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EDITORIALS: STRUCTURAL FEATURES

The paper introduces the structural features of editorials based on the data collected from most popular newspapers. Editorials are newspaper articles that combine fact and opinion to interpret current issues and at the same time shape the readers' opinion. The main functions of editorials are those of argumentation and persuasion. The paper studies how these functions are expressed by some grammatical means, such as passive voice, modal structures, sentence types.

Key words: *editorials, news articles, persuasive and argumentative function, hierarchical organization of clauses, structural types of sentences, passive voice, modal structures*

Every day newspapers publish a large number of news stories. These stories are “factual” articles: they report facts. They do not include the feelings or opinions of reporters, editors and owners of the newspapers. Newspapers also publish separate articles in which they reveal their own views on current issues in the news. Such articles are referred to as “editorials” /[www.slideshare.net/ Reza Sha ms2014/newspaper-editorials/](http://www.slideshare.net/RezaShams2014/newspaper-editorials/). Classified as a type of media discourse, editorials belong to the large class of opinion discourse. They are different from both news reports and advertisements as they are supposed to present evaluations and comments about the news events already reported in the newspapers /van Dijk, 1995/. They are “advocates” between readers and publishing house. Readers have their own view about the current issue and editorials help to shape readers' opinions in more precise way. Editorials persuade the readers to think the same way as the publishing house or the editor does.

The choice of words and structures is vital for news articles, especially for editorials because by means of them writers show their attitude towards what is presented in the editorial and try to grasp reader's attention, that is why writers use words or structures that are of special interest. Data of the study is based on 20 editorials from the most popular newspapers in the UK and USA. First we will carry out the analysis of structural types of sentences.

The structural types of the sentences in the editorial are the followings:

- Simple sentence
- Non-Simple sentence
 - Complex
 - Compound-Complex
 - Compound

Simple sentences do not prevail in editorials. As it has been mentioned above, editorials are written to show the views of the publishing house or the editor and affect the readers: its main “role”, function is to describe the issue, to interpret it, bring arguments, find solutions to this or that problem. In order to manage all these carefully and in a proper way, to give plenty of information in an organized way, editors prefer to use non-simple sentences.

But we have observed that editors do not escape using simple sentences. Texts which are “loaded” with complex sentences serve for description, argumentation, whereas simple sentences are used mostly for giving facts.

The arrest in the Philippines of the courageous journalist Maria Ressa, founder and head of the news organisation Rappler, is a disgrace. Rodrigo Duterte and his supporters have shown little tolerance for anyone attempting to hold him to account, as Rappler has done, in particular over the “war on drugs” which has killed thousands. (The Guardian)

The example starts with a simple sentence which is put at the beginning of the editorial. It introduces the case, the additional information is given by the attribute “founder and head of the news organization Rappler”. Then it is followed by complex sentences.

Editorial writers prefer to use non-simple sentences. Compound and complex sentences enable the writer to put more information in the paragraph, in the text than the simple sentences allow. We should also mention that compound sentences are used for description while complex sentences are employed for argumentation.

Like simple sentences, compound sentences are not used frequently in the editorials. They are mostly employed for description, for giving details. The number of clauses in compound sentences used in editorials fluctuates between one or two. The most frequently used conjunctions are *and, but, while*:

This has to change, and the government is to be commended for appointing a disability champion for arts and culture to address these problems. (The Guardian)

As we have mentioned editors do not escape using compound sentences, but coordination is not a preferred means of connecting clauses in the editorials, that is the reason why compound sentences are rare in editorials.

As for complex sentences, we have observed that subordination is a preferred and powerful means of connecting clauses of sentences in the editorials. The reason of using complex sentences is quite simple: complex sentences enable the writers to give as much information as possible. In case of compound sentences, if there are more than two or three clauses, it often becomes difficult for the readers to find the logical succession of the events. But as for complex sentences, they can contain more than two or three dependant clauses but only one independent clause, and this hierarchical organization of the clauses brings to hierachical organization of the information in the text which helps the reader not to be “tangled” in the loaded sentence with plenty of information.

