



## Analysis of Sentence Complexity in BBC News “US Bombs Syria Targets After Deadly Drone Attack”

Kadek Surya Adhi Permana<sup>1</sup>, Ida Ayu Mela Tustiawati<sup>2</sup>

English Study Program Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University, Bali, Indonesia

Correspondence Email : [dekadhi21@gmail.com](mailto:dekadhi21@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [mela.tustiawati@unmas.ac.id](mailto:mela.tustiawati@unmas.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Writing comprehension is an important aspect for a writer to deliver the message or idea clearly to the readers. The development of English from Old English to Modern English can be seen by looking at the differences between sentences used in any media. In the current development, the internet and technology have developed so much and it has so much influence in many aspects of society. One of the aspects influenced by this development is news media. E-news is one of the examples created by the development of technology. The sentence that appears in E-news sometimes can be complicated. The complexity of sentences can be seen by how the sentences are structured. Sentence and clause types play a big role in identifying the complexity of a sentence. This study aims to identify what are the sentence types and what are the types of subordinate clauses that appear in the data source. The researcher used a qualitative method to analyze the data.

**Keywords:** *sentence types, clause types, sentence complexity*

### Abstrak

Pemahaman menulis merupakan aspek penting bagi seorang penulis untuk menyampaikan pesan atau ide secara jelas kepada pembaca. Perkembangan bahasa Inggris dari bahasa Inggris Kuno hingga bahasa Inggris Modern dapat dilihat dengan memperhatikan perbedaan kalimat yang digunakan dalam berbagai media. Dalam perkembangan saat ini, internet dan teknologi telah berkembang pesat dan memiliki pengaruh yang besar dalam berbagai aspek masyarakat. Salah satu aspek yang terpengaruh oleh perkembangan ini adalah media berita. Berita Elektronik adalah salah satu contoh yang dihasilkan oleh perkembangan teknologi. Kalimat yang muncul dalam Berita Elektronik terkadang dapat rumit. Kerumitan kalimat dapat dilihat dari struktur kalimatnya. Jenis kalimat dan jenis klausa bawa'an memainkan peran besar dalam mengidentifikasi kerumitan suatu kalimat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis kalimat apa saja dan jenis klausa bawahan apa saja yang muncul dalam sumber data. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk menganalisis data.

**Kata kunci:** *jenis kalimat, jenis klausa, kompleksitas kalimat*

### Introduction

Writing comprehension is an important aspect for a writer to deliver messages or ideas clearly to the readers. For example, we should choose the right punctuation in every single sentence to make the idea that we want to deliver easy for the reader to

understand. In the process of writing, choosing a type of sentence can be quite challenging. Andersen (2014) states that a writer should consider some factors or questions that can be predicted before choosing the sentence, such as: Do my ideas need shorter statements or even longer explanations? Whether my ideas can be easily understood or not? How can I express my ideas without creating confusion in the reader's mind? Who is the target reader for my essay? Or even Can I deliver my ideas? These questions discuss the basic components, different types, and various functions of a sentence that can help the writer write his/her essay. According to Lane (2001), writing clearly does not mean always keeping the sentences as short and simple as they can. In the way to communicate or deliver ideas, we may need to create complex and even lengthy sentences. Sentence complexity plays a big role in these challenges. By analysing the sentence, we can find out which sentence is suitable for our reader and which one is not.

In addition to writing comprehension that needs to be considered by a writer, reading comprehension skills also need to be owned by a reader. The reading comprehension of a sentence can be divided into who the listener is or the reader of the sentence. The reason why reading comprehension is divided is because of the different levels of understanding and a writer should conduct the right sentence to make it suitable for the reader. According to Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003), Reading comprehension is the skill of reading text, processing it, and understanding the meaning that is contained in it. It relies on two aspects, the first is inter-connected abilities: The first aspect involves the skill of deciphering symbols written on a page or being able to decode the symbols on the page, while the second aspect pertains to understanding the significance of the words and sentences or being able to understand the meaning.

