



World Englishes in Editorial Writing: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Syntactic Complexity in US, Saudi, German, and Philippine Newspapers

Faiza Latif¹, Dr. Humaira Irfan², Sunila Aslam³

1. PhD. English Linguistics Scholar, Department of English, University of Education, Lahore
2. Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Education, Lahore
3. PhD. English Linguistics Scholar, Department of English, University of Education, Lahore
(Corresponding Author)

Abstract

This study investigates syntactic complexity in English newspaper editorials from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines, representing Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle varieties of English. Adopting a quantitative research paradigm, a small corpus of 3,139 words was compiled and analyzed using the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer. The tool measured nine syntactic production units: words, sentences, verb phrases, clauses, T-units, dependent clauses, complex T-units, coordinate phrases, and complex nominal phrases and generated fourteen syntactic complexity indices across five categories: production unit length, coordination, subordination, phrasal sophistication, and overall sentence complexity. Results reveal significant cross-variety differences. American English editorials feature concise sentences with high subordination and nominal elaboration, Philippine English editorials employ longer sentences and denser T-units, German English exhibits a balanced use of coordination and subordination, and Saudi English shows simpler structures with moderate coordination. These patterns highlight the influence of sociolinguistic context, editorial conventions, and World Englishes classification on syntactic choices. The findings contribute empirical evidence to the study of structural variation in global Englishes and offer practical implications for language teaching, cross-cultural journalism, and computational text analysis. Future research should expand corpora, include additional genres and World Englishes varieties, and employ mixed-method approaches to further examine the interaction of syntactic complexity with discourse and stylistic features.

Keywords: Syntactic Complexity, L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer, Syntactic Production Units, Syntactic Complexity Indices

Introduction

Media plays a pivotal role in shaping public interpretations of everyday events (Malik et al., 2023). Among its various forms, newspapers remain particularly influential as they serve as prominent platforms for the circulation of ideas, ideologies, and social perspectives. Beyond merely reporting events, newspapers actively participate in the formation of public opinion (Shahid et al., 2021). As Abdollahzadeh (2007) notes, newspapers function as socio-cultural practices through which writers articulate issues of public concern. The language employed in newspaper discourse is therefore of critical importance, as journalists and commentators must engage a diverse and largely anonymous readership whose perspectives may differ from their own. Consequently, newspaper discourse extends beyond the transmission of information to shape readers' interpretations of events and contribute to the construction of shared beliefs and collective knowledge. Editorials, as a central genre within newspapers, play a particularly

influential role in shaping readers' perspectives. They articulate the institutional voice of the newspaper and reflect its political, cultural, and ideological orientations. Editorial writers act as mediators of these positions, frequently promoting the interests or agendas of specific groups (Shahid et al., 2021). By foregrounding certain issues while marginalizing others, editorials frame information in ways that reinforce preferred viewpoints (Shafique et al., 2019). Through deliberate and strategic linguistic choices, editorialists aim to persuade and guide readers, subtly shaping public opinion by constructing authoritative narratives that are widely perceived as credible and trustworthy. Language variation is a crucial consideration in the analysis of linguistic patterns, and newspaper editorials constitute a register that remains relatively underexplored in the Pakistani context. For language learners, editorial writing is particularly valuable, as it contributes to vocabulary development, enhances reading proficiency, and increases awareness of current affairs (Manzoor et al., 2023). Within this register, Pakistani English newspaper editorials exhibit a wide range of linguistic features that reflect the country's cultural, social, and linguistic diversity. Such variation is evident in lexical choices, syntactic structures, and the use of idiomatic expressions. Moreover, the influence of local languages, including Urdu, Punjabi, and other regional varieties, can be observed through the incorporation of culturally embedded words and expressions, which contribute to the distinctive identity of Pakistani English.

American English

American English is classified within the Inner Circle of Kachru's model and represents a well-established variety that has achieved global prominence. Although it originated from British English, American English has developed into a distinct variety shaped by political, social, and cultural influences. Owing to this diversity, it exhibits unique linguistic characteristics and occupies a central position in global communication. One notable feature of American English is the retention of certain older English forms alongside innovative linguistic practices. It also demonstrates a high degree of lexical creativity, as reflected in coinages such as *pizzazz*, *debunk*, *skyscraper*, and *spacewalk*. In addition, American English has absorbed vocabulary from numerous languages, reflecting the multicultural nature of American society. As the United States is often described as a "melting pot," its language incorporates lexical contributions from various communities, including indigenous languages (e.g., *tomahawk*, *moose*) and Dutch (e.g., *cookie*, *boss*). These features collectively illustrate how American English integrates diverse linguistic influences while maintaining a distinct and coherent identity.

