



**Ferdowsi University Mashhad/ The second International Conference
Artificial Intelligence: Between Scientific Innovation and Human Responsibility**

An Analysis of Sentence Complexity in Daily Mail Newspaper Articles

Hayder Hasan Kadhim

Faculty of Arts, University of Kufa, Iraq

* Corresponding Author: **Hayder Hasan Kadhim**

Article Info

ISSN (Online): 2582-7138

Impact Factor (RSIF): 7.98

Volume: 06

Issue: 06

November - December 2025

Received: 28-09-2025

Accepted: 30-10-2025

Published: 25-11-2025

Page No: 169-173

Abstract

The current study investigates sentences complexity in the daily Mail Newspaper. The main objective is to analyse the structural characteristics of sentences used in selected articles and determine the extent to which the newspaper employs complex sentence constructions. To achieve this goal, four articles were randomly selected from different section of the Daily Mail using a sampling method. The analysis focuses on identifying and classifying sentences types- simple, compound, complex, compound-complex, based on their grammatical structure. It is hypothesis that the language of the Daily Mail newspaper exhibits a high degree of syntactic complexity and a frequent use of complex and compound-complex sentences. The finding of this study is expected to provide insight into the linguistic style of the newspaper by revealing how sentence complexity contributes to its overall readability and communicative effectiveness.

Keywords: Newspaper, Complex sentences, complexity

1. Introduction

Sentences are the basic building blocks of language, the atoms that make up the molecules of meaning. They are the means by which ideas, feelings, and thoughts are conveyed throughout the wide range of human communication. We explore the very core of human communication as we go through the complex web of sentences, where words come together to create complex patterns of meaning. A sentence is fundamentally an organized series of words that expresses a whole notion or thinking. It is a linguistic unit with both form and purpose (Milsark, 2014, p. 43) ^[18].

A sentence is composed of many words that, when combined, express a specific command, question, assertion, or exclamation. A sentence typically consists of one or more subordinate (dependent) clauses and a main clause, also known as an independent clause (Itule & Anderson, 2007, p. 33) ^[6]. According to Coulthard, text analysis has to take into account the "purpose and process" of written language's development since it is interactive. As a result, sentence structure may have an impact on the written work's clarity. Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound Complex sentences are all possible (1994, p. 3).

57% of newspapers worldwide are published in English, according to Crystal (2003, p. 106) ^[9]. Newspapers are crucial in introducing individuals to English, even if their native tongue is not the same. The Daily Mail Newspaper provides readers with a wide range of news, including foreign, entertainment, sports, criminal, political, and commercial news. The influence of climate change news on readers is the main topic of this study (Kansuwan, 1996, p. 23) ^[13]. Furthermore, newspapers and textbooks utilize different linguistic styles. This is corroborated by Meksujit (2002, p. 57) ^[17], who discovered that complex sentences rank best among four sentence types: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Meksujit conducted study on the grammatical structures employed in business news in newspapers.

2. Literature Review

A periodical or serial journal that is regularly produced, usually at brief intervals, and includes news, analysis, features, and

advertising is referred to as a newspaper. These days, newspapers are available online and in print. While print newspapers have been around for a long time, internet news is made feasible by information and communication technology. Publications printed on paper and ink are referred to as print newspapers (Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 3rd ed).

Newspapers give consumers vital information that is regarded as real news. Newspapers have historically sought out, gathered, processed, and produced news in a one-way daily delivery, but if site visitors can see, hear, or read the sources reporters relied on, the Internet can enable users to make the reporting process more transparent (Smith, 2005, p. 2) ^[23]. According to Tanikawa (2017, p.351), newspapers inform people about significant events of the day by keeping them informed about what happened on a certain day and delivering it to their doorstep the following day. Newspaper stories frequently cover current issues, including descriptions of recent study findings, according to Stebbins (2006, p.43). The narrative should be current, factual, and impartial. The information shouldn't be indifferent to societal conditions or in conflict with the public interest.

