesis that expresses there is no interaction between reading comprehension performance and response format.

This finding is also valid to test the third hypothesis that expresses there is no difference between the objective response items and subjective response items in terms of assessing students' reading comprehension because the finding is based on the results from a subjective item and an objective test item.

Table 11

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Group 2A	75,5480	25	20,0288	4,0058
	Group 2B	83,9916	25	16,0615	3,2123

Paired Samples Test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Group 2A-2B	26,6945	24	,127
		8,4436	8	19,4627

As Table 11 shows the preset significance level, 05 is smaller than the significance level out the results of the subjects in Group 2A who have read cause-effect text format and answered the cloze test designed for this particular type of organization and 2B who have read again the cause-effect text format but answered

the multiple-choice test designed for this type of organization. As a consequence, this result out of Table 11 is the second support for the researcher to fail to reject the second null hypothesis that expresses there is no interaction between reading comprehension performance and response format.

This result is also applicable to test the third hypothesis that expresses there is no difference between the objective response items and subjective response items in terms of assessing students' reading comprehension because the finding is based on the results from a subjective item and an objective test item.

#### 4.5. Conclusion

In the analysis of the data, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the varied text structures and the students' reading comprehension test performance. However, it became clear out of the data analysis that there was no significant difference between neither the different response formats and the students' reading comprehension test performance nor the subjective test items and the objective test items. In the light of the data analysis presented, the following chapter discusses its implications on reading comprehension and language testing.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0. Presentation**

In this chapter a summary of the study is presented. It also includes the conclusions drawn from the data analyzed, comparing them with the hypotheses formulated for the study. There are also suggestions and implications for further research at the end.

#### **5.1. Overview of the Study**

The current study assumed that certain text structures and response formats have effects on reading comprehension of the students. As a result, the main aim of it was to look into the existence of such relationships between the varied text structures and their effects on reading comprehension and varied response formats and their effects on reading comprehension.

In terms of methodology, the study was eclectic. It included elements of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and quantitative research as well. Describing a phenomenon that takes place naturally in a natural context, the study had preconceived hypotheses to test. Since the research group in which the study was conducted was not specifically formed for the purposes of the study, a feature making it a descriptive study, the current study was also quasi-experimental. Such a natural context made

it possible to collect data that were more representative of the results. Lastly, the quantitative aspect of the study comes from the fact that the analysis of the data collected necessitated using certain statistical calculation procedures.

The present study was based on a paired samples t-test procedure, which aimed at comparing the mean scores of the students from the tests implemented on them.

The setting of the study was the English Language School of Başkent University, Ankara. The research took place in the 2006-2007 Academic Year Fall Semester from October to November, 2006. The study was conducted on first year students from different departments. The number of subjects that participated in the study was 100, 37 males and 63 females. Their ages ranged between 18 and 22. The students came from four main types of high schools: Anatolian High Schools, Foreign Language High Schools, State High Schools, and Private High Schools.

All the students in four groups have the same proficiency levels in English varying between 60 and 75 in the proficiency exam of Başkent University. To attain this homogeneity, the tests were implemented on all the students in a classroom and then the tests of those who have a proficiency grade between 60 and 75 were selected and included in the study.

Data collection tools included a multiple-choice test and a cloze test constructed under the guidance of the supervisor. After the tests were implemented, they were analyzed and the results

were transferred into Microsoft Excel and SPSS spreadsheets to allow for the data analysis process.

The paired samples t-test procedure was used to determine if any significant change took place in the subjects' reading comprehension drawing conclusions from their test scores. The data out of the tests were entered into SPSS tables and the level of significance was set at  $p = .05$ .

## 5.2. Discussion of the Results

### 5.2.1. Varied Text Structures and Their Effects on Reading Comprehension

The first research question of the study explored whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the varied text structures and Turkish students' test performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English. The results showed that when students read a text organized in different formats their comprehension is affected.

As opposed to the findings of Sharp (2002), who states that the most loosely organized text (description) scored significantly higher than the most tightly organized text (cause-effect), cause-effect scored significantly higher than description in this study. The findings of this study were in consistence with the other researchers.

Approving Meyer and Freedle's (1984) claim that ideas are more easily remembered when presented in tightly-organized texts

than loosely-organized texts because of the close link between the ideas, this result shows that students perform better when they are presented with the tightly-organized ideas than loosely-organized ideas, which has been supported by other researchers Carrell (1984), Goh (1990) and McGee (1982).

#### 5.2.2. Varied Response Formats and Their Effects on Reading Comprehension

The second research question of the study examined whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the different response formats and Turkish students' test performance in reading that have the same level of proficiency in English. The outcomes showed that it does not matter at all which response format the students are tested with when students read the same text organized in the same text format. Therefore, their comprehension is not affected through different response formats.