Saudi English

Saudi Arabia occupies a distinctive linguistic and geopolitical position in the Middle East, having never experienced direct Western colonization. Arabic holds strong religious, political, and symbolic authority as the language of Islam and national identity, a status further reinforced by Wahhabism. Consequently, English was long viewed with suspicion as a carrier of Western and foreign values and, more broadly, as a neo-colonial tool associated with global inequality (Elyas, 2008, 2011a, 2011b; Phillipson, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Despite this resistance, globalization and Saudi Arabia's integration into international markets have rendered English increasingly indispensable as a lingua franca in education, business, industry, and international communication. Although English learning was initially discouraged and exposure remained limited (Alqahtani, 2015), formal instruction began in 1936 with the establishment of the Scholarship Preparation School, enabling selected students to study abroad (Payne & Almansour, 2014). More recently, policies such as Saudization have promoted English as a tool for technological advancement, economic participation, and the development of soft skills (Elyas, 2008; Ezzi, 2016). Within Kachru's model of World Englishes, Saudi Arabia is classified in the Expanding Circle, where English functions as a foreign language without official or constitutional status. While

widely taught and used in professional and educational domains, English remains distinct from national administration, setting Saudi Arabia apart from Outer Circle contexts where English is institutionally embedded due to colonial histories.

German English

German English is a variety primarily acquired through formal classroom instruction and subsequently used, to varying degrees, in a range of naturalistic contexts. While it shares certain interlanguage features common to other learner varieties, it is distinguished by systematic first-language German influence across multiple levels of linguistic organization. These influences are reflected in a recognizable accent as well as recurrent non-*Inner Circle* morphosyntactic and lexicosemantic features. Such characteristics have been extensively documented in scholarly research; a comprehensive overview of structural features from the perspective of English as a foreign language is provided by Swan and Smith (2001). In addition to structural aspects, German English also exhibits pragmatic and discourse-related features, which may lead to communicative challenges. These include the transfer of German conversational conventions that may not align with other speakers' politeness expectations (House, 1996) and the use of ad hoc expressions rooted in German sociocultural and institutional contexts, which can cause misunderstanding among non-German interlocutors.

Philippines English

The Philippines, a linguistically diverse archipelago in Southeast Asia, is home to over 100 million people and more than 100 languages, with English occupying a prominent position. Introduced during American colonial rule following the Philippine–American War in 1902, English was rapidly institutionalized as the language of government, education, and administration through an extensive public school system staffed initially by American teachers. Its widespread adoption was such that within a few decades, Filipinos were teaching and producing literary works in English, and the language remained firmly embedded even after independence in 1946. Today, English holds constitutional status as an official language and plays a central role in government, education, media, business, and international communication. The Philippine variety of English has since evolved beyond its American origins, developing distinctive features of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse shaped by local languages and Filipino sociocultural practices. English newspaper editorials represent a crucial site of public discourse, yet limited research has explored how syntactic complexity varies across global varieties of English within journalistic writing. While studies in World Englishes have examined lexical, phonological, and pragmatic differences, the structural and syntactic features of editorial discourse, especially across *Inner*, *Outer*, and *Expanding Circle* varieties, remain underexplored. Understanding how syntactic complexity differs in editorials from the US, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines is necessary to illuminate how sociolinguistic contexts shape grammatical choices in professional media writing. This study addresses this gap by conducting a cross-circle comparative analysis of syntactic complexity in English newspaper editorials from four distinct English-using nations.

The aim of this study is to examine and compare the syntactic complexity of English newspaper editorials from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines, representing *Inner*, *Outer*, and *Expanding Circle* varieties of English. The study seeks to identify cross-circle patterns in clausal, phrasal, and overall structural complexity to better understand how sociolinguistic contexts influence the grammatical features of editorial discourse in World Englishes.

Research Objectives

1. To measure the syntactic complexity of English newspaper editorials from the US, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines using established syntactic complexity indices.

2. To evaluate whether Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle varieties differ significantly in their use of syntactic elaboration, subordination, and nominal complexity.
3. To contribute empirical evidence to the study of World Englishes by demonstrating how syntactic complexity varies across newspaper discourse in diverse English-using contexts.

Research Questions

1. What levels of syntactic complexity are exhibited in English newspaper editorials from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines as measured by established syntactic complexity indices?
2. Do Inner Circle (US), Outer Circle (Philippines), and Expanding Circle (Saudi Arabia and Germany) varieties of English differ significantly in their use of syntactic elaboration, subordination, and nominal complexity in newspaper editorials?
3. How do the observed patterns of syntactic complexity in newspaper editorials contribute to our understanding of variation within World Englishes across different English-using contexts?

Literature Review

The study of World Englishes has increasingly focused on how English varieties diverge across global contexts, reflecting historical, social, and linguistic influences. In editorial writing, these variations are particularly salient, as lexico-grammatical, phonological, and syntactic features shape how information and arguments are conveyed. Previous research has examined the development of distinct English varieties, including Saudi English, Philippine English, and American English, highlighting unique patterns in discourse structure, lexical choice, and syntactic complexity. Studies on syntactic complexity in particular ranging from newspaper editorials to academic abstracts have demonstrated that differences in sentence length, clause embedding, and phrasal elaboration often correspond to sociolinguistic context, writer proficiency, and rhetorical conventions. Despite these advances, cross-linguistic analyses comparing Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Englishes in editorial contexts remain limited, especially when considering English varieties influenced by German and Philippine linguistic contexts. This literature review synthesizes research on syntactic and lexico-grammatical variation across global Englishes, providing the theoretical and empirical foundation for a corpus-based analysis of syntactic complexity in US, Saudi, German, and Philippine newspapers. Al Tamimi and Smith (2023) asserted that previous research has shown that phonology can play an important role in gender marking in personal names in some Germanic languages; however, this dimension has received limited attention in Semitic languages such as Arabic. Addressing this gap, the study investigates whether the phonological structure of Saudi first names alone can indicate gender, independent of traditional identification cues such as morphology, semantics, or pragmatics. Using a quantitative approach, the researchers analyzed male ($N = 237$) and female ($N = 419$) Saudi names obtained from a university registry in Riyadh across a range of phonological variables, including phoneme and syllable counts, syllable structure, stress placement, and the phonetic properties of initial and final sounds. The findings reveal systematic gender-based differences: female names tend to contain fewer phonemes, favor open syllable onsets, exhibit stress on the second syllable, and are more likely to begin or end with vowels, glottal sounds, or voiceless consonants. These results demonstrate that phonological patterns function as reliable markers of gender in Saudi Arabic personal names. Duddu and Ghani (2022) examined lexico-grammatical features in Saudi English, focusing on editorials in English-language newspapers. The researchers aimed to develop a specialized corpus of Saudi English, identify differences from British English, and establish Saudi English as an independent variety to inform ESP course design. Using Biber's (2006) multi-dimensional analysis, a corpus-based quantitative and functional approach, the study analyzed linguistic variation in Saudi and British newspaper editorials. Statistical analyses, including ANOVA,

