

## A Contrastive Study of Online English Newspaper Headlines of the USA, the Philippines, and Thailand

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### Abstract

The grammatical structure and writing style of news headlines have a symbolic meaning and play a significant role in communication. This study aimed to explore the grammatical patterns of online news headlines from English as a native language, second language, and foreign language countries. Specifically, it examined the differences of grammatical patterns found in online English newspaper headlines of native and non-native English speaking communities. The research methods utilized in this study were both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A total of 3,306 headlines were gathered from the online edition of three newspapers, namely, the USA's *The Washington Post*, the Philippines' *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and Thailand's *The Nation*. The corpora obtained from the said countries represent the Kachru's (1985) concentric circle model of World Englishes. The headline features by Znamenskaya (2005) and the grammatical framework provided by *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Language* by Biber (1999) and *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1991) were used to identify and analyze the grammatical patterns of online English news headlines from the three speech communities. Results revealed that Full Declarative Sentence (FDS) is the most common grammatical pattern of news headlines among the sentential types whereas Medial Ellipsis (ME) is the most emerging grammatical pattern among non-sentential units. However, significant differences on the grammatical patterns of news headlines for both sentential and non-sentential units were not found using statistical treatment. Nevertheless, when treated qualitatively, some salient characteristics were observed in different newspapers including sentence length and the different usage of Direct Speech (DS) headlines.

**Keywords:** News Headlines, Contrastive Analysis, Grammatical Structures

## การศึกษาเปรียบเทียบหัวข้อข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์ออนไลน์ภาษาอังกฤษของประเทศ

### สหรัฐอเมริกา ฟิlipินส์ และไทย

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#### บทคัดย่อ

หัวข้อข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์นั้นมีลักษณะโครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์ที่ทำหน้าที่สื่อความหมายและมีความสำคัญในการสื่อสาร งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาลักษณะทางไวยากรณ์ของหัวข้อข่าวในหนังสือพิมพ์ออนไลน์ภาษาอังกฤษที่จากประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาแม่ ภาษาที่สอง และภาษาต่างประเทศ และเพื่อเปรียบเทียบลักษณะทางไวยากรณ์ของหัวข้อข่าวจากหนังสือพิมพ์ออนไลน์ภาษาอังกฤษจากกลุ่มประเทศทั้งสาม งานวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการวิจัยทั้งเชิงปริมาณและคุณภาพ หัวข้อข่าวที่นำมาใช้ทั้งหมดมีจำนวน 3,306 ประโยคจากหนังสือพิมพ์ออนไลน์จากสามกลุ่มประเทศ ได้แก่ เดอะวอชิงตันโพสต์ของประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา เดอะฟิlipินส์เดลีนไควเรอร์ของประเทศสาธารณรัฐฟิlipินส์ และ เดอะเนชั่นของประเทศไทย โดยถูกเลือกมาจากหนังสือพิมพ์จากประเทศที่ถูกคัดเลือกให้เป็นตัวแทนของกลุ่มประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษตามแนวคิดของ Kachru (1985) ในการวิเคราะห์ลักษณะทางไวยากรณ์ แนวคิดของ Znamenskaya (2005), Biber (1999), และ Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Savatvik (1991) ได้ถูกนำมาปรับใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ลักษณะของหัวข้อข่าวจากหนังสือพิมพ์ออนไลน์ภาษาอังกฤษจากกลุ่มประเทศทั้งสาม ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ประโยคบอกเล่าเต็มประโยคเป็นลักษณะทางไวยากรณ์ระดับประโยคที่พบในหัวข้อข่าวมากที่สุด ส่วนในระดับต่ำกว่าประโยคพบว่า การละคำกลางประโยคเป็นลักษณะที่พบมากที่สุด อย่างไรก็ตามไม่พบความแตกต่างทางสถิติของลักษณะไวยากรณ์ที่ใช้ในหัวข้อข่าวของหนังสือพิมพ์จากสามกลุ่มประเทศ นอกจากนั้น เมื่อวิเคราะห์ลักษณะเชิงคุณภาพของหัวข้อข่าวจากแต่ละประเทศ พบว่ามีลักษณะเฉพาะเช่น ความยาวของประโยค และการใช้ประโยคคำพูดโดยตรง

**คำสำคัญ:** หัวข้อข่าว การวิเคราะห์เปรียบเทียบ โครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์

#### 1. Introduction

In the field of linguistic research, news headlines play a significant role in the communicative act performed by newspapers whether printed or online. According to Taiwo's (2007) terms, news headlines serve as "to initiate, sustain and shape discourse on the views of readers" (p.244). Therefore, language of headlines is considered as an autonomous language which is the subject of linguistic analysis. News headlines have didactic and emotive functions. They have the power to educate and to influence the readers. Journalists write headlines either to inform or to entertain. As Ludwig (2005) posited, the best headlines operationally tell and sell news items or stories. They serve as navigators of knowledge (Shostak & Gillespie, 2014) and relevance optimizers (Dor, 2003). They give the

readers a plethora of worldwide current events and shape their behaviors or reactions toward those news items. According to Ungerer (2000), headlines describe concisely the news story, inform quickly and accurately the readers, and arouse advertently their curiosity.

