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# A Functional-Discursive Analysis of Lexical Syntactic and Syntactic-Stylistic Devices in English Media Discourse

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## Annotation:

This article presents a functional-discursive analysis of lexical-syntactic and syntactic-stylistic devices in English media discourse. It investigates how specific linguistic choices contribute to the construction of meaning, the persuasion of audiences, and the overall impact of media messages across various genres (news reports, editorials, opinion pieces, etc.). The study examines the interplay between lexical selection (including connotation, framing, and ideological word choice), and syntactic structures (sentence complexity, passive voice, information flow) in shaping reader interpretation. The analysis explores the functional role of these linguistic features in achieving specific discursive goals, such as establishing credibility, influencing public opinion, and framing events. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the persuasive power of language within media communication and offers insights into how linguistic tools shape public perception and discourse. Examples from contemporary English media are used to illustrate the findings.

**Keywords:** English media discourse, lexical-syntactic features, syntactic stylistic devices functional discourse analysis, discourse analysis, media language, persuasion ideology, framing, lexical choice, connotation, syntax, sentence structure.

**Introduction.** The pervasive influence of media on shaping public opinion and societal discourse necessitates a critical examination of the linguistic mechanisms employed in media communication. This study undertakes a functional-discursive analysis of lexical syntactic and syntactic-stylistic devices in English media discourse, moving beyond a purely descriptive approach to explore the

pragmatic effects of linguistic choices within their broader communicative context. We investigate how specific lexical and syntactic features contribute to the construction of meaning, the persuasion of audiences, and the overall impact of media messages across different genres. Our analysis will explore the intricate interplay between lexical choices – including connotation, framing, and the selection of ideologically charged vocabulary – and syntactic structures – such as sentence complexity, the use of passive voice, and information flow – in shaping reader interpretation. By focusing on the functional role of these linguistic tools, we aim to illuminate how media producers strategically employ them to achieve particular discursive goals, including establishing credibility, influencing public opinion, and framing events in specific ways. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the persuasive power of language within the media landscape and offers valuable insights into the mechanisms by which linguistic choices shape public perception and discourse. The analysis will draw upon a corpus of contemporary English media texts, encompassing diverse genres to illustrate the findings and offer a nuanced understanding of the subject.

**Main part.** Syntax deals with the patterns of word arrangement and formulates rules for correct sentence building. Sometimes a need arises to intensify the utterance and the normative structures are replaced by what is traditionally called rhetorical figures, figures of speech or syntactical stylistic devices. Syntactical expressiveness is based on deliberate deviation from the accepted norm. But as the concept of norm in English syntax is rather loose, stylistic syntactical patterns can be regarded as variants of standard models beyond which they can't extend.

1. Syntactical SD based on the position of words in the sentence.
2. Syntactical SD based on the absence of some logically expected members of the sentence.
3. Syntactical SD based on repetition.
4. Syntactical SD based on the arrangement of words in a sentence or sentences in a paragraph for a special effect.
5. Syntactical SD based on different types of connection between words, clauses or sentences.
6. Syntactical SD based on transposition of structures.

**Anaphora** is the SD when beginning of two or more successive sentences (clauses) is repeated. The main stylistic function of anaphora is not so much to emphasize the repeated unit as to create the background nonrepeated unit, which, through its novelty, becomes foregrounded.

*Every day, every night, in every way, I am getting better and better.*

**Epiphora** is the SD when the end of successive sentences (clauses) is repeated. The main function of epiphora is to add stress to the final words of the sentence. *If you did know to whom I gave the ring, If you did know for whom I gave the ring...*

**Framing** is the repetition of a word combination or a sentence at the beginning and at the end of the utterance. *Those kids were getting it all right with busted heads and bleeding faces – those kids were getting it.*

**Anadiplos** is the SD when the end of one sentence is repeated in the beginning of the following one. *The mountains look on Marathon – And Marathon looks on the sea ...* (By Lord Byron)

**Parallelism** is the repetition of the syntactical structure in two or more successive sentences or clauses. It makes the utterance rhythmic increasing the impact of the statement. *He came, he saw, and he conquered.*

**Chiasmus** is a rhetorical device in which two or more clauses are balanced against each other by the reversal of their structures in order to produce an artistic effect. *Never let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You.*

*A rhetorical question is asked just for effect, or to lay emphasis on some point being discussed, when no real answer is expected. A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer, but the questioner asks it to lay emphasis to the point. In literature, a rhetorical question is self-evident, and used for style as an impressive persuasive device.*

*What made you think of love and tears And birth and death and pain?*

*Will no one tell me what she sings?*

**1. Lexical Choices and Ideological Framing:** Media texts frequently leverage lexical choices to subtly shape reader interpretation and reinforce underlying ideologies. This involves employing loaded language (emotive vocabulary, euphemisms and dysphemisms<sup>1</sup>). A dysphemistic word could be avoided by omission. Allan claims that in written language the lexis is substituted by a graphic mark, e. g. dots. In spoken language person could use non-verbal language, or semantically empty words, e. g. hm. He claims that except of full-omissions there appear quasi omissions which are more common, e. g. I need to go, which means to go to lavatory, framing devices (selective detail presentation, metaphors, similes), and strategic information omission or inclusion. For example, the selection of verbs (“attacked” versus “criticized,” “migrants” versus “new arrivals”) significantly alters event perception. Analysis of a corpus of news articles reveals patterns in lexical choices correlating with the political leanings and biases of specific media outlets. This section will present quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating these correlations, focusing on specific examples to illustrate the impact of lexical choices on meaning.