revealed that Saudi newspaper editorials (SNE) are generally more informational, explicit, and abstract, and less argumentative than British newspaper editorials (BNE). SNE tends toward non-narrative discourse, whereas BNE is more narrative. Minor variations were observed among Saudi publications, with Saudi Gazette producing non-narrative and Arab News producing narrative discourse on one dimension. These findings support the recognition of Saudi English as a distinct variety of English.

Fallatah (2016) has conducted a contrastive genre analysis of Saudi English RA abstracts within a World Englishes (WE) perspective. Findings show that Saudi English RA abstracts differ from the international RA abstracts in showing more move presence fluctuation; verbosity; excessive use of citation, acronyms, and listings; and multi-paragraphing. Furthermore, Villanueva (2016) highlighted that since American colonization, English has been widely used in the Philippines as a second language alongside local languages, shaping both language change and identity. This study analyzed 60 Twitter posts to identify distinctive features of Philippine English, examining lexical, grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and graphological patterns. Using the Language Drift Theory to explain Filipinization, the research employed a descriptive quantitative-qualitative approach, supported by a native speaker informant for nativized translations. Findings revealed prominent lexical and grammatical features and highlighted Philippine English as a distinct variety of International English, characterized by unique patterns in syntax, graphology, and lexical semantics. Martin (2020) presented that English in the Philippines exists not as a single variety but as multiple interconnected varieties used across diverse social and linguistic contexts. Introduced through American colonial education, English interacted with local Philippine languages, leading to its indigenization or nativization into what is often termed “standard” or “educated” Philippine English. Over time, English has acquired new forms, functions, and social significance, becoming a language of aspiration for many Filipinos. Despite language policies emphasizing the standard variety, scholars note that multilingual Filipinos continuously navigate a range of Englishes, referred to as *Pinoylish*, which are fluid, context-dependent, and shaped by both local languages and global influences. The study by Niyozyullayeva and Zokirova (2023) examines the historical development of English and German, two major West Germanic languages, by analyzing phonology, grammar, and lexicon. The research highlights both similarities and differences, showing that while both languages retain core Germanic features, they have diverged due to external influences and historical factors. Insights from language teaching and personal research further illustrate how these developments have shaped the contemporary forms of English and German. Muxtorovna (2024) examines the influence of the German language on modern English, focusing on historical, lexical, grammatical, and sociocultural aspects. German grammar and syntax, particularly complex sentence structures, shaped English academic and technical texts.

Axatovna (2024) presented that the phenomenon of *Denglish*, a hybrid of German and English, illustrates the dynamic interplay between languages in a globalized world. Emerging from historical contact and cultural exchange, *Denglish* has become increasingly prevalent as English asserts itself as the lingua franca of international communication, reflecting the interconnectedness of languages and cultures. *Denglish*, a hybrid of German and English, reflects the adaptability of languages in a globalized society. Widely used in business and technology, it facilitates communication by incorporating English terminology into German, illustrating the creative and fluid nature of language. While language purists criticize *Denglish* for potentially undermining German linguistic identity, supporters view it as a dynamic evolution that mirrors the multicultural and interconnected nature of contemporary society. The concept is deeply rooted in German culture, with the term itself dating back to 1965. *Denglish* has gained global recognition, with its own Wikipedia entry in 11 languages,