The grammatical structure and writing style of news headlines have a symbolic meaning and play a significant role in communication. The choice of words can have a strong influence on the cognitive and affective aspects of the readers. According to Khodabandeh (2007), the style of writing headlines is largely geared to saving space and presenting information in striking ways. English newspaper headlines have their own special rules and regulations. Since they are the gist of the news, the language is compressed and condensed which challenges not only the English language learners but also some native speakers.

Categorically, headlines written in English merge people regardless of race, culture and profession to share in the same sentiments and purposes. Most importantly, headlines contribute to the English language proficiency of the readers or the people that make up the world. Obviously, headlines expand the readers' vocabulary and satiate them with the writing conventions of the headline writers. Reah (1998), in her book, *'The Language of Newspapers'*, explained thoroughly how headlines possess a special language with distinct lexical, syntactic and rhetorical levels for its brevity, attractiveness and clarity. In earlier period, Mardh (1980) investigated the linguistic features of English news headlines and identified unique linguistic characteristics pertaining to vocabulary and syntax. From this point, it is clear that headlines, in essence, have influence on today's English communication.

It is equally significant to study the grammatical features utilized in newspapers from Kachru's three circles of English (1985) because each circle provides norms in the English language. Kachru's model further describes that the inner circle is the "norm-provider" which is the traditional bases of English. The outer circle use varieties of English that Kachru calls "norm-developing". Lastly, the expanding circle that constitutes to the context that they are the "norm-dependent".

Nevertheless, previous researches on the grammatical features of news headlines failed to investigate the grammatical patterns of news headlines written by the journalists from the three concentric circles according to Kachru (1985). As English is the international

language for communication, both conventional and digital in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need for this study prompted the researcher to uncover the grammatical features of English news headlines which are published online in native speaking (NS) countries and non-native speaking (NNS) countries.

It is the fervent hope of the researcher to emerge from the tendency of this digital age towards independent language teaching and learning due to the current technological innovations and to the learners' needs of getting global and comprehensive information through electronic newspapers.

## **2. World Englishes and Contrastive Analysis of Newspaper Headlines**

The Three-Circle Model of World Englishes was developed by Braj Kachru in 1985. This model is said to be one of the most influential representations of grouping the varieties of English in the world. Accordingly, these concentric circles describe “the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages”. With the widespread of English, it has contributed to the phenomena of diversification and varieties in English language (Crystal, 2006). As the statistics show, 80 percent of verbal exchanges in English are between non-native speakers (Gnutzman, 2000). In addition, Pakir (1999) suggested that the number of non-native English speakers triples the number of native English speakers in the world. Furthermore, Graddol (1999) claims that this number will increase from 253 million to approximately 462 million during the next 50 years. Therefore, the contrastive study between native speaking and non-native speaking of English language use has gained popularity among linguists and scholars. Regardless of the nature whether their English is English as a Native Language, English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language, undoubtedly, English is nowadays the world's most widely taught, read, written, and spoken language, including the language of newspapers in international journalism.

According to Yoneoka (2000), headlines are considered to have a special grammar which differs from that of ordinary sentences. As headlines usually serve their functions as the attention-grabbing of the news, they are the most important part of the message to the audiences. Apparently, the grammatical structures used in newspaper headlines by different English speaking groups can be seen as a variety of the English language. Thus, it is worth

examining in terms of grammatical patterns and salient characteristics used in writing headlines to give information to newspapers' readers. According to Znamenskaya (2005), the classification of headlines included a number of different lexical and syntactical categories by which the headlines are subdivided such as Full Declarative Sentence (FDS), interrogative Sentence (IS), Directive Sentence (DS), Exclamatory Sentence (ES), headings with direct and indirect speeches, Noun Phrases (NP), elliptical sentences, and non-finite clauses.

In previous literatures, there are a number of research studies investigating grammatical structures in headlines. For example, in an American setting, Khodabandeh (2007) contrasted a one-week corpus of newspaper headlines of English and Persian languages to determine the major similarities and differences between them. The variability of syntactic and lexical features across and within the headlines of the two cultures was analyzed contrastively. Moreover, the researcher used the grammatical framework provided by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1991) to analyze the English headlines. Results indicated that headlines of both newspapers were similar in the use of dynamic verbs, active voice, short words, declarative sentences, finite clauses and simple sentences, but significantly different in the usage of tense forms, headline types, modification and omission of words.

