

## Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Structures Spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the Election Night Speeches

**Aries Rahmat Anggoro**

English Education Study Program, Department of language and Art  
University of Bengkulu

[ariesrahmatanggoro@gmail.com](mailto:ariesrahmatanggoro@gmail.com)

**Mukhrizal**

English Education Study Program, Department of language and Art  
University of Bengkulu

[mukhrizal58@gmail.com](mailto:mukhrizal58@gmail.com)

**Sufiyandi**

English Education Study Program, Department of language and Art  
University of Bengkulu

[sufiyandi@unib.ac.id](mailto:sufiyandi@unib.ac.id)

**Corresponding author:** [ariesrahmatanggoro@gmail.com](mailto:ariesrahmatanggoro@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the types of sentence structures spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speech in the year of 2020. The design of this research was qualitative and quantitative research. The total of 101 sentences of both Joe Biden and Donald Trump were analyzed by using syntactical structure analysis. The instruments of this research were documentation and checklist tables. The data were analyzed by using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's theory, and Carnie's theory was used for the rules in portraying the tree diagram. The results of the study showed that all types of sentence structures appeared in both speeches. In Joe Biden's speech, there were 40% simple sentence structures, 26.7% complex sentence structures, 16.7% compound sentence structures, and 16.7% compound complex sentence structures. In Donald Trump's speech, there were 59.2% simple sentence structures, 19.7% complex sentence structures, 15.4% compound sentence structures, and 5.6% compound complex sentence structures. In other words, the simple sentence structures appeared the most dominant in both Donald Trump and Joe Biden speeches. It is recommended that other researchers should study the sentence structures of other American presidents (e.g. Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barrack Obama) in order to expand the descriptions of sentence structures of the US presidents in general.

**Keywords:** Syntax, Sentence Structures, Tree Diagram.

### Introduction

Language is a system that cannot be felt by senses with function to connect thoughts. Delahunty & Garvey (2010) defines that language is a system that links thoughts which cannot be heard, seen, or touched, but by using sound letters, manual signs, or tactile form (e.g Braille) that enable thoughts to be conveyed. Language is private thoughts that are conveyed by public expression which is

systematically linked with a code (Delahunty & Garvey, 2010). Thoughts can be delivered by people using a language in the certain form.

A language is produced in the form of oral, written, and tactile form for delivering thoughts to the other people. Therefore, a language requires some components such as words, phrases, and clauses that are constructed to express ideas. Words, Phrases, and clauses can be constructed by human beings by using devices that speakers have (Miller, 2000). The combination of the components is so called as sentence.

Sentence is defined as a group of words that has a meaning. A linguistic unit that can be used as an independent utterance is known as sentence (Declerk, 2006). A complete sentence has at least a subject and a main verb to declare a complete thought. Sentence is combined by rules which are constructed by some units (Kaefiyah, 2015). Sentence can be expressed through spoken or written form. Therefore, there is a set of rules in a sentence arrangement. In linguistics, the rules for constructing sentence are called syntax.

Syntax is a part of grammar in which how words and phrases are arranged to create well-formed sentence. Syntax can be defined as a study of the sentence structure that concerns with the part of grammar (Aarts, 2001). The phrases, clauses, and sentences are included in the study of syntax. A subject, predicate, object, information and complementary, are categorized into syntactic function (Wulandari, 2015). Moreover, syntax can also help to compile message through sentences. According to Miller (2002), syntax enables human beings to compose the complex messages.

The complex messages can be expressed to people in order to make interpretations of what someone means. The meaning of sentences can be expressed in oral form, for example, a speech that intends to convey a certain meaning through spoken sentences. Wulandari (2015) claims that syntactic grammar can also be defined that discusses the relationship between words in the speech.