including Korean, Russian, and Japanese. The phenomenon encompasses both direct borrowings from English, such as *show*, *lifestyle*, and *download*, as well as pseudo-anglicisms—words that appear English but have unique German meanings, such as *Beamer* (projector), *Handy* (mobile phone), and *Dressman* (male model). This illustrates how languages are dynamic and constantly evolving, adapting to cultural and communicative needs over time. Aghabeyli's (2015) study presented that while British English remains the primary variety taught in Europe, American English is often acquired naturally through exposure to media and modern technologies. This study aims to identify the key features of spoken American English to help non-native speakers recognize its salient characteristics. Using excerpts from contemporary American literary prose, the research focuses on the written representation of spoken language, allowing for detailed analysis of lexical, syntactic, and stylistic features, though it does not examine phonological aspects. The selected texts, spanning over 100 pages, provide sufficient material to identify patterns in character speech and enhance learners' familiarity with spoken American English. According to Wqsiatycz (2006), several external factors have shaped the distinctive features of American English. These include the linguistic influence of West African slaves, interactions with Native American languages, and the languages of European immigrant communities. During the colonial period, westward expansion was gradual, with large waves of German, Irish, and Scottish-Irish settlers moving into central and southwestern territories. The migration of Scottish-Irish communities played a key role in spreading English from the central states into the western territories, contributing to the development of what is now considered General American English. This territorial expansion coincided with economic growth and increasing tensions with the British Empire, culminating in the War of Independence. During this period, English experienced rapid lexical development, incorporating numerous borrowings and assigning new meanings to existing words. Many of these borrowings were necessary, including exotic terms, words related to the culture of the source language, and names for concepts or objects previously unknown in English. This lexical expansion reflects the adaptation of English to new social, cultural, and geographical contexts in the Americas.

The global influence of American English is closely tied to the dominant position of the United States in science, technology, culture, economy, and politics. Historical and social factors, including U.S. involvement in World War II, post-war expansion, and engagement in international aid programs through organizations such as the Fulbright Foundation, USAID, and the Peace Corps, have strengthened the worldwide presence of American English. Its prominence is further reinforced by the U.S.'s role in technological advancement, international trade, and global communications networks, making American English a widely used lingua franca that has challenged the previously privileged status of British English. Institutional support for English teaching abroad and the global exposure to American media have contributed to the widespread adoption of American pronunciation and usage, even among learners who do not consciously aim to acquire an "American" accent. The number of English users has grown dramatically, from 50 million in 1600 to over 280 million by 1950, and is expected to continue increasing as English remains a preferred foreign language worldwide and as immigration to the U.S. expands the population of native speakers (Bérešová, 2021). Regarding syntactic complexity the study by Aslam, Irfan, and Latif (2025) examines the syntactic complexity of newspaper editorials across three World Englishes: American English (Inner Circle), Pakistani English (Outer Circle), and Chinese English (Expanding Circle). A corpus was compiled from editorials published in *The Dawn* (Pakistan), *Post Editorial Board* (USA), and *China Daily* (China), totaling 1,766 words, reflecting the study's micro-level focus. To analyze syntactic complexity, the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) was employed, which identifies syntactic production units and measures complexity in terms of sentence structure, clause embedding, and phrasal

elaboration. The findings revealed notable cross-circle differences: American English exhibited the highest syntactic complexity, characterized by longer sentences, extensive clause embedding, and more dependent and complex T-units; Pakistani English showed moderate complexity with a balanced use of clausal and phrasal structures; and Chinese English demonstrated lower clausal complexity but higher phrasal and coordinative elaboration, emphasizing nominal expansion and coordination. These results underscore the influence of sociolinguistic context on syntactic choices and highlight distinct structural preferences across Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle varieties. The study contributes to the scholarship on World Englishes, provides insights into persuasive editorial discourse, and has implications for English language teaching, journalism, and computational text analysis. Future research could expand the corpus, incorporate additional English varieties, integrate qualitative methods, and examine other linguistic features to further investigate global syntactic variation.

Alamri and Alqarni (2024) investigated variations in syntactic complexity in English research article abstracts authored by native Arabic writers from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and by international writers. Their study analyzed three specialized corpora, each comprising 200 abstracts, totaling 600 abstracts and 111,645 words. Using Lu's (2010) L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA), they examined 14 syntactic complexity indices across five categories. The findings revealed significant differences among the corpora, with international authors producing longer and more syntactically complex sentences, particularly in terms of subordination, compared to MENA authors. These results indicate cross-cultural variation in academic writing practices. Zhao and Ge (2024) explored the syntactic characteristics of L2 English learners and examined which syntactic features are most effective in academic writing. Grounded in Hyland's five-move model of academic abstracts, their study analyzed sentences for syntactic complexity at global, clause, and phrase levels. Results showed that expert academic writers employed a balanced use of syntactic complexity across various rhetorical moves, adhering to the conventions of abstract writing. In contrast, Master's students tended to rely more heavily on embedded structures and dependent clauses to enhance syntactic complexity, reflecting differences in proficiency and rhetorical control. The reviewed studies collectively highlight that syntactic complexity is shaped by a combination of sociolinguistic context, historical development, and rhetorical conventions. Research on newspaper editorials and academic writing shows systematic variation across Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Englishes, with American English generally exhibiting higher syntactic complexity, Saudi and Philippine English displaying unique structural and lexical adaptations, and German-influenced varieties reflecting historical and cross-linguistic interactions. These findings underscore that editorial writing is not merely a reflection of universal English norms but is mediated by local linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical factors. Moreover, corpus-based analyses reveal that measures such as clause embedding, phrasal elaboration, and move-based syntactic choices provide reliable indicators of these differences. Taken together, this body of research establishes a strong rationale for examining syntactic complexity in a comparative framework, justifying the current study's focus on US, Saudi, German, and Philippine newspapers and its contribution to understanding global patterns of English use in editorial discourse.