The main idea of the sentence is expressed in the independent clause and supporting ideas are subordinate to it as dependant clauses, they express minor ideas. The process of subordination indicates that ideas are arranged according to their importance from the informative perspective.

The problem of complex sentences in editorials can be touched upon from different perspectives: the number of dependant clauses in sentence, types of dependant clauses, the dependency relationships.

As was mentioned above, there is one independent clause which is supported by dependant clauses. The number of these clauses varies: sentences may have one, two, three or more clauses:

1. (1) *The state has a policy of submitting mental health information to the federal background checks system, (2) which should have flagged Mr. Cho as ineligible to purchase firearms based on a state magistrate's finding in December 2005 (3) that he posed a threat to himself.* (2 clause) (Washington Post)

2. (1) *There is also a lack of understanding of the needs of those with disabilities among those (2) who work in the arts, (3) which can lead to some embarrassing, hurtful and cruel episodes – such as (4) when a young woman with Asperger's was ejected from a BFI screening this spring ((5) for which the organisation has since apologised).* (4 clauses) (The Guardian)

As for the main types, we observed four main types of clauses in editorials: relative clause, adverbial clause, nominal clause, non-finite clauses.

Relative clauses add extra information to the sentence by defining a noun, but if they are removed, the sentence will still grammatically function. Relative clauses are connected with the help of who, which, whose, whom.

She previously had to post bail over tax fraud charges which she said were trumped up to harass and intimidate Rappler. (The Guardian)

But a malignancy whose primary victims are trusting children must be treated by immediate and radical measures, not by appeals or hand-wringing. (The New York Times)

Adverbial clauses – these dependant clauses play the role of adverbs and they can be removed but the sentence will still be grammatically correct. The adverbial clauses can be classified according to the adverbs (time, place, manner, degree, concession, reason, condition). *Adverbial clauses of time* which are introduced by time adverbs, such as when, since, after, untill, after, before give extra information about the time the action has happened.

This month's confrontation was sparked when a suicide bomber blew up a convoy of more than 40 Indian soldiers in India's Kashmir. (The Guardian)

Adverbial clauses of place provide the readers with information where the action has taken place. They are connected to the main clause with the help of conjunctions *where, wherever, anywhere, everywhere:*

Mr. Trump's emergency declaration is destined to wind up in the courts, where it could get bogged down indefinitely. (The New York Times)

It is worth mentioning that mostly the clauses of time and place have middle position in the sentences in our corpus of editorials.

Adverbial clauses of comparison are used in editorials as well: they show to what degree something is done. Editors employ this type of clause to show their attitude toward something that happened in the past or something that will happen in the future:

Anything would of course be better than the malign incompetence of his predecessor Chris Grayling, who attempted to privatise much of the probation service with predictably disastrous results. (Daily Mail)

So given the anticipation of this Judas kiss, it should now be clearer than ever that the only hope of salvation is Mrs May's deal. (Daily Mail)

Adverbial clauses of comparison may have negative or positive connotation: for example in the first sentence the clause shows that the editor is not satisfied with the results. The second clause is also negatively "colored": the tense, the use of modal verbs plays a huge role in defining the attitude of the writer. For example, in sentence 1 we would be shows something that would happen but didn't happen because of some reason. In the second sentence should has the meaning of probability. And in the third sentence the comparison is in present tense, the editor is sure that his view is the right one: it is accompanied by the modal verb must.