A speech is one of the ways to express thoughts which are aimed to the audiences. A speech requires the components combined in the form of sentences with a meaning that will be expressed. However, there are some of sentences that cause different interpretations for the audiences who hear the spoken sentences in

the speech. The misunderstanding is led by the structure of sentences that are not formed well. This enables the meaning of sentences will not be conveyed well to audiences. This phenomenon also happens in studying English. Some English students get difficulties when they try to find out the structure of sentences in any other spoken or written sources for example in the speech. The learners have problems to determine the lexical items based on the category so that some information of the speech cannot be comprehended well by the students. Therefore, syntax helps to figure out the sentence structures and ambiguous sentences that can create multi interpretations in the speech.

Moreover, a speech is held for delivering ideas in certain situations for example, speeches by American presidential candidates. The election night speech is one of the speeches spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump. The speech can influence other people. The election night speech is one of the spectacular moments in presidential election because the candidates give a speech, and hope for winning the election. Motivational sentences are presented by the candidates in the speech. The effects of the speech for the audiences are to be more optimistic and convince audiences especially to the supporters that each one of them can win the election. This enables types of sentence structures used in the speech with functions to deliver thoughts, messages, feelings, and information. Sentences types possibly appear in the speeches such as simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. These types of sentence have different structures. Simple sentence does not require more components whereas compound, complex, compound, and complex sentences have more components constructed. It is because the number of clauses that differentiate it. Sentence structure in the speech must be formed well in order the meaning can be received well. Therefore, the sentence structures used in the speeches are varied to analyzed.

The transcripts of Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speeches are analyzed in this research. The sentences of the text speeches are analyzed syntactically to get the information needed by the researchers. So, the research focuses on the sentence structures used, and the most dominant of sentences structures used in the speeches.

Some previous studies have been conducted on syntactical analysis to find out structure of sentences. The first study conducted by Ma'rif & Pramudiyawardhani (2017) focused on simple declarative sentence used in the song lyrics of One Direction's Album *Made in the A.M.* The findings showed that there were 82 simple declarative sentences in the song. There were 19 sentence structures that frequently appear with formulation  $S \rightarrow NP + VP$  in which  $VP \rightarrow V + NP$ . The second study was done by Kaefiyah (2015). She investigated the sentences types appearing in animated educational television program "Go Diego Go" Eps. *The Arctic Rescue*. The results showed that there were 294 simple sentences, 28 complex sentences, 13 compound sentences, and 1 compound-complex sentence. Furthermore, their syntactic properties showed that there were 219 declarative sentences, 64 interrogative sentences, 50 imperative sentences, and 3 exlamative sentences. The third study was undertaken by Purnomoadjie and Mulyadi (2019) discussing sentence structures used in the lyrics of Two Adeles's Songs. The results revealed that there were nonstandard English words in the song lyrics such as, ain't, you'd, I'll, you're, didn't, couldn't, isn't. The researcher also found sixty forms of the structure of lyrics of the two Adele's songs. The Fourth study was done by Slamet and Sulistyaningsih (2019) investigating the structures of simple sentences in Joko Widodo's speech. The findings show that there were 18 types of simple sentence structures in the Jokowi's speech text. In brief, the previous studies have been conducted to find out sentence structures in the song lyrics, speech, and even in animated educational television program. It shows that sentence structures of the spoken or written form can be analyzed syntactically from the various sources.

The researchers analyzed the sentence structures by using syntactical analysis with the different objects. The election night speeches by Joe Biden and Donald Trump were analyzed in this research. Thus, the researchers has conducted research entitled "A Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Structures Spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in The Election Night Speeches in The Year of 2020." The following were questions of the research: (1) What are the sentence structures spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speech? (2) What are the most dominant sentence structures spoken by them in the speech?. Thus, the purposes of this research are to investigate the sentence structures and the most dominant

sentences structures spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speech in the year of 2020.

### **Research Methodology**

The design of this study was a qualitative and quantitative research. The data were analyzed qualitatively and the results were presented in the form of descriptions. Qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative data to obtain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2012). In addition, Cresswell (2012) mentioned that the quantitative data are using statistical analysis (mathematical analysis) or the data are presented in the numeric form. Thus, this research used both qualitative and quantitative to answer the research questions that have been formulated by the researcher.