Methodology

The methodology section covers information about research paradigm, corpus details, corpus construction, number of words in the corpus, L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer tool's overview and research method being employed in the study. The current study adopted a quantitative research paradigm to examine the structural complexity of three languages in numeric forms. "Quantitative method involves data collection procedures that results

primarily in numerical data, which is then analyzed by statistical methods" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 24).

Figure 1 below shows the graphical representation of methodology of the current study.

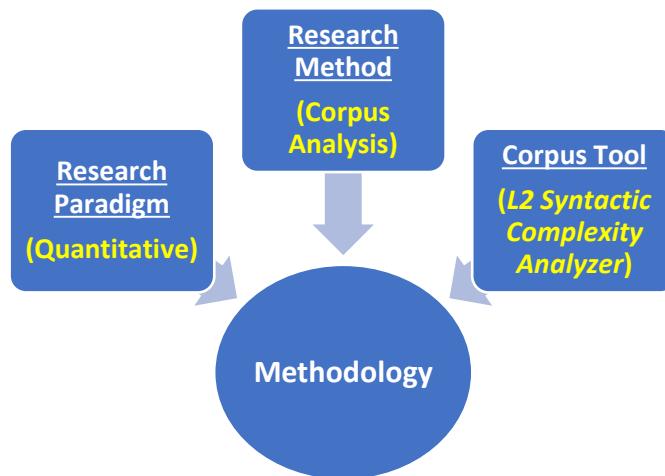


Figure 1

The corpus compiled for the study consisted of four different English varieties spoken in four different countries: America, Philippines, German, and Saudi Arabia. All these varieties belong to a different circle in Braj Kachru's circles model. US belongs to inner circle, Philippines belongs to outer circle, Saudi Arabia, and German belong to Expanding circle. Figure 2 below shows the graphical representation of four countries included in this study:

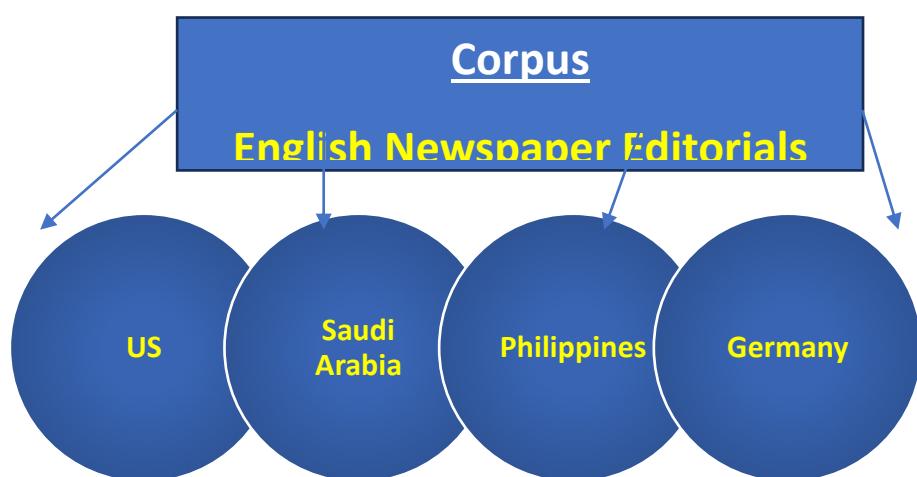


Figure 2

Table 1 exhibits the data analyzed in this study compiled from the editorials published in three newspapers in four different countries: America, Philippines, German, and Saudi Arabia. The titles of editorials from all newspapers have been written alongside the titles of newspapers. After copying the text of four editorials, it was compiled in a word format file. A small corpus was compiled consisting of 3,139 words. The total number of words in each editorial have also been shown in the table 1:

Table 1 Newspapers' titles, Editorials' Details, and Corpus Details

No.	Country	Newspaper	Editorials	Words
1	America	USA Today	Trump's special education cuts will cause our students to suffer needlessly	540
2	Saudi Arabia	Arab News	Crown prince's White House visit could chart the course for the next 80 years	891
3	Germany	The Munich Eye	Ten Years After the OECD's Warning: Bias Against Boys in Schools Still Ignored	765
4	Philippines	The Manila Times	Coincidences and space bullets	943
Total				3139

Corpus Tool

To investigate syntactic complexity, the current study employs the L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA), a corpus-based tool developed specifically for assessing syntactic complexity in learners' L2 writing. L2SCA is widely used in applied linguistics and second language acquisition research, as it automatically analyzes written texts and computes a variety of syntactic complexity measures that reflect the writer's grammatical use. The tool evaluates complexity across multiple levels, including length-based measures (e.g., mean sentence, clause, or T-unit length), subordination (clauses per sentence), coordination, phrasal complexity (e.g., complex nominals), and overall syntactic sophistication. These indices are also useful for studying writing development, proficiency effects, task effects, and instructional interventions in L2 writing research. L2SCA is recognized for its stability, scalability, and effectiveness in processing large corpora, providing quantifiable measures that are valuable for both theoretical analysis and practical assessment.