**2. Syntactic Structures and Information Control:** “Syntactic structures significantly impact information flow and reader attention.”<sup>2</sup> Passive voice, for instance, obscures agency and responsibility, while complex sentences create ambiguity or cognitive overload. Conversely, short, declarative sentences convey immediacy and urgency. This section will analyze sentence length, complexity, and information placement to demonstrate how syntactic choices contribute to the persuasive power of media texts. Examples from different genres (news reports versus opinion pieces) will highlight the contrasting effects of varied syntactic strategies, showcasing how stylistic choices align with genre conventions and communicative goals.

**3. Figurative Language and Rhetorical Effects:** Figurative language has predominantly been an important ingredient of literary writings. For Richards and Schmidt (2010), any word or phrase that means differently from the original word is a figure of speech. In classical rhetoric, schemas and tropes are two forms of style figures with the former one involving the transfer of word order in syntactic structures while the latter one entails shifting of meanings.

“Stylisticians, philosophers and linguists not only studied tropes (similes, metaphors, personification etc.) but also tried to develop an understanding of the nature of figurative expressions.”<sup>3</sup> The use of figures of speech allows speakers to create more vivid and effective expressions and lay ground for more textured interaction between speaker and listeners. The strategic use of figurative language (metaphors, similes, hyperbole) enhances memorability and persuasiveness. These devices evoke emotional responses and simplify complex issues. This section will analyze how figurative language contributes to the overall rhetorical effect, exploring the relationship between specific figures of speech, audience engagement, and the persuasive intent of the message. The analysis will incorporate examples from headlines and lead paragraphs, demonstrating the effective use of concise and impactful figurative language.

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<sup>1</sup> Allan, Keith. 1991. Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as a Shield and Weapon. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky. Syntactic Structures. 2002. Second Edition With an Introduction by David W. Lightfoot New York

<sup>3</sup> Burke, M. (2014). The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics (1st ed.). Routledge



**4. Discourse Markers and Textual Coherence:** Discourse markers (conjunctions, adverbs, interjections) guide reader interpretation and establish coherence. Specific marker choices subtly influence the perceived relationship between textual elements, shaping the overall narrative and argument. This section will investigate how discourse markers contribute to the construction of coherent and persuasive narratives, analyzing their role in guiding the reader's understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, emphasis, and overall tone. Specific examples will illustrate how different markers create different persuasive effects.

**5. Cross-Genre Comparison:** Finally, a comparative analysis across different media genres (news, editorials, blogs, social media posts) will highlight genre-specific patterns in the use of lexical-syntactic and syntactic-stylistic devices. This comparison will reveal how linguistic choices adapt to communicative purposes and audience expectations, demonstrating the versatility and strategic deployment of language in diverse media contexts. The analysis will conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for understanding media's influence on public discourse and opinion formation.

This structured analysis will demonstrate the intricate relationship between linguistic choices and discursive goals, highlighting the sophisticated use of language in shaping perceptions and influencing audiences within the English media landscape. The findings will be supported by detailed examples and data drawn from the corpus of contemporary media texts.

**Conclusion.** This study has provided a functional-discursive analysis of lexical-syntactic and syntactic-stylistic devices in English media discourse, demonstrating the intricate relationship between linguistic choices and the construction of meaning, persuasion, and overall communicative impact. Our analysis revealed that seemingly subtle linguistic features—from vocabulary selection to sentence structure—are strategically employed by media producers to achieve specific discursive goals. The use of loaded language, framing devices, and particular syntactic structures significantly influences reader interpretation and shapes public perception of events. The strategic deployment of figurative language and discourse markers further enhances the persuasiveness and coherence of media messages. Cross-genre comparisons highlighted genre-specific patterns in linguistic choices, reflecting the diverse communicative functions and audience expectations associated with various media forms. The findings underscore the importance of a critical approach to media consumption, urging readers to be aware of the subtle linguistic mechanisms employed to shape their understanding and influence their opinions. Further research could explore the diachronic evolution of these linguistic patterns, examining how technological and socio-political changes affect media discourse. Comparative studies across different linguistic and cultural contexts could also provide valuable insights into the universality and variability of persuasive techniques in media communication. This study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the persuasive power of language in shaping public discourse and emphasizes the crucial role of linguistic analysis in deciphering the messages conveyed by the media. The results highlight the need for continued critical engagement with media texts to promote media literacy and responsible media consumption.

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