Since fewer people are reading printed newspapers these days, the manufacturers are switching to digital formats to save money on printing and keep up with technological advancements. Online newspapers are complimentary to print versions rather than competing, according to a number of studies (Smith, 2005, p.18, & Bergman, 2004, p.58) ^[23]. However, according to the Project for Excellence in Journalism's 2005 State of the News Media survey, online news is starting to supplant traditional media formats and is expected to attract even more users away from newspapers in the future due to the fact that Web users are significantly younger than newspaper consumers and that the amount of online news readers is occasionally rising relative to printed ones.

It's very tactful to read news items in English. Sentence structure and word definitions are examples of language aspects that readers should be aware of. A sentence is a unit of speech whose grammatical structure complies with the language's rules; it is the primary way to express an idea (Aliyeva, 2016, p.1762) ^[2]. In a similar vein, Verspoor and Sauter (2000, p. 33) ^[24] describe a sentence as a grammatically self-contained speech unit made up of a single word or a syntactically linked set of words that conveys an exclamation, an assertion, a question, an order, or a wish. According to Andersen (2017, p.2) ^[3], sentences are divided into four groups based on their complexity: simple sentences, compound sentences, complicated sentences, and compound-complex sentences. Complex sentences are a common linguistic element in news articles. A complicated sentence, according to Oshima and Hogue (2007, p.101) ^[20], combines one independent clause with one or more dependent clauses. Accordingly, Phillips (2001, p.199) ^[21] and Fowler (2015, p.735-736) ^[11] claimed that while many English sentences include many clauses, some phrases only have one. One independent clause and one or more dependent clauses make up a complex sentence. As the name implies, a dependent clause depends on an independent clause to make a complete, coherent sentence; it cannot stand alone as a complete form of a sentence. According to Aitchison (2003, p.83-84) ^[1], a dependent clause resembles a sentence that is incorporated into an independent clause structure through the employment of a connective element. According to Verspoor

and Suter (2000, p.37) ^[24], this connecting device is a subordinator. Additionally, Azar and Hagen (2009, p.28) ^[4] clarified that a dependent clause needs to be linked to an independent clause. Noun, adjective, and adverbial clauses are examples of dependent clauses found in complicated sentences.

In contrast to a sequence of ideas expressed in a simple sentence, Bram (1995, p.40) ^[5] stated that one must find the sentence structure that establishes the proper thought relationship of ideas where the emphasis lies on independent clause and less important or deemphasized ideas in suitable subordinate constructions. This will make the flow of thoughts much more smooth. Zipoli (2017, p.219-220) ^[26] highlights a potential issue with the usage of complicated sentences: they can be misleading due to adverbs with temporal and causal conjunctions, center-embedded relative clauses, and sentences with three or more clauses. When pupils continue to adopt a word-order technique or a Subject + Verb + Object strategy, center-embedded relative clauses may provide processing challenges.

According to Ortega (2003) ^[19], as stated in Ai and Lu (2013), p. 3, syntactic complexity is the variety and intensity of syntactic structures that appear in language output. It is acknowledged as a crucial concept in second language writing instruction and research. According to Wijayanti (2017) ^[25], frequent usage of the proper arrangement of independent and dependent clauses—also referred to as compound and complicated sentences—can demonstrate a high level of syntactic complexity. In their book "Style in Fiction," Leech and Short (2007, p.76) ^[15] define sentence complexity as the syntactic structure of a sentence that may be assessed stylistically by examining its composition, such as the use of simple, complicated, or compound sentences; these types are:

- Simple Sentence

Quirk et al. (1985, p. 986) ^[22] define a simple sentence as one clause. This type of sentence has a single independent clause that provides a comprehensive prediction (Frank, 1972, p. 223) ^[12]. Writers utilize these lines in a stylish way because they are often succinct and direct. Verbs can only be identified by counting them; length is irrelevant. The simple phrase expresses an assertion, a question, a demand, a request, or an exclamation. It typically begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation mark (Lamichhane, 2017, p.38) ^[14]. For example:

"She works as an air host."