The tool identifies nine categories of syntactic production units:

1. **Word count** – the total number of words in the text.
2. **Sentence** – a group of words conveying a complete idea.
3. **Verb phrase** – a phrase with a verb as its head, expressing an action, event, or state; it may include auxiliary verbs, objects, and complements.
4. **Clause** – a syntactic element with a subject and predicate, functioning either as an independent or dependent unit.
5. **T-unit** – an independent clause along with all dependent clauses attached to it.
6. **Dependent clause** – a clause that cannot stand alone without a main clause.
7. **Complex T-unit** – a T-unit containing at least one dependent clause alongside its independent clause.
8. **Coordinate phrase** – a syntactic structure in which two or more units of equal weight are joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g., *and*, *or*, *but*).
9. **Complex nominal** – a noun phrase expanded through an adjective phrase, prepositional phrase, or other modifiers.

In addition to identifying these units, L2SCA calculates fourteen indices of syntactic complexity, providing a comprehensive profile of a text's structural characteristics. These

indices allow researchers to systematically compare syntactic patterns across texts and investigate how language varies according to proficiency, context, or writer background. The L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer calculates fourteen indices to provide a comprehensive assessment of syntactic complexity. Mean Length of Sentence (MLS) measures the average number of words per sentence, indicating overall sentence length, while Mean Length of Clause (MLC) captures the average number of words per clause, reflecting clausal elaboration. Mean Length of T-unit (MLT) represents the average number of words per T-unit, offering insight into syntactic sophistication. Measures of subordination include Clauses per Sentence (C/S), which calculates the number of clauses per sentence, Clauses per T-unit (C/T), showing the density of embedded clauses within T-units, Dependent Clauses per Clause (DC/C), and Dependent Clauses per T-unit (DC/T), both of which assess the frequency and distribution of subordinate structures. T-units per Sentence (T/S) provides an additional measure of sentence complexity by counting the number of T-units relative to sentences, and Dependent Clauses per Sentence (DC/S) indicates the use of subordination at the sentence level. Coordination is measured through Coordinate Phrases per Clause (CP/C) and Coordinate Phrases per T-unit (CP/T), reflecting the use of coordinated structures within clauses and T-units. The tool also captures phrasal elaboration with Complex Nominals per T-unit (CN/T), measuring the average number of complex noun phrases per T-unit, and verbal elaboration using Verb Phrases per T-unit (VP/T). Finally, Complex T-units per T-unit (CT/T) calculates the proportion of T-units that include at least one dependent clause, providing an overall measure of syntactic embedding and sentence complexity. Collectively, these indices allow for a detailed, multi-dimensional analysis of syntactic patterns, enabling comparisons across texts, writers, or varieties of English.

Research Method

After compilation, an account was created on the corpus tool called L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer to find the syntactic structure and complexity of the text in these editorials. The tool counted the frequencies of nine constructions in the data i.e. words (W), sentences (S), verb phrase (VP), clauses (C), T-units (T), dependent clauses (DC), complex T-unit (CT), coordinate phrases (CP), and complex nominal phrases (CN). Moreover, the tool provided the syntactic complexity of a text through 14 indices encompassed around the five broad categories: 1) production units' length, (2) coordination levels, (3) subordination levels, (4) phrasal sophistication levels, and 5) total sentence complications. The texts were copied on the free mode of tool available on the internet and the tool generated results in the bar below the text providing values for all indices. This information was copied and organized in tabular form. These results were pasted in a statistical package for further studies (Ai & Lu, 2013). The researcher used these results to look at the variances and differences in syntactic complexity of the text in four editorials.

Results and Discussion

After four editorials' data was uploaded on L2SCA corpus tool, the tool calculated the frequencies of nine syntactic production units in the corpus. Table 2 below shows these results for all nine categories:

Table 2 Syntactic Production Units for 4 Countries' Editorials

No.	Syntactic Production Unit	USA	Saudi Arabia	Germany	Philippines
1	Word Count (WC)	540	891	765	943
2	Sentences (S)	30	55	36	37
3	Verb Phrase (VP)	68	100	88	113
4	Clause (C)	53	79	70	73
5	T-unit (T)	30	57	45	49

6	Dependent Clause (DC)	26	20	25	26
7	Complex T-unit (CT)	18	14	23	23
8	Coordinate Phrase (CP)	12	26	21	20
9	Complex Nominal (CN)	74	109	89	97

Table 2 presents the distribution of syntactic production units in newspaper editorials from the USA, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and the Philippines. The total word count was highest in the Philippine editorials (943 words) and lowest in the US editorials (540 words). In terms of sentence numbers, Saudi editorials contained the most sentences (55), followed by the Philippines (37), Germany (36), and the USA (30), indicating that Saudi texts tend to use shorter sentences overall. The analysis of verb phrases (VP) shows that Philippine editorials had the greatest number (113), suggesting higher verbal elaboration, whereas the US editorials had the fewest (68). Clauses (C) were most numerous in Saudi editorials (79), reflecting frequent clausal constructions, while US editorials had the lowest number (53). Regarding T-units (T), Saudi texts again had the highest count (57), followed by the Philippines (49), Germany (45), and the USA (30), indicating differences in how sentences are structured around independent clauses. The use of dependent clauses (DC) was fairly consistent across the four countries, ranging from 20 in Saudi editorials to 26 in both US and Philippine texts. Interestingly, complex T-units (CT) were most frequent in Germany and the Philippines (23 each), highlighting a tendency toward embedded structures, while Saudi editorials had the fewest (14). Coordinate phrases (CP) were most common in Saudi editorials (26), indicating frequent coordination of elements within sentences, while US editorials had the fewest (12). Finally, complex nominals (CN) were most abundant in Saudi editorials (109), followed by the Philippines (97), Germany (89), and the USA (74), suggesting that Saudi and Philippine editorials favor nominal elaboration. Overall, these patterns indicate that Saudi and Philippine editorials tend to use more elaborate syntactic structures, including longer sentences, more T-units, coordination, and nominal complexity, whereas US editorials are relatively concise with simpler sentence constructions. German editorials appear intermediate, with moderate levels of both clausal and nominal elaboration. These findings highlight cross-linguistic variation in editorial writing styles and reflect differences in syntactic preferences across Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Englishes, as well as the influence of local writing conventions.