The election night speech by Joe Biden and Donald Trump was the object of this research. The speech was held in Wilmington, Delaware, on November 4, 2020. So, the transcripts of the election night speech by Joe Biden and Donald Trump were analyzed in this research. The researchers used documentation as source of data. The transcripts of Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speech were the data sources. The instruments of this research were documentation and checklist tables. The data were analyzed by using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's theory, and Carnie's theory was used for the rules in portraying the tree diagram. The following were steps to analyzed the data: (1) Identifying and selecting the sentences based on the number of clauses to determine the sentences were in simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentence, and compound complex sentences. (2) Describing the data. The data were presented in the form of descriptions and percentages. The sentence structures were portrayed by using tree diagram based on Carnie's theory. (3) The researchers took the conclusions based on the data which were obtained from the previous steps.

There was formula used to find out the most dominant sentence structures in the speech. The data were analyzed by using Sudijono (2009). The formula used as below:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P= The percentage

f = The frequency of sentence structures

N= The total number of sentence structures

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

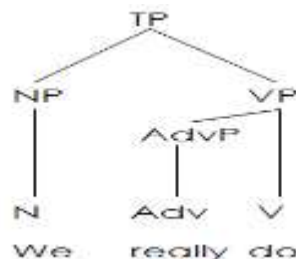
#### Sentence Structures of Joe Biden and Donald Trump's Speech

The transcripts of Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the election night speech were analyzed syntactically by using tree diagram proposed by Carnie. The findings showed that there were thirty sentence structures found in Joe Biden's speech and there were seventy one sentence structures found in Donald Trump's speech. The researchers found the structure of simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences in both speeches.

#### Sentence Structures of Joe Biden

The following are examples of the sentences in Joe Biden's Speech that are analyzed syntactically by the researchers:

##### a. Simple sentence



The tree diagram above shows that we is categorized as noun, *really* is categorized as adverb, and *do* is categorized as verb. So, the sentence structure is:

TP → NP + VP

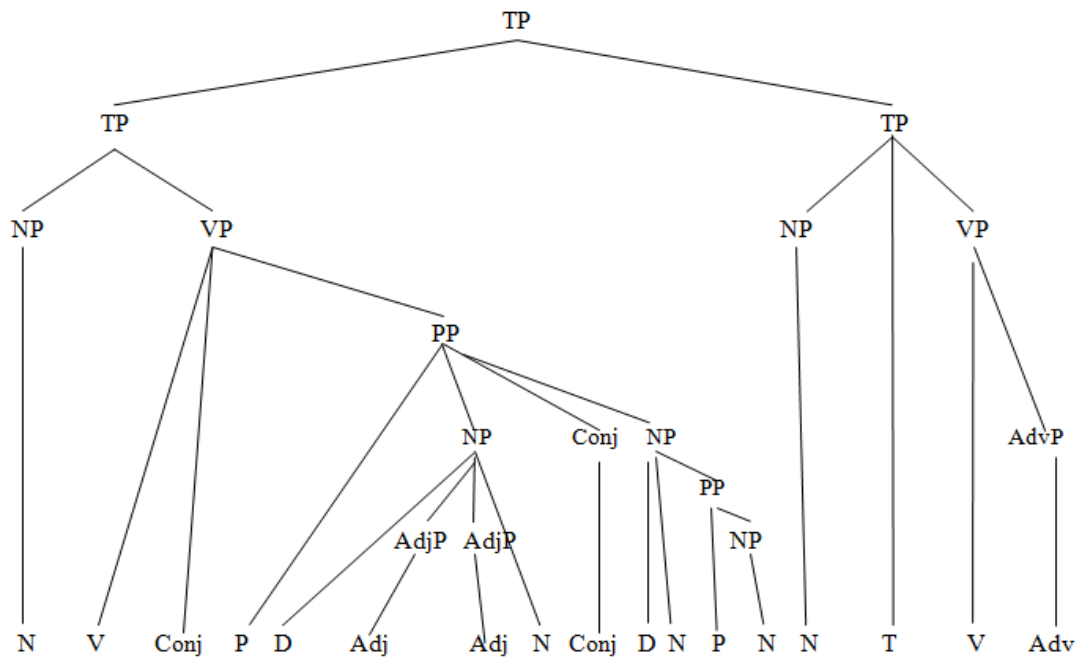
NP → N

VP → AdvP + V

AdvP → Adv

TP → N + Adv + V

**b. Compound sentence**

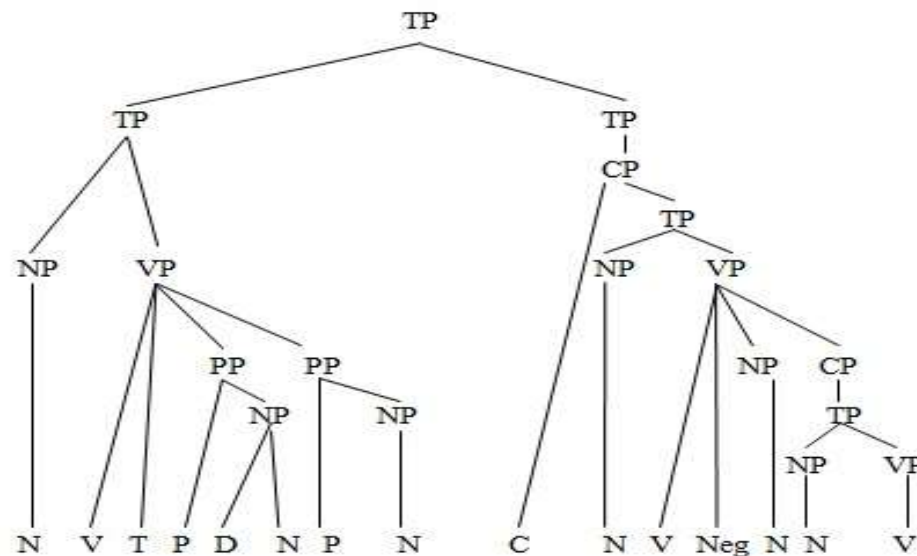


We knew because of the unprecedented early vote and the mail in vote, it was going to take a while

The diagram shows that we is categorized as noun, knew is categorized as verb, because is categorized as conjunction, of is categorized as preposition, the is categorized as a determiner, unprecedented early is adjectives that modify vote. and is a coordinate conjunction which connects the sentence " it was going to take a while". So, The sentence structure is:

- TP → TP + TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + PP
- PP → P + AdjP + AdjP + N + Conj + NP
- AdjP → Adj
- AdjP → Adj
- NP → D + N + PP
  
- PP → P + NP
- NP → N
- TP → NP + T + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + AdvP
- Adv → Adv
- TP → N + V + Conj + P + Adj + adj + N + Conj + D + N + P +  
N + N + T + V + Adv

