

BUILDING COMPOUND-SENTENCE EXERCISES FOR 5TH-GRADERS IN COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHING

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Abstract

Surveying compound-sentence exercises types in the Vietnamese-Language subject of the 2006 Primary School Program and those currently in some primary schools, Dong Thap province, the article clarifies a number of issues on building compound sentence exercises teaching 5th-graders for competency development. In particular, the article focuses on those exercises aligned with 3 lesson types in the cognitive-level order: awareness, understanding and application. These exercises provide teachers with more resources to apply to teaching; thereby, helping students identify the structural features of compound sentences and use them effectively in communication.

Keywords: *Competency development, compound sentences, exercises, students.*

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XÂY DỰNG HỆ THỐNG BÀI TẬP DẠY HỌC CÂU GHÉP CHO HỌC SINH LỚP 5 THEO HƯỚNG PHÁT TRIỂN NĂNG LỰC

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Tóm tắt

Trên cơ sở khảo sát các dạng bài tập về câu ghép trong môn Tiếng Việt của Chương trình Tiểu học 2006 và thực trạng dạy học câu ghép ở một số trường tiểu học trên địa bàn tỉnh Đồng Tháp, bài viết làm rõ một số vấn đề liên quan đến việc xây dựng bài tập dạy học câu ghép cho học sinh lớp 5 theo hướng phát triển năng lực. Đặc biệt, bài viết tập trung xây dựng hệ thống bài tập về câu ghép với 3 dạng bài theo thang cấp độ nhận thức: nhận biết, thông hiểu và vận dụng. Thông qua hệ thống bài tập này, giáo viên sẽ có thêm nguồn bài tập để vận dụng vào dạy học, qua đó, giúp học sinh nhận biết được đặc điểm cấu tạo của câu ghép và sử dụng một cách hiệu quả trong hoạt động giao tiếp.

Từ khóa: *Bài tập, câu ghép, học sinh, phát triển năng lực.*

1. Problem statement

Sentences play a crucial role in communication as they convey the intended meaning of the speaker or writer. According to Do (1999, p. 101), "A sentence is a linguistic unit used to express thoughts associated with specific contexts for the purpose of communication or conveying evaluative attitudes. A sentence has an independent grammatical structure and a definitive intonation". Additionally, "In the process of thinking and communication, we often refer to complex judgments. Therefore, besides simple sentences, we use various complex sentence structures. Compound sentences are the expressions of such complex structures" (ibid, p. 123). Therefore, teaching Vietnamese compound sentences plays a crucial role in enhancing students' communication effectiveness. To communicate effectively, students need to use compound sentences to convey the content of a topic comprehensively, avoiding ambiguity or lack of clarity. To do so, students must have a solid understanding of the characteristics of compound sentences and be able to construct appropriate compound sentences for different communication situations. However, in the Vietnamese curriculum for 5th grade, the training on sentence construction and analysis of compound sentences mainly relies on exercises, but the reality shows that these exercises are limited, primarily serving theoretical review and have not been scientifically systematized. Furthermore, there is a limited availability of teaching materials that focus on developing students' skills in using compound sentences, making it difficult for teachers to find supportive resources for their teaching. In order to improve the quality of Vietnamese language instruction in elementary school, with a focus on developing students' competencies, it is crucial to develop exercises for teaching compound sentences using various formats.

2. Contents

2.1. Concept of Compound Sentences

There are different perspectives on the concept of compound sentences. According to Diep (2008, p. 292), "A compound sentence (or sentence combination) is a structure consisting of two or more sentence forms, each of which has relative independence. There are certain types of relationships between these sentence forms, expressed in specific ways. Each sentence within the compound sentence is a clause, or a "sentence form" that is not embedded within another." Do (1999, p. 124) argues that "A compound sentence

consists of two or more S-P structures (or two or more predicate centers), in which one S-P structure does not include another. They always have a closely connected relationship, forming a unified entity in terms of meaning". The textbook "Tiếng Việt 5" [Vietnamese 5] defines compound sentences as "sentences formed by combining multiple clauses. Each clause in a compound sentence usually has a structure similar to a simple sentence (with a subject and predicate) and expresses an idea closely related to the meanings of other clauses" (2011, p. 8).