Nowadays, there are a lot of media that include many sentences in their content. The emergence of various media is closely related to technology and the internet. The news that we usually find on Television or in newspapers now can appear on the Internet too. E-newspaper or known as electronic newspaper is the newest version of a traditional newspaper as the development of technology, it contains information electronically that we can find easier than traditional newspaper (Panda, K., & Swain, D. 2011). The differences between e-newspaper and traditional newspapers can be seen easily by just looking at how to find those things. E-newspaper can be easily found online on social media or several websites, meanwhile, the traditional newspaper should be bought first or it can be found in an offline way.

Talking about news, it is certain that we will discuss sentences too. According to Andersen (2014), there are 4 types of sentences namely, 1. A simple sentence is one that comprises a single independent clause with both a subject and a predicate, 2. A compound sentence is characterized by the presence of two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction (such as and, nor, yet, but, so, far, or). It typically includes a comma before the conjunction, 3. A complex sentence contains at least one independent clause along with one or more dependent clauses. These sentences often feature subordinating conjunctions, 4. A compound-complex sentence seamlessly integrates aspects of both compound and complex sentence structures, utilizing one or more independent clauses alongside one or more dependent clauses to create a versatile and effective means of expression in writing.

One aspect that is closely related to sentences is the idea of clauses. Independent clauses (superordinate clauses) and Dependent clauses (Subordinate clauses) are the most common clauses that appear in a sentence. According to Quirk et al (1990), a subordinate clause or dependent clause can't stand alone without any superordinate clause/main clause as a sentence. It doesn't express a complete unit of thought or idea on its own, so that makes a subordinate clause depends upon an independent clause to make the idea that consists in it become clear. The subordinate clause may function as a subject, object, complement, or adverbial in a superordinate clause/sentence.

A subordinate clause also can be defined as the main clause in a sentence. A subordinate clause is a collection of words containing a subject and predicate that conveys a full thought or idea. It differs distinctly from the subordinate clause. As suggested by their names, the superordinate or main clause serves as the primary structure to which all other words or clauses have a subordinate connection. In a superordinate clause, subordinate clauses can function as sentence components, such: as subject, object, etc. According to the four types of sentences, it is certain to have some different levels of complexity with one another. The complexity of a sentence can be seen from how it is structured. It can be analyzed based on a sentence or clause and another way is by analyzing the grammar that contains in a sentence. According to Sitingjak (2023), the concept of grammar in a language is a sub-discipline of linguistics that studies the relationship between words, including the arrangement of phrases, clauses, and sentences.

This study used BBC E-News as the data source. BBC E-News is the British broadcasting corporation operational business that is responsible for the broadcasting of news and current affairs around the world especially in the UK. Additionally, this research aims to enhance the understanding of sentence complexity through the examination of sentences in an E-News.

Several studies discuss syntax analysis, especially sentence complexity in spoken or written sentences. The first article is entitled “sentence complexity of planned and unplanned speaking performance outside the class room by Kurniawati and Astika (2011)”. This article focuses on the complexity of sentences that are used by the student in planned and unplanned speaking performances (structure and pattern of the utterances). Descriptive quantitative analysis is used in this research. The data used in this article was the recorded student's speaking performances. In the planned speech the author found 212 T-units and 76 sentences with the calculated number  $(212:76) = 2.70$ . In the unplanned speech, the author found 224 T-units and 107 sentences with the calculated number  $(224:107) = 2.09$ . The research results indicated that sentence complexity was greater in planned speech compared to unplanned speech.

The second article by Andriani and Bram (2021) is entitled “Syntactical Analysis of Sentence Patterns and Types of BBC News”. The study focuses on sentence patterns and the types of sentences that occurred in BBC News's article. The data source for the research consisted of 10 BBC News articles that published in October 2020, and the researcher employed the descriptive-qualitative method to depict the data. In this study, the sentence structures were analyzed using the frameworks proposed by Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) and Brown (2000). Additionally,

sentence types were identified by drawing upon the theories of Murcia and Freeman (1999), Morley (2000), Reyner (2016), and Bornstein (1977). The study's results revealed the usage of five sentence patterns. Furthermore, the investigation identified four sentence types, namely: simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence, with complex sentences being the most frequently utilized.