**c. Complex sentence**



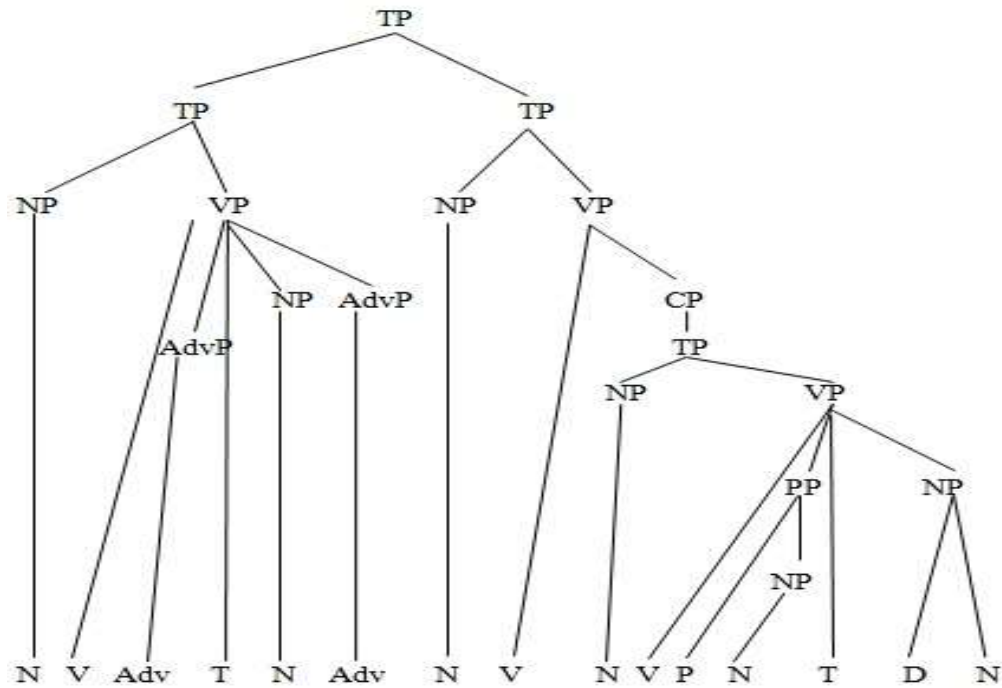
We 're still in the game in Georgia, although that 's not one we expected

The tree diagram shows that there is a subordinate conjunction which connects the clauses. It is indicated with the word *although*, so the sentence is included into complex sentence. There is another CP in the sentence even though there is no complementizer *that*. So, the structure of the sentence is:

- TP → TP + TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + T + PP + PP
- PP → P + NP
- NP → D + N
- PP → P + NP
- NP → N
- TP → CP
- CP → C + TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + Neg + NP + CP
- NP → N
- CP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V
- TP → N + V + T + P + D + N + P + N + C + N + V + Neg + N + N + V



**d. Compound complex sentence**



I am here to tell you tonight, we believe we're on track to win this election

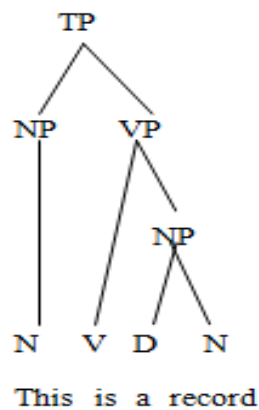
The tree diagram shows that *I* is categorized as noun, *am* is a verb, *here* is an adverb, *to tell* is categorized as infinitive, *you* is a noun and, *tonight* is an adverb. The clause *we believe we're on track to win this election* shows that the clause have a CP in it even though there is no complementizer *that*. *We* is categorized as noun, *believe* is categorized as a verb, *'re(are)* is a verb, *on* is a preposition, *track* is a noun, *to win* is categorized as infinitive, *this* is determiner, and *election* is noun. So, the structure of the sentence is:

- TP → TP + TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + AdvP + T + NP + AdvP
- AdvP → Adv
- NP → N
- AdvP → Adv
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + CP
- CP → TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + PP + NP
- PP → P + NP

### Sentence Structures of Donald Trump Speeches

The following are examples of the sentences in Donald Trump's Speech that are analyzed syntactically by the researchers:

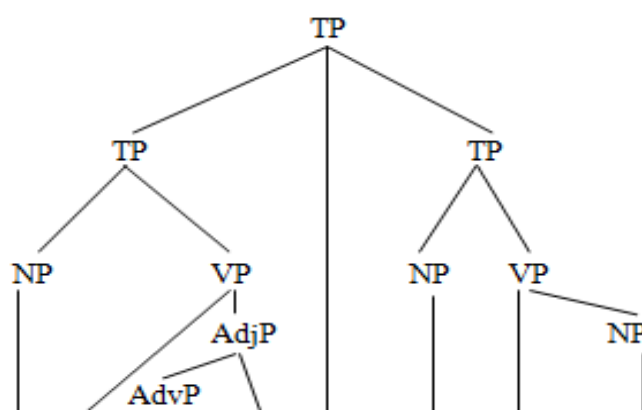
#### a. Simple sentence



The tree diagram shows that *this* is categorized as a noun, *is* is categorized as the verb, *a* is categorized as a determiner, and *record* is a noun. Thus, the sentence structure of the tree diagram is:

- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + NP
- NP → D + N
- TP → N + V + D + N

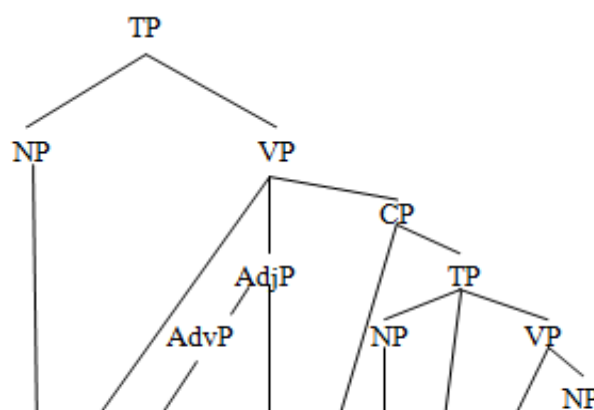
#### b. Compound sentence



The tree diagram shows that there is conjunction *but* which merges the two independent clauses. The first clause *it was almost complete* is started by *it* as a noun, *was* is the verb, *almost* is an adverb that modifies the adjective *complete*. The second clause *he congratulated me* is started by *he* as a noun, *congratulated* is the verb, and *me* is categorized as noun. So, the sentence structure of the tree diagram above is:

- TP → TP + Conj + TP
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + AdjP
- AdjP → AdvP + Adj
- AdvP → Adv
- TP → NP + VP
- NP → N
- VP → V + NP
- NP → N
- TP → N + V + Adv + Adj + Conj + N + V + N

**c. Complex sentence**



The tree diagram shows that there is complementizer phrases which can be indicated with a subordinate conjunction *that*. The conjunction connects the sentence *It's also clear and we have won Georgia*. The tree diagram breaks down the lexical items based on its category. *It* is categorized as noun, *'s* or *is* is categorized as a verb, *also* is an adverb, *clear* is an adjective. *We* is a noun, *have* is categorized as an auxiliary, *won* is the verb, and *Georgia* is a noun. So, the sentence structure is:

TP → NP + VP

NP → N

VP → V + AdjP + CP

AdjP → AdvP + Adj

AdvP → Adv

CP → C + TP

TP → NP + T + VP

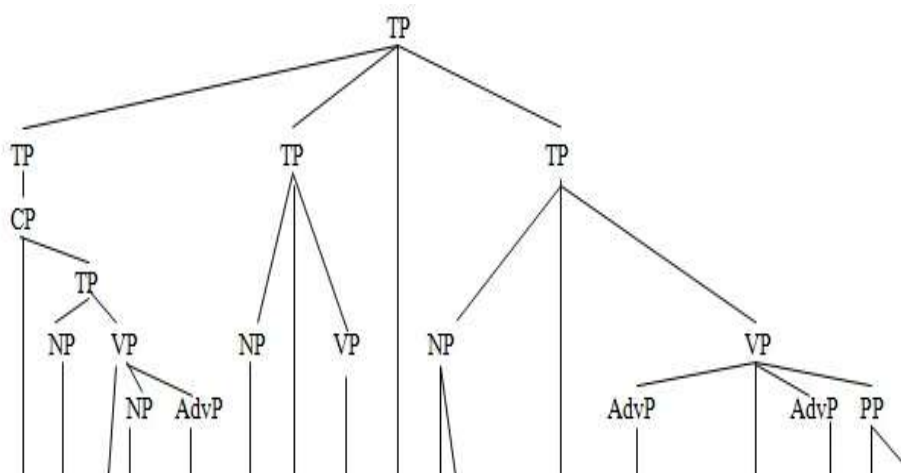
NP → N

VP → V + NP

NP → N

TP → N + V + Adv + Adj + C + N + T + V + N

**d. Compound complex sentence**



The tree diagram shows that the sentence is started with subordinate conjunction *since* which is included into complementizer phrase. Also, There are two independent clauses which are connected by coordinate conjunction *and*. So, the sentence structure is:

TP → TP + TP + Conj + TP

TP → CP

CP → C + TP

TP → NP + VP

NP → N

VP → V + NP + AdvP

NP → N

AdvP → Adv

TP → NP + T + VP

NP → N

VP → V

TP → NP + T + VP

NP → D + N

VP → AdvP + V + AdvP + PP

AdvP → Adv

PP → P + NP

NP → AdjP + PP

AdjP → Adj

PP → P + NP

NP → N

TP → C + N + V + N + Adv + N + T + V + Conj + D + N + T + Adv + V + Adv + P +

**The Most Dominant Sentence Structures Spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in The Speech**

The researchers had obtained the sentence structures of both speeches by Joe Biden and Donald Trump. All types of sentence structures appeared in the speeches. The researchers also analyzed the most dominant sentence structure used in the speeches by Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

**Table 1: The most dominant sentence structure used in Joe Biden’s speech**

NO	Joe Biden Speech		
	Sentence structures	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Simple	12	40%
2.	Compound	5	16.7%
3.	Complex	8	26.7%
4.	Compound Complex	5	16.7%
TOTAL		30	100%

The table shows the most dominant sentence structure used in Joe Biden's speech. The most dominant sentence structure used is simple sentence which appears 12 times with the percentage of 40%, the second are the structures of complex sentences which appear 8 times with the percentage of 26.7%, and the third are compound sentence and compound complex sentence which has the same percentage 16.7%.

**Table 2: The most dominant sentence structure used in Donald Trump’s speech**

NO	Donald Trump's Speech		
	Sentence structures	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Simple	42	59.2%
2.	Compound	11	15.4%

3.	Complex	14	19.7%
4.	Compound Complex	4	5.6%
TOTAL		71	100%

Table 2 shows the most dominant sentence structures used in Donald Trump's speech. The most dominant sentence structure used in the speech is simple sentence which appears 42 times with the percentage of 59.2%, the second is followed by the structure of complex sentence which appears 14 times with the percentage of 19.7%, the third position is compound sentence which appears 11 times with the percentage of 15.4%, and the least is compound complex sentence which only appears 4 times with the percentage of 5.6%.

### Discussion

The findings showed that all types of sentence structures appeared in the speeches by Joe Biden and Donald Trump. There were 30 sentence structures spoken by Joe Biden and there were 71 sentence structures spoken by Donald Trump. It shows that Donald Trump has a longer speech probably as the incumbent president he has many issues to talk about. However, it does not mean that Donald Trump speech is better than Joe Biden speech because a good speech is not only seen from the sentence structures used but what the effects of the speech that the audiences receive. A good speech is a speech that can give a positive impression to the people who listen to the speech (Alfari, 2021).

Moreover, both speeches consist of all types of sentence structures. The first are structures of simple sentences. The structures of simple sentences appeared because the speakers stated the direct statements in the speeches. According to Andersen (2014), the function of simple sentence is to declare a direct statement. Moreover, the simple sentence structures can be understood easily by the audiences. Jegede (2020) stated that the simple sentence is to make the speech clear understandable and simple to the audience.

The second are structures of compound sentences. The compound sentences structures appeared because Joe Biden and Donald Trump conveyed more than one idea within a sentence. This is accordance with Jegede (2020), the compound sentences can help the speaker to state two or three ideas in a sentence so that the speech can be concise.