This finding seems to be incompatible with the findings of Kobayashi (2005) who found that test performance is affected by text type and response format.

Besides, the outcome of this study is also a support for the third research question which investigates whether there is a difference between students' test scores when they are provided with an objective response item and a subjective response item as varied response formats because the study indirectly examined whether there was such a statistically significant

relationship by using a subjective test item-cloze test and an objective test item-multiple-choice.

### 5.3. Limitations of the Study

The study had some limitations concerning the number of subjects and the process of data collection. The first limitation in this study is that the results obtained from this study may not be sufficient enough to account for the general tendencies of all the first year students at Başkent University in terms of reading comprehension. Therefore, the outcomes of this study reflect the performances and characteristics of only a part of the target population.

Secondly, the research process had a very tight schedule. That is, the tools had to be implemented before all the subjects disperse from the preconceived homogenous proficiency level at the beginning of the term for some of them have 4 hours of English courses while others have 6 hours depending on the needs of their departments.

### 5.4. Pedagogical Implications

The main finding of this research is that different text structures have significant effect on reading comprehension test performance of the students. Therefore, when the educational setting of the study is concerned, raising awareness of the students in regards to different text structures will be beneficial on students' behalf to be proficient readers throughout their academic English courses.

Another implication of this study concerning the teachers is that it can arouse some kind of a skeptical view. Bearing the rhetorical organization of their texts and response items for these texts in mind, teachers could be more skeptical of the appropriateness of their reading texts in accord with their goals and objectives. Moreover, they could be more skeptical of their test items as to whether they are suitable tools for their texts.

Similarly, on a broader ground, if the test constructors become more aware of the fact that selection of texts according to varied text structures will affect the test scores of the students' or applicants' reading comprehension, fair and reasonable construction and implementation of tests will take place. This is crucial because these test results are vital measures when deciding whether a student fails or passes a course, or when selected reading text comprises a high percentage of the test score which is used to decide on admissions to academic studies or jobs.

#### 5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further research come out of the outcomes of this study. To begin with, to be able to generalize the results on the target population, the number of subjects could be increased.

Then, a questionnaire could be designed to determine whether there is a relationship between the test developers' selection of

varied text organizations followed by different response formats and the students' test performance.

Another suggestion is that another text organization format and another response could be added to the study to verify and compare the findings of this result with the two text organization formats and the response formats.

## 5.6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of varied text structures and response formats on Turkish university students' reading comprehension test performance. It showed significant difference between the varied text structures and subjects' reading comprehension test performance. However, there was not any significant difference between the different response formats and the subjects' reading comprehension test performance.

The findings partially support the previous studies on varied text structures and different response formats that came up with the result that varied text structures affect reading comprehension.

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## **APPENDICES**

### APPENDIX A

TEST BOOKLETS 1A-1B-2A-2B

## BOOKLET 1 A

**Read the text carefully. You will be given a separate sheet for questions after 8 minutes.**

### Healthy Diet

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. We may avoid bad health if we eat a variety of foods.

Protein is needed for children to grow healthily. Fibre provides a substance that helps prevent constipation. Vitamins can be obtained from fruit and vegetables. Protein is also important for good health. Energy levels will be reduced by a lack of carbohydrates. Vegetable fats are better for our health than animal fats. We should try to eat more vegetable fats.

Carbohydrates can be found in foods such as bread, rice and potatoes. Protein can be found in eggs, fish and meat. Lack of vitamins can cause diseases such as rickets and scurvy. Eating vegetable fats rather than animal fats will reduce the risk of heart problems, particularly when we get older. We should avoid eating in Mc Donalds. Fibre can be found in cereals, vegetables and fruit.

## BOOKLET 1 A

October 2006

Sevgili arkadaşlar,

İsminim Mehmet Ali Yılık. Okulumuzun İngilizce Hazırlık Bölümü'nde 4 yıldır okutman olarak görev yapıyorum. Yüksek Lisans tezimin bir parçası olan bu okuma uygulamasına katılarak katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim. Aşağıdaki kişisel bilgilerinizi eksiksiz doldurmanız çok önemli.

Hepinize başarılar dilerim.

Name	
Gender	
Department	
Proficiency Exam	
Grade	

*Now that you have read the text, try to remember as much as you can from the reading passage and fill in each blank with one appropriate word in 10 minutes.*

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. We may avoid bad 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (health) if we eat a 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (variety) of foods.