2.2. Competency-based teaching

Competency-based teaching is a new and current educational trend. It is an instructional model that aims to maximize the capabilities and qualities of learners through organizing active and creative learning activities under the appropriate organization, guidance, and support of teachers. In this approach, teaching activities are not only focused on transmitting knowledge but also on helping students complete tasks and solve problems in learning and life by effectively and creatively applying the knowledge they have acquired.

Teaching Vietnamese language skills in general, and teaching compound sentences in particular, based on competency development is a teaching method that shifts from the objective of students knowing about language units to the objective of students applying and using these units in communication activities. With this direction, teaching compound sentences helps students not only acquire basic knowledge but also develop the ability to construct compound sentences and apply them flexibly in communication activities.

2.3. Surveying exercises on compound sentences and students' using compound sentences

2.3.1 Objectives, participants, and scope of the survey

To have a clear understanding of the current situation regarding exercises on compound sentences and students' usage of compound sentences, as a basis for developing a system of exercises for teaching compound sentences based on competency development, we conducted a survey on exercises on compound sentences in the Vietnamese Language textbook "Tiếng Việt 5", Volume 2, of the 2006 general education program, as well as the usage of compound sentences by students in some primary schools in Dong Thap province.

2.3.2. Method

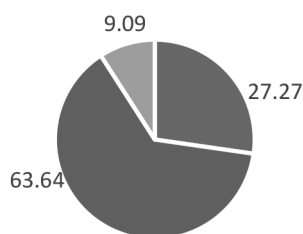
When surveying the types of exercises on compound sentences and the issues related to students' usage of compound sentences, we employed the following methods:

- Statistical classification method and mathematical statistics method: The purpose was to classify and rank the exercises on compound sentences in the "Tiếng Việt 5" textbook, Volume 2, of the 2006 general education program according to Bloom's taxonomy. We also assessed the level of students' achievement in meeting the requirements during the survey process.

- Observation and survey through questionnaires: We observed several lessons on compound sentences and distributed questionnaires to understand the level of students' usage of exercises on compound sentences in current primary school teaching.

2.3.3. Findings

By conducting a statistical analysis of the types of exercises on compound sentences, we collected a total of 22 exercises (including 6 recognition exercises, 14 comprehension exercises, and 2 application exercises) arranged in the Practice section of Vocabulary and Sentences.



■ Remember ■ Understanding ■ Applying

Graph 1. Percentage of exercises on compound sentences in the Vietnamese Language textbook "Tiếng Việt 5" of the 2006 General Education Program, categorized according to Bloom's taxonomy

Through rigorous statistical analysis of the exercises administered in this study, the findings revealed that the Vietnamese Language curriculum for Grade 5 encompassed a total of 22 exercises dedicated to compound sentences, spanning 6 weeks. The predominant focus of these exercises revolved around comprehension and recognition, constituting a significant proportion of the total exercises (27.27% and 63.64% respectively). Conversely, the

number of application exercises was significantly limited, accounting for a mere 2 exercises (9.09%). Consequently, the majority of exercises primarily aimed at enabling students to identify and construct compound sentences based on predetermined patterns, rather than fostering their proficiency in constructing compound sentences in diverse contexts. Regrettably, the Vietnamese Language textbook "Tiếng Việt 5", Volume 2, exhibited a dearth of dynamic application exercises, thereby failing to create an engaging learning environment conducive to enhancing students' language skills in both academic study and communication.

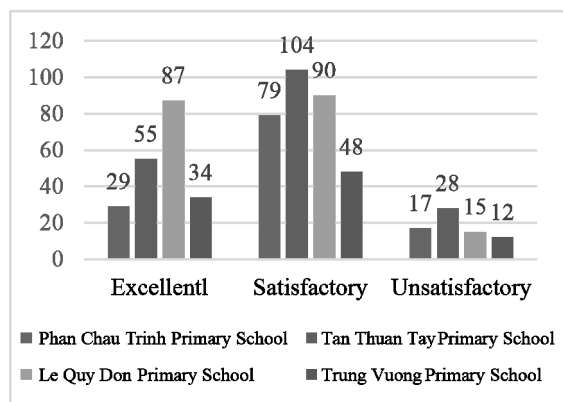
To assess the level of students' recognition and usage of compound sentences, from March to April 2023, we conducted a survey on the completion of compound sentence exercises with 598 fifth-grade students from four primary schools in Dong Thap province (including Phan Chau Trinh Primary School, Tan Thuan Tay Primary School, Le Quy Don Primary School, and Trung Vuong Primary School) by observing their lessons and distributing survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed with exercises to identify compound sentences, determine the clauses of compound sentences, construct compound sentences, connect clauses in compound sentences with pairs of linking words or punctuation marks, and write descriptive paragraphs using compound sentences. In the student survey questionnaires, we scored and classified the results into three levels under Circular 22/2016/TT-BGDĐT as follows:

- Level 1: Excellent (from 9 to 10 points): Students complete the exercises quickly and accurately, demonstrating the ability to infer, understand, and express ideas as required.

- Level 2: Satisfactory (from 5 to below 9 points): Students have a good foundation of vocabulary, understand the requirements, and are able to complete the exercises. However, they may still make mistakes in various aspects such as word usage, identifying clauses, and expressing ideas clearly.

- Level 3: Unsatisfactory (from 1 to below 5 points): Students did not fully understand the exercise requirements, unable to complete the exercises satisfactorily. Their work contains many errors in word usage, sentence construction, and selecting accurate answers.

The survey results regarding the completion of compound sentence exercises by fifth-grade students in the four primary schools in Dong Thap province are as follows:



Graph 2. Completion level of compound sentence exercises by 5th-grade students in Dong Thap province

The survey data shows that the majority of students have completed or completed the compound sentence exercises well (526 out of 598 students, accounting for 87.96%). This indicates that students have grasped the basic knowledge of compound sentences in Vietnamese. However, when applying the learned knowledge to solve exercises, some students still struggle with identifying the components of a sentence, sentence structures, especially in exercises that require the application of compound sentences. The number of students who have not completed the compound sentence exercises is 72 out of 598 surveyed students, accounting for 12.04%. Among them, the numbers of students not completing the exercises in Phan Chau Trinh, Tan Thuan Tay, Le Quy Don, and Trung Vuong Primary School are 17, 28, 15, and 12, respectively. The completion rate of exercises varies among students in different schools. Schools located in central areas have a higher rate of students who complete the exercises well or complete them. This indicates that students from schools with different socioeconomic conditions have different abilities to recognize and use compound sentences. Therefore, it is necessary to design exercises that are suitable for different groups of students.

Through a survey of the number of exercises in the Vietnamese 5 textbook and the results of students' completion of exercises in some primary schools, we have noticed that during the teaching process, students are only provided with theoretical knowledge

without sufficient emphasis on practical exercises. The exercises in the new textbooks are limited to simple levels, focusing only on helping students memorize information and knowledge, without placing enough emphasis on developing actual language skills for application in learning and communication. This approach aligns with the objectives of the 2006 General Education Program (designed with a content-oriented approach). However, teaching based on competency development is a new point and a current trend in education. Therefore, we have developed a system of exercises for teaching sentence structures in a competency-oriented approach, with different levels, to supplement teaching materials according to the objectives of the 2018 General Education Program.

2.4. Designing a system of exercises teaching sentence structures for 5th-grade students in a competency-based approach

The objective of the Vietnamese language program for primary schools is "To help students initially develop general competencies, develop language skills in all reading, writing, speaking, and listening aspects at a fundamental level: ...writing correctly in terms of spelling and grammar; writing a number of sentences, paragraphs, and short essays" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018, p. 5). In the field of education, the hierarchy of thinking levels can be seen as a foundational tool for constructing and organizing educational objectives, developing programs, educational processes, and training, as well as structuring and systematizing questions and exercises used for assessing the learning process. According to Bloom (1956), educational objectives consist of six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Educators also believe that the educational objectives at the primary school level only reach three levels: knowledge, comprehension, and application. Therefore, when constructing a system of exercises for teaching sentence structures based on the developmental aspect of competencies, we have developed exercise types corresponding to three levels of thinking: knowledge, comprehension, and application. In this article, we introduce some exercises for teaching sentence structures to 5th-grade students at three levels: recognition, comprehension, and application, in order to supplement teaching materials for teachers and provide references for students to use during the teaching process.