Lee (2012) also explored the similarities and differences of American and Korean political news headlines. He investigated how extra-linguistic factors influenced the composition of news headlines between writers of different linguistic and cultural environments. This study was anchored to the framework of Lee (2009) on the structural patterns of headlines. Results revealed that the two sets of headlines display a similarity regarding the variety of structural patterns they deploy. Nevertheless, it was discovered that differences exist in the tense or aspect of sentences, length of the headlines, uses of complex noun phrases, and naming practice. The differences identified could be attributed to the considerations of the readers' interests, and the conventions practiced within the relevant linguistic and cultural communities.

Furthermore, an analysis of American and Philippine English news leads was done by Gustilo (2012). Her study involved American and Philippine electronic newspapers on news leads. The framework used to describe the types of leads was based on the categories stipulated by journalism textbooks written by Philippine and American authors. It was

shown that there was no significant difference in the number of words used between these two speaking communities. Also, they both shown preference for summary lead with who, what and when as elements in their leads and who as the heavily used starting element. Such patterns further explained that American and Philippine Englishes have similarities due to the fact that Filipino writers adhere to the American English norms and standards.

Another contrastive study was undertaken by Tabula and Agbayani (2015) about the syntactic patterns of news headlines written by Filipino and American writers. The study primarily aimed to examine the grammatical patterns and the use of cohesive conjunctions; a contrastive analysis on the use of cohesive conjunctions in long headlines and its cultural practices in writing the news headlines. This study used the Classifications of Clauses by Quirk et al. (1985) to carry out the first objective. In addition, Halliday and Hassan's (1976) model on the categories of cohesive conjunctions was also used as one of the frameworks. The results of the study further revealed that S-V-O pattern was commonly used by both writers which is frequently employed either in simple or multiple sentences. The adversative type of cohesive conjunction was also built in these news headlines. These results manifested that Philippine and American Newspaper headlines have similarities in the use of grammatical structure.

There have been a few contrastive rhetoric studies investigating Thai news discourse. With the aim to equip the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students with the linguistic strategies deployed by headline writers, Vadhanasindhu (2002) explored a contrastive study that sought to provide a descriptive comparison of newspaper editorials in Thai language written by native speakers of Thai (TT), in English language written by both native speakers and non-native speakers of English published in Thailand (ET), and in English written by native speakers of English published in the USA (EA). This single genre of writing involved a triangulation between Thai LI, English LI and English L2 speakers. Tirkkonen-Condit's Model (1985) was utilized in this study to provide the text structures of argumentative texts such as editorials. The results showed that more editorials from EA were published per day with comprehensive subject matter than the editorials from Thailand. Moreover, the Thai texts were more linguistically complicated than English as there are typically more V-units in Thai sentences construction. With the range of purposes and the number of purposes per

editorial, ET editorials were similar to EA than TT. Also, TT editorials cover more diverse types of titles than editorials from ET and EA.

Another research study by Chana and Tangkiengsirisin (2012) examined the differences in discourse structure between English news stories published in Thailand and those published in the United States of America. The study employed the analytical framework of discourse structure proposed by Bell (1991). It was then developed from the notion of news discourse proposed by Van Dijk (1988). The results show that news articles reported by different news agencies were differently presented. The American newspaper presented many more events than the Thai counterparts when reporting the same story. In addition, source attribution and news actor were presented differently by each news agency.

As it can be seen, all of the related researchers have analyzed the language of English newspaper. Some of them are analyzed in the headlines of editorials, news leads, news stories, politics headlines and sports headlines. For this present study, the grammatical structures of news headlines were highlighted.

At this end, previous studies on the grammatical features of news headlines failed to explore the grammatical patterns of news headlines written by the journalists from the three concentric circles of English according to Kachru (1985). Using the concepts of Contrastive Analysis, the researcher hoped to gauge the linguistic similarities and differences in the news headlines written by native and non-native English speaking journalists. Contrastive analysis has been used to analyze countless genres of writing such as business reports, job application letters, and grant proposals to mention a few. News writing genre has become one of the most intriguing research areas on cross-cultural differences in writing. Conducting this present study would somehow delve and determine whether readers would be much guided if they have awareness of the rhetorical differences in news headlines cross-culturally, to extend further their comprehension and become more open-minded with their expectations.

### **3. Research Questions**

3.1 What are the grammatical patterns of online English newspaper headlines used in the United States of America, the Philippines, and Thailand?

3.2 Are there differences in the use of grammatical patterns of online English newspaper headlines between the United States of America, the Philippines, and Thailand?

#### 4. Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were applied in this study. The coded portions of the headlines were counted to determine the most commonly used grammatical structures of English newspapers between and among the native and non-native English speaking countries. On the other hand, contrastive analysis was used to ascertain the parallelism and writing practices of online news headlines between the three concentric circles of World Englishes.