Adverbial clauses of condition are employed in editorials very often. These clauses show conditions under which the main idea comes into effect. They reflect the view of the writer about something that will happen if a certain condition is fulfilled. This type of clause is connected to the main clause by if, unless:

These are potentially humane and effective steps, especially if they were combined with proper social support for offenders. (The Guardian)

"If today the national emergency is border security, tomorrow the national emergency might be climate change." (The New York Times)

The tense used in conditionals plays an important role in defining the possibility of fulfillment of condition. For example, in the first sentence we have past tense which shows possibility, advice which will bring to the fulfillment of the idea. In most cases past tense form shows unfulfilled condition which Quirk and the others call hypothetical condition (Quirk, 1985, cited in <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ljh/article/view/87358/77072>). The present tense form shows "hopeful" fulfillment and it is mostly used in persuasive writing: with the help of these clauses in present tense writers want to make the readers believe in the action.

In the editorials there are also *adverbial clauses of reason* which are marked by as, since, because:

There were students lined up and shot in a classroom; students leaping from the windows of buildings to save themselves; a gunman unidentified for hours because his head wounds were so severe. (The Washington Post)

The editorials also contain adverbial *clauses of concession*. This type of clauses offers a statement which contradicts the main idea:

Though Mr Gauke didn't complete the thought, prison is far more likely to aggravate a problem with substance abuse than help to cure it, as the drug statistics show. (The Guardian)

Adverbial clauses of concession are connected to the main sentence with the help of subordinating conjunctions *though, whereas, even*.

Summing up we should mention that adverbial clauses are typical to editorials and they are vital for giving additional information about when and where, under what condition, for what reason the actions of the main sentences have been realized. Our study shows that the most frequently used types of clause are the adverbial clauses of time, condition, concession, reason.

Nominal clauses – this type of clauses is used in the editorials very often and it is conditioned by the purpose of the writer to expand the sentence and give as much information as possible:

Ressa has called the campaign against Rappler a kind of back-handed compliment: it shows (what) that the president sees it as a threat. (The Guardian)

Just consider (what) how that would shatter the integrity of our democracy and erode what's left of public trust in our political class. (Daily Mail)

Non-finite clauses – very often editors try to provide much information by “packing” them in such clauses as non-finite clauses. This type of clauses enables the editors to “pack” the information in a single sentence. Non-finite clauses are of two types – *infinitival* and *participial*.

The examples below contain non-finite infinitival clauses which complement the nouns:

Would we trust the same kind of technology to predict what crimes we might next commit? (The Guardian)

Bishops who cover up their actions should be laicized and exposed, and the order to do so must come from the top, from the pontiff. (The New York Times)

In the editorials non-finite clauses that complement the verbs are used more often:

Priests who are credibly shown to abuse children should be thrown out of the pulpit and identified to civil authority. (The New York Times)

It is not clear to what extent he was pressed to undergo counseling or whether a residential adviser was monitoring Mr. Cho and attempting to reach him. (Washington Post)

These clauses are very popular in the editorials and are effective means for the writers not to “load” the sentences with “heavy” clauses. The same refers to the participial clauses. Participial clauses are very often used after prepositions:

His solution: Sign the bill while simultaneously declaring a national emergency that, at least in his mind, would allow him to shift funds and order the military to start building his wall. (The New York Times)

In Myanmar, Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo have lost their appeal against seven-year sentences for reporting on a military-led massacre of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state. (The Guardian)

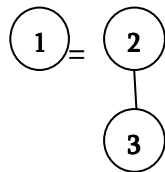
Infinitival and participial clauses are employed by editors very often because, besides giving the writers an opportunity to “pack” the information in a single sentence, they also enable them to organize the ideas in an hierarchical organization in order to make easier for the reader to differentiate between more important and less important ideas.

As we have already mentioned, together with simple, compound, complex sentences there is also another type of sentence – the complex-compound sentence which represents an interesting correlation and cooperation of subordination and coordination. These sentences contain two or more independent clauses which are defined by dependant clauses. This type of sentence is not often used by the writers but we managed to find some examples:

1) *(1) Millions of lives already have been upended — well beyond the 800,000 federal workers not getting paid — and (2) millions more could be (3) if the dysfunction continues, disrupting everything from air travel to the federal courts to basic services throughout Indian Country.* (The Guardian)

2) *(1)EPRDF had until last year been Tigray-dominated, (2) his rise as an Oromo (with an Amhara mother), reflects his skills as a politician as well as the Oromo protests (3) which triggered his predecessor’s resignation.*

(The Guardian)



This structure is the same for both examples. Editorial writers seem to escape such sentences because they bring confusion as they carry too many ideas for the readers to digest at once.