- Compound Sentence

A compound sentence is one that uses conjunctions like and, but, or, etc. to link two or more independent, fundamental statements. Independent clauses can function as entire sentences on their own, in contrast to dependent clauses (Lamichhane, 2017, p. 38) ^[14]. For instance:

"The professor started the class early in the morning but the students did not enter in the classroom."

- Complex Sentence

According to Frank (1972, p.224) ^[12], a complicated sentence consists of two or more complete predictions, one of which is an independent clause (main clause) with the form of a simple phrase and at least one dependent clause (also called a subordinate clause). Unlike a compound sentence with

coordinating conjunctions, where the subordinate clause depends on the main clause, the two clauses in the complicated sentence are not equivalent (DeCapua, 2017, p.288)^[10]. For instance:

"She became very happy when she had met her parents."

- Compound-Complex Sentence

Complex and compound sentence forms are combined in a compound-complex sentence. One or more dependent clauses and two or more independent clauses make up a compound-complex sentence (Andersen, 2014, p. 2)^[3]. As an example:

"Although she felt guilty for missing her friend's birthday, she took her out to dinner the next day, and they had a great time."

3. Data Analysis

Text 1.

"Australia's deadly bushfires could become commonplace as scientific review shows human-induced climate change is fuelling wildfires around the world"

"The Australian bushfires could be just a taste of what's to come, according to scientists who claim that human-induced climate change is fuelling wildfires."

"The current bushfires across Australia, which have so far killed 24 people and at least a billion animals, according to estimates, will become 'normal' conditions, the scientists claim."

"The average temperature in Australia in December 2019 was exceptionally hot compared to the historical record, and played a key role in the severity and spread of the recent bushfires," said Professor Richard Betts at the Met Office Hadley Centre."

There are just four sentences in this news article. In order to convey the complexity of this news article, the author exclusively used complicated and compound complex sentences. The headline, "Australia's deadly bushfires could," is a difficult statement with one independent and one dependent clause. Complex sentences also make up the lead and the opening paragraph. Additionally, the final paragraph uses a compound-complex sentence, "The average temperature in Australia in December 2019 was..." which consists of two independent sentences united by "and" before being appended to "said Professor Richard Betts." Because this piece of writing communicates scientific research, the author chooses to employ these kinds of phrases with an emphasis on creating sentences with a certain level of complexity.

Type	Frequency
simple	0
compound	0
complex	3
Compound-complex	1
Total	4

Text 2.

"Climate change is causing the lowest level of the atmosphere to SWELL in size, inflating 174 feet per decade since 2001: Planes may have to fly higher to avoid turbulence, experts claim"

"Climate change is causing the Earth's atmosphere to swell, which could have implications beyond just the health of the

planet, a new study suggests."

"Researchers at the National Center for Atmospheric Research have found that the lowest level of the atmosphere, known as the troposphere, has inflated roughly 174 feet per decade between 2001 and 2020."

"At this point, it's unclear how a rising tropopause will impact the planet's climate or weather, but it could result in planes flying higher to avoid turbulence, Live Science reports."

There are just five sentences in this news article. Neither simple sentences nor compound-complex sentences are allowed by the author. Rather, he selects complicated and compound sentences throughout the entire text. It is common knowledge that news headlines are typically composed of brief statements. In order to fully explain the news topic, the author of this article employs a complex sentence in the headline that consists of an independent clause, "Climate change is causing the lowest..." and a subordinate phrase, "inflating 174 feet per decade since 2001." The second complex sentence in the headline is "Planes may have to fly higher." The compound sentence only occurs once within the last subsection, although the complex sentence, which is the most elaborate in the text, is employed four times: "It's unclear right now."

Type	Frequency
simple	0
compound	1
complex	4
Compound-complex	0
Total	5

Text 3.

"Climate change IS to blame for the heatwave gripping northern Europe, as scientists warn blistering summer temperatures are now 'twice as likely'"

"The scorching heatwave gripping northern Europe was made twice as likely to happen by climate change, scientists have revealed."

"An initial assessment of the prolonged period of record-breaking hot weather suggests rising temperatures caused by human activity increased the odds of it happening."