2.4.1. Exercise Type: Remember

Based on the theoretical knowledge conveyed during instructional sessions, recognition exercises serve to enhance students' retention and identification of the concepts and characteristics of compound sentences. Moreover, these exercises cultivate students' ability to distinguish sentence components and effectively link sentence clauses based on the instructed principles. By utilizing newly presented linguistic material, these exercises concretize the attributes and functions of compound sentences, while also fostering students' capacity to recognize, analyze, and deepen their comprehension of compound sentence structures acquired in prior lessons, specifically pertaining to sentences and their principal constituents. Tailored to the operational and cognitive capacities of fifth-grade students, recognition exercises are designed with diverse formats such as identifying and determining compound sentences, analyzing sentence clauses, and employing multiple-choice questions, among others, thereby engendering an engaging learning environment for students.

Each recognition exercise encompasses two sections: the task requirements and the linguistic data. The task requirements are articulated through imperative statements, such as locating, ascertaining, selecting the correct answer, and the like. The linguistic data comprises a sentence or paragraph that is cognitively accessible, age-appropriate, and attuned to the primary school learners.

2.4.2. Exercise Type: Understanding

The exercise type centered around comprehension is closely intertwined with practice activities, surpassing the cognitive demands of recognition exercises. This exercise format serves to engender students' comprehensive understanding of fundamental concepts, enabling them to proficiently explicate and present the provided knowledge based on their own interpretation, thus promoting comprehension among their peers. The linguistic material employed in comprehension exercises generally exhibits inherent accessibility, relatability, and substantive depth. Typical exercise formats at this level encompass the arrangement of given words into syntactically correct sentences, the formulation of sentences according to predetermined patterns or specific requirements, and the rectification of errors within sentences.

2.4.3. Exercise Type: Applying

The application exercise type represents an elevated level of complexity compared to recognition exercises. It necessitates that students adeptly apply and synthesize the knowledge and skills they have acquired, enabling them to adroitly address scholastic or real-life challenges with flexibility and precision. These exercises serve as a vital bridge between theoretical understanding and the effective practical application of compound sentence knowledge, ensuring its fruitful utilization. In essence, exercises of this nature gauge students' aptitude for employing their knowledge of compound sentences in communicative endeavors. These exercises eschew predetermined sentence structures or templates, instead emphasizing the creative faculties of students. They provide an opportunity for students to showcase their proficiency in applying the acquired knowledge of compound sentences to resolve practical issues.

2.5. Compound-sentence exercises for developing 5th-graders' competency

2.5.1. Recognition Exercise Type

Exercise 1: Which of the following statements best describes a compound sentence?

- A. It is a sentence with a single subject-predicate core.
- B. It is a sentence with two or more subject-predicate pairs joined together.
- C. It is a sentence with two or more subject-predicate pairs, and they contain each other.
- D. It is a sentence with two or more subject-predicate pairs, and they do not contain each other.

Answer: D. It is a sentence with two or more subject-predicate pairs, and they do not contain each other.

Exercise 2: Find the compound sentences in the following passage:

"The coconut tree trunk soars straight up into the sky, reaching a height of twenty to thirty meters that even strong winds cannot topple. The coconut fronds extend outward like sharp swords. The young tree has just sprouted, yet its leaves are already brushing against the ground. The palm leaves spread out, forming many long, pointed segments, resembling a forest of waving hands that blocks the scorching midday sun like a newly risen sun. In the spring, birds flock back in groups."

(Excerpt from "The Coconut tree forest in my hometown" by Nguyen Thai Van)

Answer: The compound sentences are "The coconut tree trunk/soars straight up into the sky, reaching a height of twenty to thirty meters that even strong

winds/cannot topple; The young tree/has just sprouted, yet its leaves/are already brushing against the ground."

Exercise 3: Determine whether the following sentences are compound or not. Mark True (T) if they are compound, and False (F) if they are not.

#	Sentence	True (T)	False (F)
1	Because I am sick, I did not go to school		
2	Because of sickness, I dit not go to school		
3	Two years have passed, and the soursop tree has grown tall with its branches spreading wide, providing shade in a corner of the garden		
4	In autumn, the weather is gentle and the village road suddenly feels familiar, yet unfamiliar		
5	Thanks to diligent studying, Mai received praise from the teachers		

Answer: 1T; 2F; 3T; 4T, 5F

Exercise 4: Find the compound sentence in the following passage. Identify the clauses within the compound sentence and indicate how they are connected.