The third article by Cahyani (2020) entitled “Analysis of Simple Sentence Structure in English: Functional Syntax Approach”. The purpose of the study is to analyze simple sentence in English especially declarative sentence to describe the constituent units and the function structure of simple sentence with active voice. The author used the theory from Morley’s Functional Syntax Approach to identify the function of each English active sentence element and describe the structure of a simple sentence in English. The result of this study shows that simple sentence can have a syntactic function structure of Subject, Predicator, Object and Complement, with the pattern that found in the study were S P-O, S-P-C, or S-P-ACIRC.

The fourth article entitled “Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Pattern in the Headlines of TEMPO News” by Arham (2020). The study focused on 2 problems of its study, the first is to analyze the sentence pattern in the headlines of TEMPO news and the second is to analyze the predominant syntactical patterns found in the headlines of TEMPO news. The author used qualitative method to answer the research question and also used the theory from Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) to analyze the sentence patterns in the headlines. The result of the study shows that the author found out that there were 6 out of 7 patterns which were used in the song lyrics.

Lastly, an article by Wiryastuti & Maharani (2020) in their study entitled “Subordinate Clause Functioning as Direct Object in Complex Sentences Found in BBC News Instagram Caption”. Their study aimed to analyze the function of subordinate clauses found in BBC News Instagram Caption. The researchers used a qualitative approach to collect and process the data. The result implied there were 36 complex sentences containing subordinate clauses that functioned as direct objects found in 49 captions from BBC News Instagram.

## **Method**

This study used a qualitative approach where the process of collecting and processing data was carried out based on the results of literature studies and qualitative data analysis. According to Bhandari (2020), Qualitative research encompasses the collection and analysis of non-numeric data, such as text, video, or audio, in order to gain insights into concepts, viewpoints, or personal experiences. The data source was taken from news on BBC News platform entitled “US bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack”. The reason to choose BBC News as the data source was because this company is one of the most popular news platforms that is used by people to get news from around the world. BBC News provides the latest news every day and has 26 million followers on Instagram. The theory used in this study is taken from Randolph

Quirk and from Sarah Andersen. The E-News as the data source was downloaded from BBC’s website that talked about the war incident between the US and Iran. The News carried out a part of the tragedy in the war field by the US’s perception. In this study, the researchers used two data collection techniques. There are observations and analyses: 1. Observation; will be made by investigating the content and sentences in BBC News's “US Bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack”. 2. Analyzed and validated. In this section, the researcher will analyze the sentences to get information about the use of sentence types and clause types.

In this section, the researcher analyzed the types of sentences used in the news. Once the types were determined, the function of subordinate clauses found in the sentences would also be identified. Then continue validating data to investigate the data. This will create coherence between the researcher and other experts and will have accurate data on what types of sentences and clauses occur in BBC News's “US Bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack”.

The step in the analysis includes first, composing such as sentence types and clause types by using the theory proposed by Quirk & Greenbaum (1990) & Andersen (2014). Second, categorizing the sentence in the News based on types of sentences and clauses. For the types of sentences (simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence) the researcher used the theory proposed by Andersen (2014), and for the subordinate clause, the researcher used the theory proposed by Quirk & Greenbaum (1990).

## Result and Discussion

### Result

There are 4 sentence types that occurred in the news as described in Table 1, there are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. In Simple Sentences, there were 2 sentences found by the researcher, 2 sentences of Compound Sentences, 13 sentences of Complex Sentences and 3 sentences of Compound-Complex Sentence.

Table 1. Types of sentences

| NO | Types of Sentences        | Quantity | Percentage |
|----|---------------------------|----------|------------|
| 1. | Simple Sentence           | 2        | 10%        |
| 2. | Compound Sentence         | 2        | 10%        |
| 3. | Complex Sentence          | 13       | 65%        |
| 4. | Compound-complex sentence | 3        | 15%        |

For the second finding, there are 4 functions of the subordinate clause found in BBC News “US Bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack” as described in Table 2 function of the subordinate clause. The researcher found 16 subordinate clauses that appear in the superordinate clause (main clause). The functions of subordinate clauses found by the researcher are shown in 4 functions. There were 2 data on subordinate clause as direct object, 5 data on adverbial and subject complement, and the last 4 data on object complement.