Summing up the results, we should once again mention that information is the “weapon” of the writers in the persuasion process. And different types of sentences help the writer to organize the weapon-information in an effective and efficient way. Thus, simple sentences enable the editorial writers to give factual information, more often they are used for the sake of brevity. Compound sentences are employed for elaborating the ideas. Complex sentences are employed for detailed, additional information. Using complex sentences in editorials gives opportunity to expand the information and different types of dependent clauses enable the writer to deliver different types of information.

In editorials *voice* plays an important role: whether the sentence is used in active or passive voice is of much importance. The *active voice* is employed by writers when they want to focus on the doer of the action, for example:

Rodrigo Duterte and his supporters have shown little tolerance for anyone attempting to hold him to account. (The Guardian)

As we see in the example the subject-doer of the sentence is *Rodrigo Duterte and his supporters*. So, the focus is on *Rodrigo Duterte and his supporters*: it is the carrier of the most important part of the information. The sentence could be used by passive voice without mentioning the agent or mentioning it but changing the focus. But the writer wants to emphasize that people have been shown little tolerance by *Rodrigo Duterte and his supporters*.

When we change the active voice into passive we don't change the facts, the essence of information, we change the sentence structure.

The *passive voice* is used when the writer wants to focus on the object, the target of the action. Passive sentences are longer than the active ones, they are marked up by larger number of words, for example *by, with*.

Passive voice without the agent mentioned is used very often in editorials and the purposes are different:

- Sometimes the doer of the action is not important: *Some of the best, or at least sharpest, minds on the planet are devoted to guessing what we might buy next.* (The Guardian)

- Passive structure is more preferable when the writer wants to put emphasis on the object, material, rather than on the actor:

The Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi was one of 80 journalists killed last year, while hundreds more were locked up. A Ghanaian journalist who exposed football corruption was shot dead in January. (The Guardian)

- Passive forms are also used when the writer wants to keep the doer of the action invisible, unknown.

You don't really know who you are until you're forced to fight to defend it. (The Guardian)

Very often, agent of the action is mentioned in passive forms. In this case the writers try to emphasize both the object-material or the process of the action and the doer of the action at the same time:

Mr. Trump predicted that he would lose the first couple of court rounds, particularly in California federal courts, but would ultimately be vindicated by the Supreme Court. (The New York Times)

We should mention that the sentences in active voice prevail in editorials.

Editorials can “evaluate” and comment the news. Their main goal is to influence readers’ opinions and make them accept the intended interpretation of news. So objectivity, just giving facts is rare for editorial writers. They don't only convey information but also interpret it from their viewpoint. To express their viewpoints editorial writers use a number of devices and one of them is the use of *modal verbs* for example *can, could* for possibility, *may, might* for probability, *will, would* for predicting the future events and *must, should* for necessity. We should mention that modal verbs are used both in active and passive voice:

Active voice structures – *There are a number of simple measures that could help.* (The New York Times).

Passive modal verb structures meet in the editorials very often:

Could there be a worse breach of faith? (Daily Mail)

Obviously, universities must be vigilant about potentially dangerous students it is nearly impossible to set a fixed standard by which universities can expel or remove a student. (The New York Times)

Modal verbs help the editorial writers to show their viewpoint, evaluation: whether they find something necessary, possible, probable. Some evaluations can be implicitly expressed by the *passive modal verb* construction when the writers want the readers to concentrate not on the doer but on the object of the action showing their attitude toward it with the help of modal verbs.