"When encountering a storm, the river surges with waves, and the boats have to dock. The sails are lowered. The rolled-up sails lie on the bow of the boat. It is unclear what the sails are thinking while the wind howls and the rain pours."

(According to "The Icy Mountain" by Bang Son)

Answer:

- Compound sentence: "When encountering a storm, the river/surges with waves, and the boats/have to dock."

- Clause connection: Direct connection (using punctuation: comma)

2.5.2. Comprehension exercises

Exercise 1: Arrange the given words into appropriate compound sentences.

- if/study/I/will/high grades/hard/ achieve.
- An/because/ didn't understand /was/ he/ reminded/by/the eacher/ the lesson.
- The classroom/in /the teacher/ lecture/ attentively/ listen/the student/ attentively.
- D. Rain/if/rain/continues/for/the river/ along time/water/will/rise.

Answer:

- If I study hard, I will achieve high grades.
- An was reminded by the teacher because he didn't understand the lesson.

c. In the classroom, the teacher lectures attentively while the students listen attentively.

d. If the rain continues for a long time, the river water level will rise.

Exercise 2: Create compound sentences using the following pairs of conjunctions:

- Although/Though ... but/yet ...
- If ... then ...
- Because ... therefore ...
- Whenever ... then ...

Answer: Students should form sentences according to the correct structure and semantic meaning.

Exercise 3: Fill in the missing clause to complete the following compound sentences:

- If I study well,...
- If only I studied harder, ...
- Although the house is far away, ...
- Thanks to Nam always helping friends,....

Answer:

- If I study well, then I will be praised.
- If only I studied harder, then I would achieve higher grades.
- Although the house is far away, but An still comes to class on time.
- Thanks to Nam always helping friends, you are loved by everyone.

Exercise 4: Underline the incorrectly used conjunctions in the following compound sentences and replace them with appropriate conjunctions.

- "Tuy đêm đã khuya nên em vẫn ngồi học bài."

- b. “Mặc dù nhà nghèo nên bạn ấy vẫn học giỏi.”
- c. “Vì tôi ngủ dậy muộn thì tôi bị trễ xe bus.”
- d. “Giá mà tôi ôn tập bài kỹ hơn nên điểm của tôi sẽ đạt tuyệt đối.”

Answer:

- a. “Tuy đêm đã khuya nhưng em vẫn ngồi học bài.”
- b. “Mặc dù nhà nghèo nhưng bạn ấy vẫn học giỏi.”
- c. “Vì tôi ngủ dậy muộn nên tôi bị trễ xe bus.”
- d. “Giá mà tôi ôn kỹ bài hơn thì điểm của tôi sẽ đạt tuyệt đối.”

2.5.3. Types of application exercises

Exercise 1: Write a paragraph of 4 to 6 sentences describing the schoolyard scene. Include at least one compound sentence in the paragraph. Underline the compound sentence in the paragraph and indicate how the clauses in the compound

sentence are connected.

Answer: Students write paragraphs and follow the requirements of the problem..

Exercise 2: Create compound sentences with the given prompts and the provided images

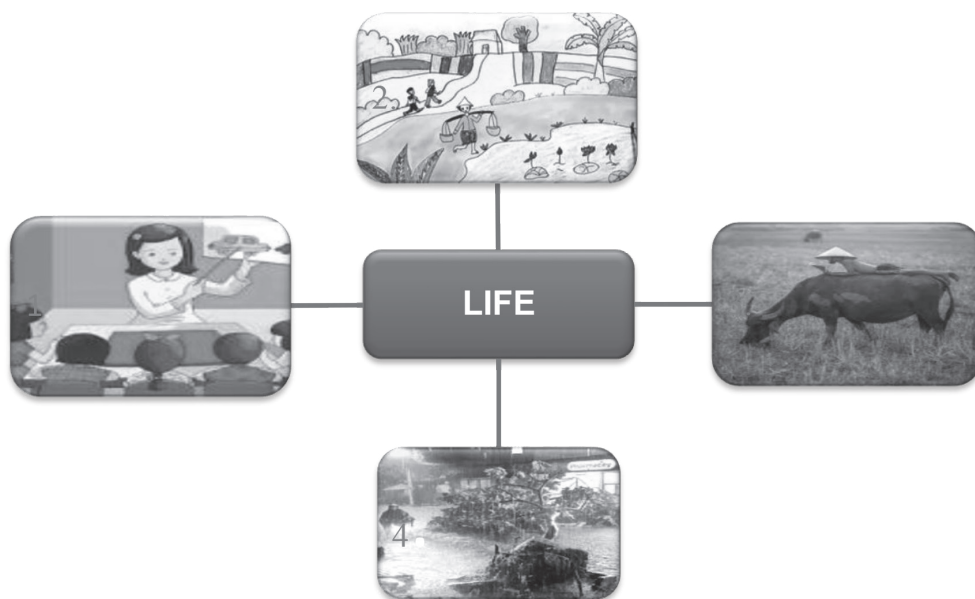
Answer:

1. The teacher is delivering a lecture, while the students are attentively listening.
2. The mother goes to work, while the child goes to school.
3. The boy is reading a book, while the buffalo leisurely grazes on grass.
4. As the rain intensifies, the road becomes increasingly flooded.

Exercise 3:

Solve the crossword puzzle:

Name the objects present in the following images.



Scheme 1. Images on the topic of life

3. Conclusion

In the context of competency-based education, it is crucial to develop a system of exercises for teaching general sentences and compound sentences specifically to 5th-graders. To enhance Vietnamese language skills for students, teachers can construct a suitable system of exercises that align with their cognitive abilities and thinking. We propose three types of exercises: recognition, comprehension, and application, which can be integrated into various

teaching activities such as reviewing previous lessons, building new knowledge, practicing and reviewing, and assessing students' performance. In practice, these exercise types can be flexibly utilized based on the teacher's objectives and students' abilities. Each exercise type offers a diverse range of exercises with varying levels of cognitive engagement, fostering students' interest in learning and promoting comprehensive development of their competencies, practical skills, and communication abilities.

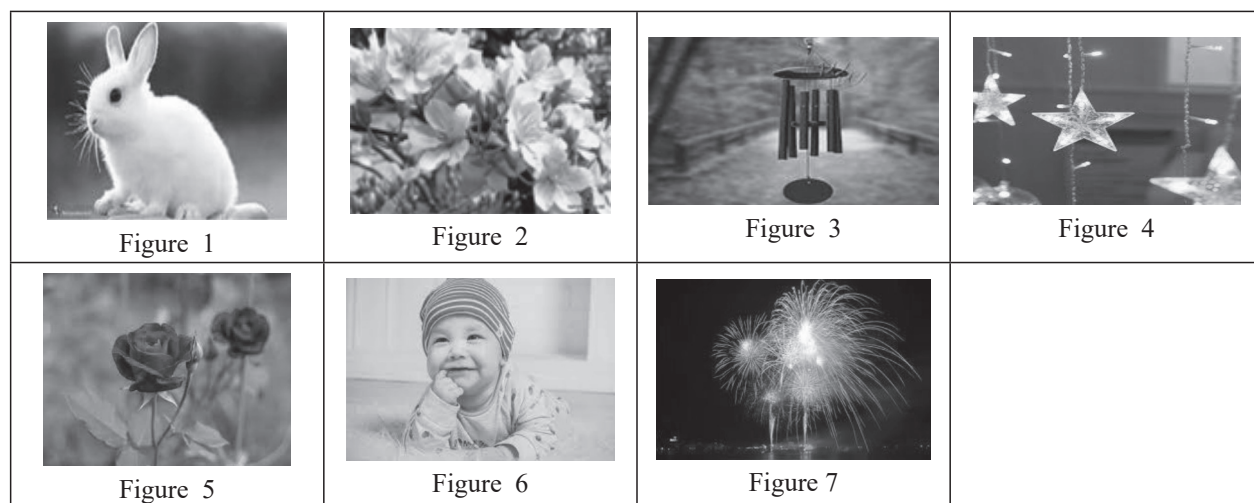


Image source: Internet

Answer: Vertical crossword: COMPOUND SENTENCES

Figure 1		C	O	N	T	H	O	
Figure 2		C	A	Y	M	A	I	
Figure 3	C	H	U	O	N	G	G	I
Figure 4		N	G	O	I	S	A	O
Figure 5			H	O	A	H	O	N
Figure 6			E	M	B	E		
Figure 7			P	H	A	O	H	O

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