Table 2. Function of subordinate clause

| NO. | Function              | Quantity | Percentage |
|-----|-----------------------|----------|------------|
| 1.  | As Direct Object      | 2        | 12.5%      |
| 2.  | As Adverbial          | 5        | 31.25%     |
| 3.  | As Subject Complement | 5        | 31.25%     |
| 4.  | As Object Complement  | 4        | 25%        |

## Discussion

### 1. Sentence

#### A. Simple Sentence

Quirk et al. (1990) defines a simple sentence as a sentence comprising a single independent clause, and this type of sentence can take on seven different forms. These variations in simple sentences depend on whether certain clause elements, aside from the subject (S) and verb (V), are required. The seven types are:

1. S+V : Those starts (S) are moving (V).
2. S+V+O : The teacher (S) teaches (V) Us (O).
3. S+V+C : Their meal (S) looks (V) delicious (C).
4. S+V+A : your house (S) was (V) on Jalak Street (A).
5. S+V+O+O : Joni (S) will call (V) his parents (O) by phone (O).
6. S+V+O+C : Lot of teachers (S) teach (V) the lesson (O) by brain storming (C).

7. S+V+O+A : We (S) may bring (V) a phone (O) to the class (A).

Based on the results of the analysis, the researcher found several examples of simple sentences in the news, there are:

Data 1. *He said they had targeted* = (S + V + O + C)

The sentence is categorized as Simple Sentence because it just contains 1 independent clause, and that sentence can stand alone by itself as a complete sentence. The structure of this simple sentence can be analyzed as : *He* (S) *said* (V) *they* (O) *had targeted* (C).

Data 2. *Iran has not commented* = (S + V)

The structure of this simple sentence can be analyzed as : *Iram* (S) *has not commented* (V). This sentence only has 1 independent clause, so it is categorized as simple sentence.

## B. Compound Sentence

Andersen (2014) states that A compound sentence is characterized by the presence of two independent clauses, which are connected by a coordinating conjunction (such as and, but, for, nor, so, yet, or). Typically, a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction and serves to link the two independent clauses.

Compound sentence that found in BBC News:

Data 1. *Most of the time they don't do any damage and they don't cause casualties.*

1st Independent clause = (A + S + V + O)

2nd Independent clause = (S + V + O)

This compound sentence has 2 independent clauses (*Most of the time they don't do any damage*) & (*they don't cause casualties*) and it connected by using a coordinating conjunction (**and**).

## C. Complex Sentence

Quirk et al. (1990) describes a complex sentence as resembling a simple sentence in that it contains only one main clause. However, unlike a simple sentence, a complex sentence incorporates one or more subordinate or dependent clauses, which serve as integral sentence components.

Complex sentence found in BBC News:

Data 1. *The fate of 40 other people remains unknown, the observatory said*

1<sup>st</sup> Independent clause = (S + V + A)

1<sup>st</sup> Dependent clause = (S + V)

This sentence has 1 independent clause (*The fate of 40 other people remains unknown*) and 1 dependent clause (*the observatory said*). And it is connected by a conjunction (.). The subject (*The fate of 40 other people*), verb (*remains*) and adjective (*unknown*) is identical as independent clause. The dependent clause has it owns subject (*the observatory*) and verb (*said*).

#### D. Compound-Complex Sentence

According to Andersen (2014), A compound-complex sentence merges the characteristics of both complex and compound sentences. It comprises at least one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

Compound-Complex sentence that found in BBC News are:

Data 1. *The US has carried out air strikes against Iran-linked groups in eastern Syria after a drone attack killed a US contractor, the US defence chief said.*

1<sup>st</sup> Independent clause = (S + V + O + O)  
1<sup>st</sup> Dependent clause = (prep + S + V + O)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Dependent clause = (S + V)

This sentence has 1 independent clause (*The US has carried out air strikes against Iran-linked groups in eastern Syria*) and 2 dependent clauses (*after a drone attack killed a US contractor*) and (*the US defence chief said*).