Protein is 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (needed) for children to grow 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (healthily). Fibre provides a substance that helps prevent constipation. Vitamins can be obtained from fruit and 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (vegetables). Protein is also 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (important) for good health. Energy 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (levels) will be reduced by a lack of 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (carbohydrates). Vegetable 9. \_\_\_\_\_ (fats) are better for our 10. \_\_\_\_\_ (health) than animal fats. We should try to eat more 11. \_\_\_\_\_ (vegetable) fats.

12. \_\_\_\_\_ (Carbohydrates) can be found in foods such as bread, rice and potatoes. Protein can be found in eggs, 13. \_\_\_\_\_ (fish) and meat. Lack of vitamins can cause diseases such as rickets and scurvy. Eating 14. \_\_\_\_\_ (vegetable) fats rather than 15. \_\_\_\_\_ (animal) fats will reduce the risk of heart attacks, particularly when we get 16. \_\_\_\_\_ (older). We should 17. \_\_\_\_\_ (avoid) eating in McDonalds. Fibre can be found in cereals, vegetables and fruit.

## **BOOKLET 1 B**

**Read the text carefully. You will be given a separate sheet for questions after 8 minutes.**

### **Healthy Diet**

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. We may avoid bad health if we eat a variety of foods.

Protein is needed for children to grow healthily. Fibre provides a substance that helps prevent constipation. Vitamins can be obtained from fruit and vegetables. Protein is also important for good health. Energy levels will be reduced by a lack of carbohydrates. Vegetable fats are better for our health than animal fats. We should try to eat more vegetable fats.

Carbohydrates can be found in foods such as bread, rice and potatoes. Protein can be found in eggs, fish and meat. Lack of vitamins can cause diseases such as rickets and scurvy. Eating vegetable fats rather than animal fats will reduce the risk of heart problems, particularly when we get older. We should avoid eating in Mc Donalds. Fibre can be found in cereals, vegetables and fruit.

## BOOKLET 1 B

October 2006

Sevgili arkadaşlar,

İsminim Mehmet Ali Yılık. Okulumuzun İngilizce Hazırlık Bölümü'nde 4 yıldır okutman olarak görev yapıyorum. Yüksek Lisans tezimin bir parçası olan bu okuma uygulamasına katılarak katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim. Aşağıdaki kişisel bilgilerinizi eksiksiz doldurmanız çok önemli.

Hepinize başarılar dilerim.

Name	
Gender	
Department	
Proficiency Exam	
Grade	

*Now that you have read the text, try to remember as much as you can and circle the appropriate option in the following questions according to the reading passage in 10 minutes.*

1. Eating a variety of foods avoids...(Cloze 1-2)
  - a. weight loss.
  - b. bad health.**
  - c. heart problems.
2. Protein is necessary...(Cloze 3-4)
  - a. for healthy growth in children.**
  - b. to prevent constipation
  - c. to balance energy levels
3. Without fibre, one would frequently suffer from...
  - a. insomnia
  - b. digestion
  - c. constipation**
4. Fruits and vegetables are rich in...(Cloze 5)
  - a. proteins
  - b. fibre
  - c. vitamins**
5. Insufficient levels of carbohydrates will lead to...( C 7-8)
  - a. low energy levels**
  - b. diseases
6. .... fats are less healthier than ..... fats. ( Cloze 9-10-11)
  - a. Vegetable / animal
  - b. Animal / vegetable**
  - c. Vegetable / cereal
7. Some of the foods rich in ..... are bread, rice and potatoes. ( Cloze 12)
  - a. vegetable fat
  - b. carbohydrates**
  - c. vitamin
8. Together with eggs and meat, protein can be found in...( Cloze 13)
  - a. cereals
  - b. fruit
  - c. fish**
9. We might have little risk of heart problems in our elderly years if we... ( Cloze 14-15-16)
  - a. eat less vegetable fats.
  - b. eat less animal fats.**
  - c. eat foods rich in vitamin.

**Read the text carefully. You will be given a separate sheet for questions after 8 minutes.**

### **Healthy Diet**

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. A poor diet can cause disease.

If our bodies are provided with food that contains the right substances then we are less likely to become ill. A lack of vitamins can cause diseases like rickets and scurvy. Fruit and vegetables are necessary to avoid these diseases. A lack of protein can also result in illness, but this can be avoided by eating eggs, fish and meat. If we are able to eat plenty of carbohydrates then the body will be provided with the energy it needs.

Carbohydrates can be found in foods like potatoes, bread and rice. Lack of fibre from foods like cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit are a cause of problems such as constipation. If we eat too much animal fat instead of vegetable fat then this may cause heart attacks, particularly when we get older. Mc Donalds restaurant food may be unhealthy because of high animal fats-we should eat there less.

