

Parallel Structure: Influential Tool in Newspaper Editorial Headlines

Nirupa D. Ranasinghe

*Department of Languages, Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities,
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka.*

rnirupad@gmail.com

Abstract

The editorial of a newspaper is fabricated on an argument influencing the reader to think accordingly. It also promotes critical thinking and at times makes the reader react to an issue. Hence, an editorial is defined as an opinionated piece of news. Therefore creating a standout phrase as the headline of an editorial is of vital importance to persuade the reader to read the editorial. Among syntactic tools, this research determines the use of the rhetorical device, parallel structure, also known as parallel construction or parallel syntax, and their effects in headlines of newspaper editorials. The aim of this research ascertains the use of parallel syntax to emphasize the centre theme the writer attempts to convey, and the objectives identify and analyze parallel structures in a corpus of sixty editorial headlines of two Sri Lankan Sunday newspapers: The Sunday Times and Sunday Island. Adopting the theory of parallelism, this research identifies parallel structures of word orders and phrases. Such headlines comprise of coordinating joining words: prepositions, adverbs, (be) verbs and conjunctions. The phrases also have varied features, such as, elements of comparison and contrast. Faulty parallelism or exceptions without the accepted elements of parallel syntax were also noted in this analysis. The identified features of parallel structures in the headlines of newspaper editorials lead to effects, such as, rhythm, economy, clarity, equality, emphasis and delight. Utilization of such effects creates a balanced and smooth flow of information, persuades and emotionally appeals the reader. Nevertheless the findings of this research specify that parallel structures are used as a tool of advantage, only in 43% of the headlines of newspaper editorials.

Key words: newspaper editorial, headline, rhetorical device, parallel structure, influence

Introduction

The editorial is a vital article in a newspaper that expresses the opinion of the editor or editorial board. Although an editorial can be on any topic, it is usually on a current issue that deals with