##### 4.1 Materials

In January 2019, a total of 3, 306 headlines were retrieved from the online edition of newspapers of the said countries from their official websites for 31 days of January in the year 2019. These countries were represented by the USA (The Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com>), the Philippines (Philippine Daily Inquirer, <https://www.inquirer.net/>), and Thailand (The Nation, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/>).

##### 4.2 Research Instrument

This research project utilized the headline features by Znamenskaya (2005) and the grammatical framework provided by *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Language* by Biber (1999) and *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1991) to identify analyze the grammatical patterns of online English news headlines from the three speech communities.

With regard to grammar and its structures, there are two basic types of headlines in terms of their structures, the sentential and non-sentential headlines. The first type refers to all headlines that have a regular sentence structure, that is, all headlines with a subject and a finite verb phrase. It has six subcategories which include full declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, declarative sentence, exclamatory sentence, direct speech, and indirect speech. The second type of headline structure is non-sentential. This structure is lower than a regular sentence; it is constructed in an irregular way. It covers noun phrase, initial ellipsis, medial ellipsis, final ellipsis, infinitive clause, -ing clause, and -ed clause.



### 4.3 Analysis of Data

There were 3,306 news headlines considered as samples for this study. There were two kinds of news headlines (sentential and non-sentential), all of these were categorized accordingly. They were coded based on the grammatical structures or patterns used within the headlines, which are, full declarative sentence (FDS) (*Ex. Verizon TV customers suffer blackout of key channels days before NFL playoffs*), Interrogative Sentence (IS) (*Ex. Can Romney chart a course that has eluded other GOP critics of Trump?*), Directive Sentence (DS) (*Ex. Democrats, don't impeach Donald Trump*), Exclamatory Sentence (ES) (*Ex. Help! A cry for Justice!*), Direct Speech (DSp) (*Ex. Palace to Filipinos: Let us continue to be noted this 2019*), Indirect Speech (IDSp) (*Ex. Labor chief says approved pay hike 'too low' for workers to cope*), Noun Phrase (NP) (*Ex. Bloodbath in Jolo*), Initial Ellipsis (IE) (*Ex. Snow increasing into this evening. Expect deteriorating conditions*), Medial Ellipsis (ME) (*Ex. Monk arrested for child abuse*), Final Ellipsis (FE) (*Ex. Duterte open again to talks with Reds, but ...*), Infinitive Clause (IC) (*Ex. To cost more canned meat*), -ing Clause (-ing) (*Ex. Saving their breath*), and -ed Clause (-ed) (*Ex. Arrested Thai man*). Using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index, the data were validated. There were three Language specialists, two native English speakers and one non-native English speaker, who judged the corpora.

Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequency counts were calculated for the grammatical patterns of news headlines. To determine the whether there were significant differences between the groups in these three speaking communities, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized with this purpose. The significant level was set up at  $p < .05$  in this study.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 The Grammatical Patterns Employed in online English newspaper headlines

Table 1 exhibits the frequency occurrences of commonly used grammatical patterns of online new headlines used in the three circles of World Englishes presented by the USA, the Philippines, and Thailand. Within a month of gathering the corpora from the online news publications of The Washington Post, Philippine Daily Inquirer, and The Nation Bangkok, it emerged that there were 3, 306 news events reported. Out of these corpora, it turned out

that Philippine's newspaper outnumbered news headlines from the USA and Thailand's newspaper with 2,207, 719, and 380 news headlines, respectively.

The table further indicates that the three most emerging grammatical structures in the sentential units are Full Declarative Sentence with a summation of 1, 692 headlines, followed by Direct Speech garnering 577 headlines and Indirect Speech with a total of 131 headlines. For the non-sentential units, the three most prevailing grammatical patterns are Medial Ellipsis with a total of frequency of 717, Initial Ellipsis with a total of 11, and -ing Clause with 6 samples. Inversely, Infinitive clause and -ed clause headlines were not found in any newspapers among the three groups of speaking communities.

Overall, the Philippine news headlines practiced almost all types of grammatical patterns as compared to the USA and Thailand news headlines. Of the 13 grammatical patterns, only 2 patterns were not observed in the Philippine online newspaper. The infinitive clause and -ed clause were not evident among the headlines gathered within the time frame. In the case of USA newspaper, 4 grammatical patterns, to wit: Directive sentence, final ellipsis, infinitive clause and -ed clause. Thailand online newspapers did not use five grammatical patterns of headlines which are exclamatory sentence, initial ellipsis, final ellipsis, infinitive clause, and -ed clause.