"The preliminary research claims to have found 'unambiguous' evidence that human interference has triggered the recent heatwave, which computer models predict will continue until the end of August."

In terms of intricacy, the text consists of four sentences. One statement is easy, whereas three are difficult. "The scorching heatwave gripping northern Europe was," "The preliminary research claims to have found," and "Climate change IS to blame" are examples of complex statements. In comparison, the straightforward statement reads, "An initial assessment of the prolonged period of record-breaking..." For the purpose of communicating the extensive information contained in the text, this text favors the use of complex sentences above other sentence types.

Type	Frequency
simple	1
compound	0
complex	3
Compound-complex	0
Total	4

Text 4.

"Climate change is on ice: UN scientists reveal the world's barely got any hotter in the last 15 years - but say they are now 95% certain man is to blame for global warming"

"UN scientists said today they are '95 per cent' certain that climate change is man made, but still could not explain why the world has barely got any hotter in the last 15 years."

"The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that sea levels have risen by 19cm since 1901 and are expected to rise a further 26-82cm by the end of the century."

"It added that concentrations of CO2 and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have increased to levels that are unprecedented in at least 800,000 years."

The book uses a range of sentence structures, which enhances its overall readability and informative efficacy while emphasizing the text's degree of complexity. In this paragraph, there are two compound-complex sentences. Both "UN scientists revealed the world's barely got" and "UN scientists said today they are" are compound-complex sentences. There are two difficult sentences in this text, just like the compound-complex type.

Type	Frequency
simple	1
Compound	0
complex	2
Compound-complex	2
Total	5

4. Results

The analysis of sentence structures across the four selected Daily Mail articles reveals clear patterns regarding the use of syntactic complexity. A total of 18 sentences were examined and classified into simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex types. The overall findings are summarized as follows:

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Simple	2	11%
Compound	1	6%
Complex	12	67%
Compound-Complex	3	17%
Total	18	100%

The results indicate that complex sentences are the most frequently used, comprising more than two-thirds (67%) of all sentences analyzed. Compound-complex sentences account for an additional 17%, reinforcing the prominence of syntactically sophisticated structures. In contrast, simple and compound sentences appear only rarely, together constituting 17% of the total. Additionally, a text-by-text analysis shows the following observations:

Text 1: Dominated by complex sentences (3 out of 4); includes one compound-complex sentence.

Text 2: Uses 4 complex sentences and only one compound sentence.

Text 3: Includes 3 complex sentences and 1 simple sentence.

Text 4: Shows the highest structural variation, with 2 complex and 2 compound-complex sentences and only 1 simple sentence.

Overall, the structural analysis confirms that the Daily Mail frequently relies on complex and compound-complex

constructions when reporting scientific or climate-related news. This pattern results in more detailed and information-dense sentences, especially when explaining research findings, causes and effects, or expert commentary.

5. Discussion

The dominance of complex and compound-complex sentences in the examined articles reflects the linguistic demands of scientific and environmental reporting. Such topics typically involve cause-effect relationships, technical data, expert quotations, and explanatory background information—all of which naturally lead to more elaborate sentence structures.

This stylistic choice aligns with existing literature stating that news texts, particularly those discussing scientific issues, frequently employ complex syntactic forms (Meksujit, 2002; Leech & Short, 2007)^[17, 15]. The Daily Mail articles analyzed in this study follow the same tendency, using embedded clauses, subordinate structures, and extended reporting verbs to convey nuanced and multi-layered information.

Furthermore, the relatively low number of simple and compound sentences suggests that the newspaper prioritizes thorough explanation over brevity. While this may enhance informational depth, it could also increase cognitive load for readers with lower proficiency in English, thereby affecting readability.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the sentence complexity of four Daily Mail articles and found that the newspaper strongly favors complex and compound-complex sentence structures. The results support the initial hypothesis that the Daily Mail employs a high degree of syntactic complexity in its reporting, particularly in articles related to climate change and scientific topics.