Table 3 Syntactic Complexity Indices

No.	Syntactic Complexity Indices	American English	Saudi English	German English	Philippines English
1	Mean Length of Sentence (MLS)	18.0000	16.2000	21.2500	25.4865
2	Mean Length of T-unit (MLT)	18.0000	15.6316	17.0000	19.2449
3	Mean Length of Clause (MLC)	10.1887	11.2785	10.9286	12.9178
4	Clause per Sentence (C/S)	1.7667	1.4364	1.9444	1.9730
5	Verb Phrase per Unit (VP/T)	2.2667	1.7544	1.9556	2.3061
6	Clause per T-Unit (C/T)	1.7667	1.3860	1.5556	1.4898
7	Dependent Clause per Clause (DC/C)	0.4906	0.2532	0.3571	0.3562
8	Dependent Clause per T-unit (DC/T)	0.8667	0.3509	0.5556	0.5306
9	T-unit per Sentence	1.0000	1.0364	1.2500	1.3243

	(T/S)				
10	Complex T-unit Ratio (CT/T)	0.6000	0.2456	0.5111	0.4694
11	Coordinate Phrase per T-Unit (CP/T)	0.4000	0.4561	0.4667	0.4082
12	Coordinate Phrase per Clause (CP/C)	0.2264	0.3291	0.3000	0.2740
13	Complex Nominal per T-unit (CN/T)	2.4667	1.9123	1.9778	1.9796
14	Complex Nominal per Clause (CN/C)	1.3962	1.3797	1.27149	1.3288

Table 3 presents fourteen syntactic complexity indices for newspaper editorials written in American English, Saudi English, German English, and Philippine English. The results reveal distinct patterns in sentence length, clause usage, and phrasal elaboration across the four varieties.

The Mean Length of Sentence (MLS) was highest in Philippine English (25.49 words), followed by German English (21.25), American English (18.00), and Saudi English (16.20), indicating that Philippine editorials favor longer, more elaborated sentences, whereas Saudi texts tend toward shorter sentence constructions. A similar trend is observed in Mean Length of T-unit (MLT), with Philippine English at 19.24 words, American English at 18.00, German English at 17.00, and Saudi English at 15.63, showing that independent clauses in Saudi editorials are more concise. Conversely, Mean Length of Clause (MLC) was highest in Philippine English (12.92) and Saudi English (11.28), suggesting more detailed clausal elaboration in these texts compared to American (10.19) and German English (10.93). Measures of subordination reveal that Clauses per Sentence (C/S) and Clauses per T-unit (C/T) are highest in Philippine English (1.97 and 1.49, respectively) and German English (1.94 and 1.56), with Saudi English exhibiting the lowest values (1.44 and 1.39). Dependent clauses per clause (DC/C) and per T-unit (DC/T) are particularly prominent in American English (0.49 and 0.87), indicating a strong use of embedded structures, whereas Saudi English shows the lowest dependent clause ratios (0.25 and 0.35), reflecting simpler subordination patterns. T-units per sentence (T/S), an indicator of sentence segmentation and clause integration, was highest in Philippine English (1.32) and German English (1.25), suggesting more syntactically dense sentences, while American English and Saudi English showed slightly lower values (1.00 and 1.04). The Complex T-unit ratio (CT/T) was also highest in American English (0.60), followed by German (0.51), Philippine (0.47), and lowest in Saudi English (0.25), illustrating that Saudi editorials rely less on complex embedded structures compared to the other varieties. Coordination measures, including Coordinate Phrases per T-unit (CP/T) and per clause (CP/C), were highest in German (0.47 and 0.30) and Saudi English (0.46 and 0.33), suggesting a tendency to link clauses or phrases using coordinating conjunctions, while American and Philippine English showed slightly lower coordination indices. Finally, Complex Nominals per T-unit (CN/T) and per clause (CN/C), which reflect phrasal elaboration through noun phrase expansion, were most frequent in American English (2.47 and 1.40), followed by Philippine (1.98 and 1.33), German (1.98 and 1.27), and Saudi English (1.91 and 1.38). This indicates that American editorials favor nominal elaboration as a primary strategy for syntactic complexity, while Saudi texts rely less on such phrasal expansion. Overall, these indices demonstrate clear cross-variety differences in syntactic strategies. American English exhibits the highest use of dependent clauses and complex T-units, Philippine English favors longer sentences and clauses, German English balances subordination and coordination, and Saudi English generally shows simpler sentences with less embedded structure but moderate coordination and phrasal elaboration.

These patterns highlight the influence of sociolinguistic context, editorial conventions, and local writing norms on syntactic complexity across World Englishes.