Table 1 Frequency of Grammatical Patterns in Online English Newspaper Headlines

Online Newspapers	Sentential					Non-Sentential							TOTAL	
	Full Declarative Sentence (FDS)	Interrogative Sentence (IS)	Directive Sentence (DS)	Exclamatory Sentence (ES)	Direct Speech (Dsp)	Indirect Speech (IDSp)	Noun Phrase (NP)	Initial Ellipsis (IE)	Medial Ellipsis (ME)	Final Ellipsis (FE)	Infinitive Clause (IC)	-ing Clause (-ing)		-ed Clause (-ed)
The Washington Post-USA	476	67	0	3	32	44	29	5	62	0	0	1	0	719
Philippine Daily Inquirer- The Philippines	984	24	2	3	533	75	21	6	553	4	0	2	0	2207
The Nation- Thailand	232	3	3	0	12	12	13	0	102	0	0	3	0	380
Total	1692	94	5	6	577	131	63	11	717	4	0	6	0	3306

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of News Headlines in the USA, the Philippines and Thailand

Grammatical Structure Types	USA		Philippines		Thailand	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>Sentential</b>						
FDS	476	66.2	984	44.59	232	61.05
IS	67	9.32	24	1.09	3	0.79
DS	0	0	2	0.09	3	0.79
ES	3	0.42	3	0.13	0	0
DSp	32	4.45	533	24.15	12	3.16
IDSp	44	6.12	75	3.40	12	3.16
Total	622	86.51	1621	73.45	262	68.95
<b>Non-Sentential</b>						
NP	29	4.03	21	0.95	13	3.42
IE	5	0.7	6	0.27	0	0
ME	62	8.62	553	25.06	102	26.84
FE	0	0	4	0.18	0	0
IC	0	0	0	0	0	0
-ing	1	0.14	2	0.09	3	0.79
-ed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	97	13.49	586	26.55	118	31.05
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2207</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of percentage of news headlines in the USA, the Philippines and Thailand. As reflected, headlines in the USA newspaper register 719 corpora, while the Philippines has 2,207, and Thailand has 380.

Of the 719 corpora gathered from the USA's The Washington Post, 622 headlines were identified as sentential while 97 were non-sentential. Among the sentential types, full declarative sentence emerged as the highest with a frequency of 476 or a percentage of 66.2, followed by interrogative sentence with a total of 67 headlines of 9.32%; then, indirect speech with a number of 44 headlines or 6.12% ; next is direct speech which has a proportion of 32 headlines or 4.45%; while exclamatory sentence garnered 3 headlines or .42%; and finally directive sentence having none at all or 0%.

On the other hand, medial ellipsis got the highest proportion in non-sentential units having a frequency of 62 or a percentage of 8.62. This is followed noun phrase with a total of 29 headlines or 4.03%; then by initial ellipsis with a ratio of 5 headlines or 0.7%, next is –ing type with only 1 headline or 0.14% and lastly, by final ellipsis, infinitive clause, and –ed headlines with the same percentage of 0 or having none at all.

Taking a closer look at Table 2, it could be gleaned that there are 2, 207 headlines gathered from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a newspaper representing non-native speakers of English as a Second Language. As indicated, full declarative sentence (FDS) has the greatest number of sentential types of news headlines with a total of 984 or a percentage of 44.59. Direct Speech (DSp) followed with a frequency of 533 or 24.15%. Indirect Speech (IDSp) came out next having a total of 75 headlines or 3.40%. Interrogative sentence (IS), Exclamatory sentence (ES) and directive sentence (DS) respectively earned a frequency of 24, 3 and 2 or a percentage of 1.09, 0.13, and 0.09.

In the case of non-sentential units, medial ellipsis (ME) got the highest frequency having 553 headlines or 25.06%; followed by noun phrase (NP) and initial ellipsis (IE) with a portion of 21 and 6 or a ratio of 0.95 and 0.27, respectively; next is final ellipsis (FE) and –ing clause with frequencies of 4 and 2 or percentages of 0.18 and 0.19, respectively; and finally, infinitive clause and –ed clause similarly earned 0 percentage or none at all.

Revealed further in Table 2 is the frequency and percentage distribution of news headlines in Thailand's The Nation. As disclosed, full declarative sentence (FDS) emerged as the highest with a summation of 232 headlines or 61.05% ; Direct Speech or (DSp) and Indirect Speech (IDSp) got equal numbers of 12 headlines or 3.16%; Interrogative sentence (IS) and Directive sentence (DS) also garnered similar numbers of 3 headlines or 0.79% each; whereas Exclamatory sentence (ES) was zero found, thus no percentage at all. On the other hand, only three non-sentential units were found, the rest were zero. First, middle ellipsis (ME) has the most number with 102 headlines or 28.84% . Second, 13 headlines or 3.42% were found as noun phrase (NP). Third, 3 headlines were classified as –ing clause registering 0.795. Lastly, Final Ellipsis (FE), Infinitive clause (IC) and –ed clause headlines were not visible in Thai online newspaper; thus, 0%.