## BOOKLET 2 A

October 2006

Sevgili arkadaşlar,

İsminim Mehmet Ali Yılık. Okulumuzun İngilizce Hazırlık Bölümü'nde 4 yıldır okutman olarak görev yapıyorum. Yüksek Lisans tezimin bir parçası olan bu okuma uygulamasına katılarak katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim. Aşağıdaki kişisel bilgilerinizi eksiksiz doldurmanız çok önemli.

Hepinize başarılar dilerim.

Name	
Gender	
Department	
Proficiency Exam	
Grade	

*Now that you have read the text, try to remember as much as you can from the reading passage and fill in each blank with one appropriate word in 10 minutes.*

If our bodies are 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (provided) with food that contains the 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (right) substances then we are less likely to become ill.

A lack of 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (vitamins) can cause diseases like rickets and scurvy. Fruit and vegetables are 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (necessary) to avoid these diseases. A lack of 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (protein) can also result in illness, but this can be avoided by eating eggs, 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (fish) and meat. If we are able to eat plenty of 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (carbohydrates) then the body will be provided with the 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (energy) it needs.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ (Carbohydrates) can be found in foods like potatoes, bread and rice. Lack of 10. \_\_\_\_\_ (fibre) from foods like cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit are a cause of 11. \_\_\_\_\_ (problems) such as constipation. If we eat too much 12. \_\_\_\_\_ (animal) fat instead of 13. \_\_\_\_\_ (vegetable) fat then this may cause heart attacks, particularly when we get 14. \_\_\_\_\_ (older). Mc Donalds restaurant food may be 15. \_\_\_\_\_ (unhealthy) because of high 16. \_\_\_\_\_ (animal) fats- we should eat there 17. \_\_\_\_\_ (less).

## BOOKLET 2 B

**Read the text carefully. You will be given a separate sheet for questions after 8 minutes.**

### Healthy Diet

Our bodies need a variety of foods to stay healthy. A poor diet can cause disease.

If our bodies are provided with food that contains the right substances then we are less likely to become ill. A lack of vitamins can cause diseases like rickets and scurvy. Fruit and vegetables are necessary to avoid these diseases. A lack of protein can also result in illness, but this can be avoided by eating eggs, fish and meat. If we are able to eat plenty of carbohydrates then the body will be provided with the energy it needs.

Carbohydrates can be found in foods like potatoes, bread and rice. Lack of fibre from foods like cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit are a cause of problems such as constipation. If we eat too much animal fat instead of vegetable fat then this may cause heart attacks, particularly when we get older. Mc Donalds restaurant food may be unhealthy because of high animal fats-we should eat there less.

## BOOKLET 2 B

October 2006

Sevgili arkadaşlar,

İsminim Mehmet Ali Yılık. Okulumuzun İngilizce Hazırlık Bölümü'nde 4 yıldır okutman olarak görev yapıyorum. Yüksek Lisans tezimin bir parçası olan bu okuma uygulamasına katılarak katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim. Aşağıdaki kişisel bilgilerinizi eksiksiz doldurmanız çok önemli.

Hepinize başarılar dilerim.

Name	
Gender	
Department	
Proficiency Exam	
Grade	

*Now that you have read the text, try to remember as much as you can and circle the appropriate option in the following questions according to the reading passage in 10 minutes.*

1. It is probable for us to stay away from illness... ( Cloze 1-2)
  - a. if we eat food that contains the right substances
  - b. provided we exercise a lot.
  - c. so long as we take medicines on a regular basis.
2. Rickets and scurvy are two diseases that result from a lack of... ( Cloze 3)
  - a. proteins
  - b. fibre
  - c. carbohydrates
3. Fruits and vegetables are rich in... ( Cloze 4)
  - a. proteins
  - b. fibre
  - c. vitamins
4. Together with eggs and meat, protein can be found in... (Cloze 5-6)
  - a. cereals
  - b. fruit
  - c. fish
5. If we eat plenty of carbohydrates, then we will have sufficient... ( Cloze 7-8)
  - a. energy levels
  - b. diseases
  - c. digestion
6. Some of the foods rich in ..... are bread, rice and potatoes. ( Cloze 9)
  - a. vegetable fat
  - b. carbohydrates
  - c. vitamin
7. Without enough fibre, one would frequently suffer from... ( Cloze 10-11)
  - a. insomnia
  - b. digestion
  - c. constipation
8. We might have little risk of heart problems in our elderly years if we... ( Cloze 12-13-14)
  - a. eat less vegetable fats.
  - b. eat less animal fats.
  - c. eat foods rich in vitamin.
9. Mc Donalds are..... because of the high animal fats present in their foods. ( Cloze 15-16-17)
  - a. popular
  - b. unhealthy
  - c. global