The third structures are the structures of complex sentences. The purpose of using the complex sentence is to incorporate and compare ideas. Andersen (2014) stated that the functions of complex sentences are to combine and contrast ideas. Moreover, the structures can be recognized because there were subordinate clauses in the sentences. The subordinate clauses can be identified because it is indicated by subordinate conjunctions such as (that, for, if). It is symbolized by CP which stands for complementizer phrase (Carnie, 2013). However, sometimes the complementizer (that, for, if) does not appear in the sentences but the sentences still have a CP. It is because the embedded clause takes place as the direct object (Carnie, 2013).

Last, the structures of compound complex sentences appeared in both speeches. This can be said as the combination of compound and complex sentence. Joe Biden and Donald Trump used the compound complex structures to deliver cause and impact or chain of occasions in the speeches. Andersen (2014) stated that the purpose of using compound complex sentence is to convey cause and effect or chain of events.

Moreover, the most dominant sentence structures found in both speeches were the structures of simple sentences. There were simple sentence structures spoken by Joe Biden which appeared 12 times and 42 times simple sentence structures appeared in Donald Trump's speech. It shows that the most dominant sentence structures of both speeches are simple sentence structures. The speaker's purpose is to make the speech easy to comprehend because of the succinct sentence that is used. According to Shrandama & Ajayi (2019), the simple sentences are concise and free of pointless words so that the audiences can easily understand the speech. Also, the simple sentences structures are more inspiring and practical to be used in the speeches. The using of simple sentence structures in the speech tend to be inspiring and plain sentences can help to get support and trust from the commons (Rong, 2021). This is because the sentence consists of simple structures, and the pattern of the simple sentence structures only consist at least NP, VP which also can be followed by AdvP or AdjP.

The structures of compound sentence appeared 5 times in Joe Biden's speech, and 11 times appeared in Donald Trump's speech. It is indicated by the use of coordinate conjunctions in the sentences. The structures appeared with pattern



NP + VP + Conj + NP + VP. It means, there are two independent clauses connected by coordinate conjunctions.

The structures of complex sentences appeared in both speeches. There were 8 structures of complex sentences spoken by Joe Biden, and there were 14 complex sentence structures spoken by Donald Trump. The structures of complex sentences are identified with CP. The complex sentence pattern is NP + VP which NP or VP consists of CP. It can be categorized as complex sentence structures.

The last are compound complex structures. There were 5 compound complex structures found in Joe Biden and 4 structures were used by Donald Trump. These structures became the less appeared in Joe Biden and Donald Trump Speech. The combination of two types of sentence structures which make it more complicated. The sentence structures are indicated by the pattern NP + VP + Conj + NP + VP which one of the clause must have a CP. In other hand, it consists of at least two independent clauses and a CP. The findings are in Line with Kaefiyah (2016) who found the most dominant sentence structures are simple sentences.

In addition, the variation of sentence structures showing the language ability. According to Putrayasa *et al*, (2018), the high level of language ability influences the variation of sentence structures used in delivering ideas. Based on the findings above, it can be related to the English language teaching that sentence structures should to be taught to improve the language ability for English students especially in simple sentence structures. This is because the simple sentences are easy to be used and understood. Meanwhile, the other sentence structures such as compound, complex, and compound complex sentence also have to be taught so that the usage of sentence structures of English students will be varied and it increase students' language ability.

## **Conclusion and Suggestion**

### **Conclusion**

It can be inferred that the sentence structures spoken by Joe Biden and Donald Trump consist of all types of sentence structures. There are the structures of simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound complex sentences.

Moreover, the most dominant sentence structures found in Joe Biden's speech are 40% simple sentences and the most dominant sentence structures found in Donald Trump's speech are 59,2% simple sentences. Thus, the simple sentence structures are the most dominant in both speeches.

### Suggestion

The researchers hopes this study can be useful for the readers who want to find out about analyzing sentence structures in the speeches by using tree diagrams. For English language teaching, the sentence structures should to be taught in order to improve students' language ability. Furthermore, the future researchers can conduct research with the different objects of the speeches. The future researchers can analyze other speeches syntactically from the previous US presidents such as speeches by Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barrack Obama, or the other presidents to find out the sentence structures used in their speeches.

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