In conclusion, the sentential news headline that has the greatest number in the three concentric circles of World Englishes represented by the USA, the Philippines, and

Thailand is the Full Declarative Sentence (FDS) whereas the least is the Directive sentence (DS). However, Medial ellipsis (ME) has the highest frequency in non-sentential news headlines, while the least are Infinitive clause (IC) and –ed clause headlines, which are not evident in all newspapers. On the other hand, the non-existence of infinitive clause and –ed clause headlines in all newspapers implies that these grammatical structures are not interesting, eye-catching, and relevant to the readers within the three speaking communities.

## 5.2 Differences of Grammatical Patterns in Headlines

Table 3 Differences of grammatical patterns in headlines

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
<b>Sentential</b>					
Between Groups	165249.000	2	82624.500	1.200	.329
Within Groups	1032861.500	15	68857.433		
TOTAL	1198110.500	17			
<b>Non-Sentential</b>					
Between Groups	21837.429	2	10918.714	.730	.496
Within Groups	269209.143	18	14956.063		
TOTAL	291046.571	20			

Statistically, the results yielded no significant differences on the grammatical patterns of news headlines for both sentential and non-sentential units at the significant level at  $p > 0.05$ . This implies that the three countries practice or utilize similar grammatical patterns in writing news headlines. This means that the most frequently used patterns in writing news headlines in an L1 speaking country also prevails in ESL and EFL speaking countries.

## 5.3 Salient features of online news headlines in the USA, the Philippines, and Thailand

### 5.3.1 The Use of Full Declarative Sentence (FDS) in news headlines

While the three countries utilized a uniform grammatical pattern, it was found that the USA news headlines made use of a full declarative sentence with an independent clause and full declarative sentence with multiple clauses as opposed to Philippine and Thai news headlines which used shorter full declarative sentence only. The following headlines illustrate the differences:

#### **USA's FDS with multiple clauses**

*Pelosi seeks a return to normalcy, **but** an unpredictable president may not comply*

*Maryland gerrymandering commission meets **as** case goes to Supreme Court*

*Georgetown drops ball late **and** St .John's capitalizes to extend its rebound season*

*An ex-prime minister tries to offend Trump, **but** embarrasses Canadians instead*

It could be noticed that in the Full Declarative Sentence grammatical pattern news headlines, they have a common denominator which means that they consist of only one independent clause with series of noun phrases. These noun phrases placed after the simple subject and the simple predicate or verb make the FDS headline lengthy. On the other hand, Full Declarative Sentence with multiple clauses grammatical pattern of news headlines could form two independent clauses.

Meanwhile, the Philippine news headlines, however, consistently used full declarative sentence with only one independent clause which is either lengthy or short. This makes it distinct or different from the USA news headlines. Unlike USA's full declarative grammar pattern that has two classifications, which are FDS with an independent clause and FDS with multiple clauses, Philippine news headlines maintain simple full declarative sentence with an independent clause.

#### **PH's FDS with one independent clause**

*Robredo calls for stricter measures against landslides*

*Cops find lumpia wrappers in abandoned box in QC*

*Fire guts warehouse in Ilocos Sur on New Year's Day*

*Duterte belittles senatorial ‘survey front-runners’*

*Fire hits National Children’s Hospital in Quezon City*

Finally, Thailand news headlines resembled with the Philippine headlines which made use of full declarative sentence grammatical pattern with only one independent clause. Similarly, Thai news headlines followed an FDS which is either short or lengthy with noun phrases found at the simple subject or placed after the main verb.

### **TH’s FDS with one independent clause**

*Driving and speeding top road toll of 2,761 accidents in five days*

*Thais turn out to offer alms to monks as 2019 begins*

*Airports return to normal after storm cancellations*

*Severe weather warning as Pabuk leaves trail of damage*

*His Majesty sends wreath to teacher slain in Songkhla*

### **5.3.2 Punctuation marks in Direct Speech Headlines**

The use of punctuation marks in Direct Speech headlines varies across countries and cultures. The Washington Post of USA made use of a colon (:) before the quoted speech. Then, enclosed the direct speech with single quotation marks (‘’). The following headlines illustrate the writing style of the American headline writers:

*Chicago's forgotten gun violence victims :‘We’ve normalized hopelessness’*

*Sen .Graham :‘If Trump gives in on the shutdown, it’s probably the end of his presidency’*

*Trump‘ :‘We have a crisis at the border’*

*Trump on border wall funding :‘I may declare a national emergency’*

*British lawmaker :‘I do object to being called a Nazi’*

The Philippine newspaper, The Philippine Daily Inquirer, followed different styles pertaining to the writing of Direct Speech headlines. It utilized two styles. It was observed that the first style is a modification of the USA style of writing wherein the colon (:) appeared after the source of the statement, and then followed by the direct speech



without the enclosure of quotation marks. The following headlines exemplify the style of headline writers in the Philippine online newspapers as discussed above:

*Duque :No total firecrackers ban without alternative livelihood*  
*Palace to Filipinos :Let us continue to be united this 2019*  
*NCRPO :No stray bullet casualty in Metro Manila during the New Year revelry*  
*Palace :Duterte won't apologize over maid molestation story*  
*Andaya :Contractors are being used as fronts for Aremar*