The predominance of complex sentences (67%) demonstrates the newspaper's reliance on detailed and layered sentence constructions to convey scientific explanations, expert viewpoints, and contextual information. This stylistic choice contributes to the newspaper's communicative effectiveness by allowing precise and comprehensive reporting; however, it may also pose challenges for readers who are unfamiliar with advanced English structures.

Future research may expand the dataset, compare different sections of the newspaper, or contrast the Daily Mail's syntactic patterns with those of other British newspapers to provide a broader understanding of stylistic variation in modern journalism.

7. References

1. Aitchison J. Teach Yourself Linguistics. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd; 2003.
2. Aliyeva KS. About the different kinds of meanings in a sentence. Theory Pract Lang Stud. 2016;6(9):1762-6. doi: 10.17507/tpls.0609.09.
3. Andersen S. Sentence type and function [Internet]. San José (CA): San José State University Writing Center; 2014 [cited 2025 Apr 5]. Available from: <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/docs/handouts/Sentence%20Types%20and%20Functions.pdf>
4. Azar BS, Hagen SA. Understanding and using English grammar. 4th ed. New York: Pearson Education; 2009.
5. Bram B. Write well: improving writing skill. Yogyakarta: Kanisius; 1995.

6. Itule BD, Anderson DA. News writing and reporting for today's media. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2007.
7. Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary [Internet]. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2008. Blended learning; [cited 2023 Jul 12]. Available from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/blended-learning>
8. Coulthard M. On analysing and evaluating written text. In: Coulthard M, editor. *Advances in written text analysis*. London: Routledge; 1994. p. 1-11.
9. Crystal D. *English as a global language*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2003. doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511486999.
10. DeCapua A. *Grammar for teachers: a guide to American English for native and non-native speakers*. 2nd ed. Cham (Switzerland): Springer; 2017.
11. Fowler HW. *Fowler's dictionary of modern English usage*. 4th ed. Butterfield J, editor. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2015.
12. Frank M. *Modern English: a practical reference guide*. Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice Hall; 1972.
13. Kansuwan S. *Introduction to newspaper*. Bangkok: Prakaipruek; 1994.
14. Lamichhane M. *The stylistic features of newspaper headlines: a case of English dailies [dissertation]*. Kirtipur (Kathmandu): Tribhuvan University; 2017.
15. Leech GN, Short M. *Style in fiction: a linguistic introduction to English fictional prose*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Education; 2007.
16. Lu X, Ai H. Syntactic complexity in college-level English writing: differences among writers with diverse L1 backgrounds. *J Second Lang Writ*. 2015;29:16-27. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2015.06.005.
17. Meksujit S. *Grammatical structures used in the business sections of the Nation and the Bangkok Post: a case study [master's thesis]*. Bangkok: King Mongkut's Institute of Technology North Bangkok; 2002.
18. Milsark GL. *Existential sentences in English*. London: Routledge; 2014.
19. Ortega L. Syntactic complexity measures and their relationship to L2 proficiency: a research synthesis of college-level L2 writing. *Appl Linguist*. 2003;24(4):492-518. doi: 10.1093/applin/24.4.492.
20. Oshima A, Hogue A. *Introduction to academic writing*. 3rd ed. White Plains (NY): Pearson/Longman; 2007.
21. Phillips D. *Longman complete course for the TOEFL test*. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman; 2001.
22. Quirk R, Greenbaum S, Leech G, Svartvik J. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman; 1985.
23. Smith JE. *Content differences between print and online newspapers [master's thesis]*. Tampa (FL): University of South Florida; 2005 [cited 2025 Apr 5]. Available from: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/868>
24. Verspoor M, Sauter K. *English sentence analysis: an introductory course*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing; 2000.
25. Wijayanti W. Syntactic complexity in the reading materials of English for academic purposes levels 1-3. *Lang Lang Teach J*. 2017;20(2):102-15.
26. Zipoli RP Jr. Unraveling difficult sentences: strategies to support reading comprehension. *Interv Sch Clin*. 2017;52(4):218-27. doi: 10.1177/1053451216659467.