#### Subordinate Clause

According to Quirk et al (1990), a subordinate clause or dependent clause can't stand alone without any superordinate clause/main clause as a sentence. It doesn't express a complete unit of thought or idea on its own, so that makes a subordinate clause depends upon an independent clause to make the idea that consists in it become clear. The subordinate clause may function as a subject, object, complement, or adverbial in a superordinate clause/sentence. A subordinate clause also can be defined as the main clause in a sentence. A subordinate clause is a group of words made up of a subject and predicate that express a complete thought or idea concept. This clause presents a clear distinction from the subordinate clause. As the terminology suggests, the superordinate or main clause serves as the central framework to which all other words or clauses are subordinate. In superordinate clauses, the subordinate clauses fulfill various sentence roles, such as subjects, objects, or adjuncts.

To sum up, the analysis of the subordinate clause is inherently linked to the superordinate clause, where the latter functions as the primary sentence structure that incorporates the subordinate clause. According to *Table 2 function of subordinate clause*, it can be seen that the researcher found 4 functions of subordinate clause

sentences that include superordinate clauses as the main clauses and subordinate clauses as dependent clauses in each sentence. Some sentences are explained as below:

#### 1. Subordinate Clause as Direct Object

Data 1.

*The US defence department said **the contractor had been killed**.*

1<sup>st</sup> subordinate clause = (S + V)

The superordinate clause in this sentence includes: 1. Subject (*The US defence department*) and 2. Verb (*said*). The subordination clause includes: 1. Object (the contractor), 2. Verb (had been killed). The function of subordinate clause in this sentence is categorized as Direct Object, because the clause *the contractor had been killed* modified the Verb (*said*) and it makes an additional thought and become an Object.

#### 2. Subordinate Clause as Adverbial

Data 1.

***Thursday night's** air strikes were carried out on President Biden's orders.*

1<sup>st</sup> subordinate clause = (A)

The superordinate clause in this sentence includes: 1. Subject (*air strikes*), 2. Verb (*were carried out*), 3. Object (*on President Biden's orders*), and the subordinate clause includes: 1. Adverb (*Thursday night's*). The function of subordinate clause in this sentence is categorized as Adverbial, because the clause *Thursday night's* modified the word (*happened*) and it made an additional thought or idea of a specific time.

#### 3. Subordinate Clause as Subject Complement

Data 1.

*Seven civilians and eight tribesmen **working for the Al-Qaterji militia** were reportedly killed in Hama.*

1<sup>st</sup> subordinate clause = (V + C)

The Subordinate clause that contains in the superordinate clause based on this sentence can be seen in the sentence “*working for the Al-Qaterji militia*”. This clause functions are to give specific description of the Subject (*Seven civilians and eight tribesmen*), and as the complement it can be added or not in a sentence.

#### 4. Subordinate Clause as Object Complement

Data 1.

*Mr Biden offered condolences to the family **of the US contractor that was killed**.*

1<sup>st</sup> subordinate clause = (C).

The whole sentence is superordinate clause with one superordinate clause that contain in it. The sentence “*of the US contractor that was killed*” as the subordinate clause modified the Object (*the family*) and it added a new idea or thought of describing the word *family* as the object complement.

## **Conclusion**

There are simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, and compound-complex sentences found in this study. Most of the sentence types used in BBC NEWS “US Bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack” are in the form of complex sentences, followed by compound-complex sentences with 15 percent and the last are simple and compound sentences. For the functions of the subordinate clause, there are 4 functions of the subordinate clause found by the researcher. There are subordinate clauses such as Direct Object, Adverbial, Subject Complement, and Object Complement. The most common functions of subordinate clauses that are used in BBC NEWS “US Bombs Syria targets after deadly drone attack” are Adverbial and Subject complement followed by a subordinate clause as Object Complement and the last as Direct Object.

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