Noticeably, the second style was written in a manner of stating the direct speech with no quotation and then a dash. To illustrate this style of headline writing among Filipino news writers, the following headlines are herein presented:

*Duterte orders probe on killing of ex-lawmaker's aide —Palace*  
*UK travel advisory for Mindanao is SOP —PNP*  
*Evidence vs Aremar has reached plunder point – Andaya*  
*Duterte denies tapping Andal to lead backchannel peace talks –Lorenzana*  
*Human rights crisis in Philippines intensified amid drug war –HRW*

Thailand's newspaper, The Nation, also utilized a unique writing style of the Direct Speech headline through stating the statement followed by a colon (:), then the source of the direct speech. This writing style slightly resembles with the Philippine Daily Inquirer. The only difference is the use of mechanics wherein the dash (-) is replaced with a colon (:).

Further, this style is reversal of the first of writing style of the Philippine Daily Inquirer wherein the source and the direct speech were interchanged and the colon (:) is placed at the middle of the two entities. Shown below are examples of news headlines from Thailand using direct speech as grammatical pattern.

*Coronation Committee to be formed :PM*  
*Saudi asylum-seeker held at Bangkok airport :Thai immigration chief*

*Thailand will not forcibly deport Saudi woman :immigration chief*

*Monopoly of medical cannabis not in public interest :Experts*

*Thai political development on table at Asean-EU meeting: Source*

In summary, these distinct features of news headlines from the three countries make them different from one another. Though in general they follow the same conventions in writing, they display unique characteristics when analyzed deeply. This means that headlines are written purposively; and it could be dependent on the headline writers' consideration to the interests and needs of their readers.

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

This research aimed to explore the grammatical patterns of online news headlines written by native and non-native English speaking countries. Specifically, this study examined the types of grammatical patterns found in online English newspaper headlines of native and non-native English speaking communities. The research problems probed the grammatical patterns of online English newspaper headlines used in the United States of America, the Philippines and Thailand; and the differences in the use of grammatical patterns of online English newspaper headlines among the United States of America, the Philippines and Thailand. A total of 3,306 headlines were collected from the online edition of newspapers of the USA's Washington Post, the Philippine's Philippine Daily Inquirer, and Thailand's The Nation. To analyze the grammatical features of the headlines, the headline features by Znamenskaya (2005), the grammatical framework provided by Biber (1999), and *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1991) were incorporated to identify and analyze the grammatical patterns of online English news headlines from the three speech communities.

Results reveal that the most common grammatical pattern of online English newspaper headlines used in the United States of America, the Philippines, and Thailand is on the Full Declarative Sentence (FDS). The high number of full declarative sentence in news headlines indicates that USA, Philippines and Thailand observe the conventional sentential units in writing headlines to inform and persuade the readers. This means that full declarative sentences are the most common grammatical structure of news headlines for

the readers within the three linguistic and cultural communities. As Lee (2012) concludes in his study on the similarities and differences of American and Korean political news headlines, the readers' interest and the conventions practiced within the relevant linguistic and cultural communities are necessary attributes to be considered in writing news headlines.

Furthermore, the prevalence of Full Declarative Sentence in the USA, the Philippines and Thailand could be attributed to the characteristics and/or objectives of headlines identified by Ungerer (2000) that a good headline must describe concisely the news story, inform quickly and accurately the readers, and arouse advertently their curiosity. In the same vein, Ludwig (2005) insinuated that the best headlines operationally tell and sell news items or stories. They serve as navigators of knowledge (Shostak & Gillespie, 2014) and relevance optimizers (Dor, 2003). On the other hand, Medial Ellipsis came out as the most common grammatical pattern of non-sentential headlines because it is the usual practice of headline writers to omit some operators (Biber et al., 1999, p.443), and one of the typical peculiarities in headline writing (Metcalf, 2013; Mardh, 1980).

However, there was no significant difference among the grammatical structures of news headlines in the USA, the Philippines and Thailand. This implies that the three countries from the inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle practice or utilize similar grammatical patterns in writing news headlines. This means that the most frequently used patterns in writing news headlines in an L1 speaking country also prevails in ESL and EFL speaking countries. Similarly, the least frequently used grammatical patterns of news headlines in the inner circle of World Englishes holds true in the outer and expanding circles.

When closely look into some salient characteristics in each newspaper, the length of Full Declarative Sentence and the use of multiple sentential units in USA news headlines could be due to Crystal's (2003) tenet of news headline that it must be a statement or a sentence whose primary purpose is to convey information. In other words, it is the declarative headline that is frequently used because it functions to declare or make something known (Crystal, 2003: 218).