Though editorials are written in subjective manner, accuracy is very important for editorials as well. Writers of editorials first give information then bring argumentation and after they try to persuade readers to think as they think and interpret the events. That is why it is not surprising to meet quotations – the exact words of the speakers in the editorials. Quotations make the editorials more lively and colorful, but don't bring more objectivity to editorials because the writers may choose such quotations that will serve to writers' real "editorial" objective and support their viewpoint.

"I didn't need to do this," President Trump insisted at a Rose Garden appearance on Friday. (The New York Times)

The Czech president, Miloš Zeman, said last year that: "It hasn't yet been possible to wipe out Czech journalists." (The Guardian)

We should hasten to add that quotations and directed speech are not used much in the editorials. More often not whole clauses but individual words or expressions are used in quotation marks. By the use of these "scarce quotes" author wants to mark that what is put in quotes is questioned, taken into consideration, is used in ironic or special sense.

The White House plans to "backfill" the money it is taking from the Pentagon in future budgets." (The Guardian)

Starting in 2016, major platforms adapted that technology to filter for "terrorist" content. (The New York Times)

As we notice *backfill*, *terrorist* are put in quotation marks. In the case of *backfill* and *terrorist* the writers want to put emphasis on these words, want the reader to pay attention, to take into consideration these words like they are the key words of the sentence, the carriers of the message. As we see scarce quotes are also targetted at showing the things from evaluative perspective.

Summing up the structural features of editorials we conclude that grammar and syntax in particular play a huge role in editorial writing. The use of grammatical devices shows that the complex structural features of editorial texts are targetted at representing the evaluation, comments of the editorial writer. As

editorials are aimed at influencing readers' opinions, they use different strategies in order to persuade them. The strategies are as follows: how to organize the editorial text, what sentences to use in editorials, what specific devices to use to obtain the main goal, i.e. to persuade readers to think the same way the editors do.

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Ա. ՄԱԹԵՎՈՍՅԱՆ, Լ. ԿՈՆԴՅԱՆ – Խմբագրական հոդվածների կառուցվածքային առանձնահատկությունները. – Սույն հոդվածում ներկայացվում են խմբագրականների առանձնահատկությունները, որոնք վեր են հանվել հեղինակավոր ամսագրերից: Խմբագրականները թերթերի հոդվածներ են, որոնք միավորում են փաստը և կարծիքը՝ ընթացիկ թեմաները մեկնաբանելու և ընթերցողի կարծիքի վրա ազդելու: Խմբագրականների հիմնական գործառույթները փաստարկելն ու համոզելն են: Հոդվածը փորձ է ցույց տալու, թե ինչպես են այս գործառույթները արտահայտվում քերականական միջոցներով, որոնք են՝ կրավորական սեռը, եղանակավորող կառույցները, նախադասության տեսակները:

Բանալի բառեր. խմբագրականներ, հոդվածներ, փաստարկում և համոզում, նախադասությունների հիերարխիկ դասավորություն, նախադասությունների կառուցվածքային տիպեր, կրավորական սեռ, մոդալ կառույցներ

А. МАТЕВОСЯН, Л. КОНДЯН – Передовая статья и ее структурные особенности. – Статья представляет структурные особенности передовых статей, выявленные на основе изучения популярных англоязычных газет. Передовые статьи, в отличие от новостных, объединяют факт и мнение, комментируя текущие события и влияя на мнение читателя. Главными функциями передовых статей являются аргументирование и убеждение. В статье рассматривается, как они выражены различными грамматическими средствами, такими как страдательный залог, модальные структуры, структурные типы предложения.

Ключевые слова: передовые статьи, новостные статьи, функции аргументирования и убеждения, иерархическая организация предложения, структурные типы предложений, страдательный залог, модальные структуры

Ներկայացվել է՝ 10.04.2019

Երաշխավորվել է ԵՊՀ Անգլիական բանասիրության ամբիոնի կողմից
Ընդունվել է տպագրության՝ 20.05.2019