Figure 3 shows the overall syntactic complexity composite score in all four English varieties used in four different countries:

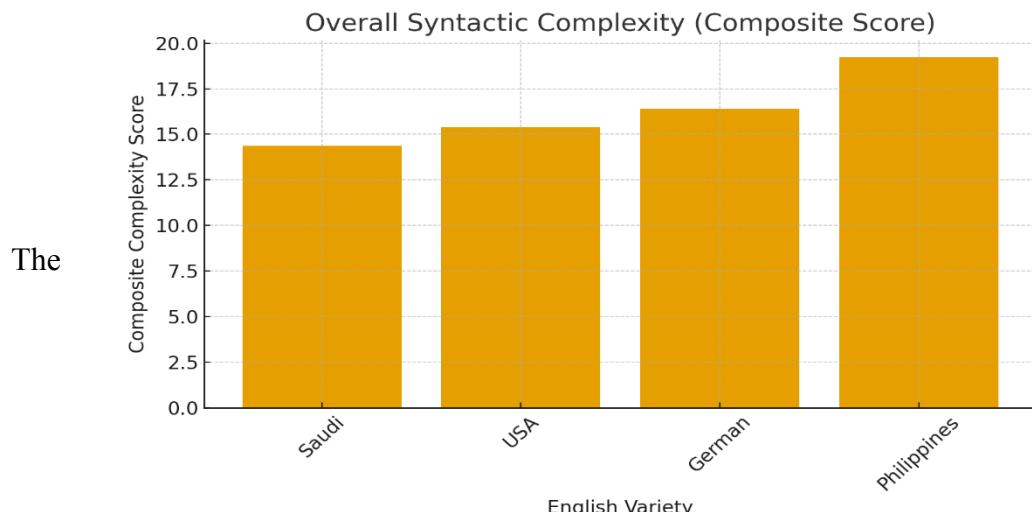


Figure 3

The

comparison reveals that Philippine English demonstrates the highest syntactic complexity, followed by German, US, and Saudi English. The greater complexity in Philippine English may reflect local rhetorical preferences and the influence of long-standing academic traditions that favor elaborated sentence structures (Bautista, 2004; Bolton & Bautista, 2008). German editorials similarly show high levels of syntactic elaboration, consistent with research associating European expository writing with a tendency toward formality and structural density (Wanner, 2009). Although US English does not achieve the highest sentence or clause lengths, its structural density often realized through subordination and nominalization is in line with findings that American editorials emphasize clarity while maintaining argumentative depth (Connor, 1996; Biber et al., 2011). Saudi English, which shows the lowest complexity, may reflect the developmental stage of English-language journalism in the region and the influence of EFL writing norms (Mahboob, 2013). Overall, the patterns reinforce the idea that syntactic complexity is shaped by sociolinguistic context and the editorial conventions of each English variety.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study provides a detailed comparative analysis of syntactic complexity in newspaper editorials across four English varieties: American English, Saudi English, German English, and Philippine English. Both the analysis of syntactic production units and syntactic complexity indices reveal significant cross-variety differences, reflecting distinct structural preferences and writing conventions. American English editorials are characterized by concise sentence constructions but a high use of dependent clauses, complex T-units, and nominal elaboration, indicating a preference for embedded structures and phrasal sophistication as a primary strategy for syntactic complexity. Philippine English editorials, in contrast, feature longer sentences, extended clauses, and dense T-units, highlighting a tendency toward length and elaboration at the sentence and clause level. German English exhibits a balanced profile, with moderate levels of both subordination and coordination, combining sentence complexity with coordinated and embedded structures. Saudi English editorials consistently show simpler sentence constructions with shorter T-units and fewer dependent clauses, though they employ moderate coordination and phrasal elaboration, suggesting a distinct syntactic style shaped by local editorial conventions and communicative norms. These findings underscore the role of sociolinguistic context, editorial genre, and

World Englishes classification (Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle) in shaping syntactic patterns. They demonstrate that syntactic complexity is realized differently across global varieties of English, with each reflecting unique preferences for sentence length, clause embedding, coordination, and nominal elaboration. The study contributes to the literature on World Englishes by providing empirical evidence of structural variation in editorial writing and offers practical insights for English language teaching, cross-cultural journalism, and computational text analysis. Future research could expand the corpus to include additional countries and genres, integrate qualitative analyses of rhetorical and stylistic features, and examine the interaction between syntactic complexity and other linguistic dimensions, such as lexical or discourse-level variation, to further elucidate global patterns in English writing. To deepen the understanding of syntactic complexity across World Englishes, future research should consider expanding the editorial corpora to include larger datasets, allowing for more robust quantitative analysis. Additionally, conducting cross-register comparisons by examining other genres such as online commentaries and academic writing from each national context would provide insights into how syntactic complexity varies across different forms of discourse. Extending the study to incorporate additional World Englishes varieties, such as Indian English, Singapore English, Malaysian English, and African Englishes, would further enrich the comparative framework and highlight global linguistic diversity. Including student writings, like essays and theses, as well as academic texts such as research articles, would broaden the scope and relevance of findings for language teaching and academic literacy. Finally, employing mixed-method approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative analyses would offer a more nuanced understanding of syntactic complexity by capturing both measurable features and contextual, functional aspects of language use.

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