As there were variability and utilization of multiple types of grammatical patterns in Philippine news headlines, this could be attributed to the multiculturalism and multilingualism brought by colonialism in the Philippines. This finding seems to support the

claim of Tabula and Agbayani (2015) on the syntactic patterns of news headlines in American and Philippine newspapers that variability in the structure of Philippine headlines could be due to pluralism in race, culture and language, which are influences of colonialism. On the other hand, the preference of US headlines for lesser grammatical patterns seems to support Lonner, Berry and Hofstede's (1980) claim that the US has valued an individualist or universalist culture. In the case of Thailand, a sole southeast Asian country that was never formally colonized by the west empire (Chaochuti, 2009), had least grammatical patterns because of the absence of colonialism or imperialism of English native speakers in its history. In addition, it could be assumed that Thai writers use the influence of their first language and culture interfering when writing in the English language. The interference of Thai linguistic elements in their writing arouse on the grammatical structures of their news headlines. Nevertheless, the marked use of Medial Ellipsis in Thailand news headlines is distinctively characterized by the omission of the operator (Biber et al., 1999, p.442).

The use of mechanics in Direct Speech headline varies across countries and cultures. Each country in the three concentric circles of World English practices unique style in writing news headline such as the case of Direct Speech, one of the grammatical patterns of headlines identified. The USA used colon to show the source and single quotation marks to figure out the statement. The Philippines followed two styles of writing, which are the utilization of a colon after the source to emphasize the statement, and the usage of a dash before the source preceding the statement. Thailand made use of a colon before the source preceding the statement. According to Metcalf (2013) and Mardh (1980), journalists observe some usual peculiarities and special rules of headlines grammar to make the headlines more attractive and to intrigue people to read the article as well as for limited space in the newspapers. Knowledge on the special grammatical features of news headlines can facilitate easy understanding and interpretation of the news article (Metcalf, 2013; Mardh, 1980).

Qualitatively speaking, the data generated some distinctive grammatical patterns used by the news headline writers from the three speaking countries are slightly varied from other Englishes. This variety of English usage is the product of nativization. This happens when different people and different groups of people used a certain language (Kachru, 1992). In other words, people tend to use the language to serve their own needs in communication in their own cultural milieus. Thus, American English, Philippine English and

Thai English are used in their respective contexts that have their own characteristics in accordance with their language and style of writing news headlines.

### **Practical and Pedagogical Implications**

The results of the study impacts that each concentric circle in the World Englishes has its own linguistic conventions and exhibits significant social norms. Clearly, the findings reverberate the linguistic tenet that language is a rule-governed behavior and language learning requires application of the rules that are considered to be standards in a particular linguistic community. The fact that there are universal linguistic rules, it is also daunting to consider that they may not be necessarily applicable within their sociolinguistic boundaries. Thus, variations of the most commonly used grammatical structures found in each concentric circles represented by the United States, the Philippines, and Thailand are clear indications that each circle represents practices certain linguistic rules and social norms. Further, that these are based on what are socially and culturally acceptable trends of writing and readership considerations.

The results of this study on online newspaper headlines in three groups of English speaking communities namely English as a Native Language, English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language have also significant implications for academic instruction. It can guide non-native English language educators in recognizing the linguistic similarities and differences of news headlines in order to scaffold non-native English language learners toward better linguistic knowledge of news headlines. When non-native English language teachers would have relevant contrastive information, they would know the real constraints of students in learning news headlines and other journalistic texts. Thus, better instruction would occur.

The findings of this study will also insinuate that newspapers online are good instructional materials that can be utilized in teaching linguistics, academic writing, journalism, grammar and technical writing. The authentic language represented in the news headlines can serve as models for L2 writers and learners.

### Limitations of the study

As this study attempted to uncover the grammatical patterns of online news headlines represented by the USA, the Philippines, and Thailand, it did not fully capture the exact scenario of all the countries belonging to each of the three concentric circles of Englishes due to the following limitations:

1. The use of purposive sampling in selecting the number of countries to represent the three concentric circles of Englishes could not generalize the most common grammatical pattern of news headlines prevailing in each circle.
2. The number of newspaper to represent each country is inadequate.
3. The length of time in gathering the corpora could be too limited to fully capture the most commonly used grammatical patterns of news headlines in each country.
4. The differences between and among the types of grammatical patterns had not been fully examined statistically.

### Recommendations

Since online newspaper are the most readily available sources of news and other information, language teachers should utilize news headlines as instructional materials in teaching grammar, journalism, and other English-related subjects such as English Error analysis, technical writing, developmental reading, paragraph writing, among others. With the features revealed in the study, online news headlines may serve as a good springboard for Language educators especially in the development of the language learner's creativity. As a result, learners would have better qualities for effective English language communication equipped with accuracy and fluency of the message. Furthermore, a qualitative study should be undertaken by comparing the headlines of the same news among and between and countries in each concentric circle. More statistical analysis or tests should be employed to examine the differences among the grammatical subcategories of newspaper headlines.

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