

Noora Abd-Alnabi, Dr. Manal Jasim Muhammad. (2022). A Linguistic Study of Topicalisation in Selected USA Newspapers: North Korea Nuclear Weapon as a Case Study. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)*, 14(1): 882-896.
DOI: 10.9756/INT-JECSE/V14I1.221103

Received: 17.10.2021 Accepted: 30.12.2021

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A Linguistic Study of Topicalisation in Selected USA Newspapers: North Korea Nuclear Weapon as a Case Study

Abstract

This research focuses on surveying Topicalisation phenomenon in political texts, and investigating the utilizations of its types. It aims to inspect Topicalisation in construing various types of constructions in the texts of political discourse and display how this phenomenon can construe non-canonical and complex sentences' structures. To achieve these goals, Verma's division (1976) of Topicalization types is adopted as a model of analysis. Additionally, Quirk et.al (1985) is adopted as a complementary modal. The data of the present study are 17 selected political editorials that are chosen in a random way from three of the most famous American newspapers: The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal. According to Verma's division, Topicalisaion types are divided into four basic types: passivization, pseudo-cleft, Cleft, and Extraposition. The study hypothesized that: Topicalisation transforms the syntactic construction of simple sentences into complex one, still it is utilized in political editorials in order to grant prominence to specific sentences' items to grab the attention of readers and convince him or her in a specific point of view. Cleft, which offers a highly levels of flexibility by drawing two or more sentences from a simple ones, is utilized heavily in political editorials. From a syntactic perspective, topicalisation supplies diverse syntactic structures, which have rhetorical effective. From a semantic perspective, It clarifies and unambiguously expresses the desired meaning. Data analysis has displayed that Topicalisation provides editorialists with various syntactic constructions for various purposes, involving pique the reader's interest and try to persuade him in a particular view. It has shown that passivization has been the most dominant type used in political discourse. In addition, the analysis has shown that syntactic and semantic aspects of Topicalisation phenomenon produce sentences with effective constructions and unambiguous meaning. The study comes up with the conclusion that Topicalisation has various structures which can serve various purposes. For example, when New piece of information appears at the beginning of the sentence, passivization process can be utilized to reorganize the sentence in order to agree with Given-New principle via postponing it.

Keywords: Topicalization, Passivization, Pseudo-cleft, Cleft, Extraposition, Political Texts.

Theoretical Background

Individuals utilize language in order to communicate. Hence, communication might, in some situations, "be complicated, and such

complication necessitates it to be flexible. Flexibility is the core of ambiguity as it renders the word, phrase, sentence and even paragraphs to carry multiple legitimate faces of

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interpretation" (Muhammad, 2021). English is one of the languages that follow a rigid order in organizing sentences' elements. This means that changing the order of words within a sentence will mostly produce different meaning of the sentence, for instance Mohammed hurts Ali gives a quite distinct meaning from Ali hurts Mohammed. Yet, topicalisation phenomenon is regarded as a technique that alters the canonical order of sentences' elements without altering their grammatical state and their meaning, for instance Omer is his name and his name is Omer. It has the ability to influence the origin position of the sentence's elements in order to gain prominence. Topicalisation phenomenon appears in semantic, stylistic, and syntactic theories to fulfill several functions. There are several traits that define political journalistic writings. The syntax's intricacy is arguably the most prominent feature. (Van Dijk, 1985). Topicalisation structures supplies editors by diverse structures that keep the original meaning of the sentence, yet, it converts its simple construction into more complicated one. Thus, it sounds reasonable to ask the following questions:

1. What are the justifications for using different kinds of topicalisation in political discourse?
2. Which kind of topicalisation is more common in political editorials and why?
3. What are the syntactic and the semantic significant of topicalization?

Topicalisation: An Overview

Topicalisation is defined as strategies of topic-promoting. According to Ross (1967), non-canonical forms of syntactic, like initial object syntactic form, contain a trace in the canonical position that is occupied by object, in languages that have initial subject in their canonical order. He labeled these forms "Topicalisation", assuming that these forms are critical for identifying topics. Ross considers topicalisation as a syntactic structure which involves moving an element of the sentence to the initial-position of that sentence, for examples:

4. a. Does she like tea? b. Tea she doesn't like. (Ross, 1967)
5. a. I liked the subject b. The subject I liked... (Baltin, 1982)

Jackendoff (1972) defines topicalisation as a principle of preposing which moves sentences' phrases over variable. Topicalisation shifts NPs, to the initially positions, it can be also regarded as a replacement for the complementizer node at the start of sentence. The process of topicalisation is optional. As a result, by placing a constituent of structure and attaching it to unusual place in the sentence, this method can insert any constituent, other than the topic, at the

initial-position of the sentence (Chomsky, 1976). Leech deduces that any element of the sentence can be marked as the topic instead of the subject by relocating it to the initial-position of the sentence (1975). This type of relocating gives the topicalized elements a kind of "psychological prominene", and it has three distinct effects:

- a. **Emphatic topic**, this entails giving the topicalized elements twofold emphasis,
- b. **Contrastive topic**, it shows a contrast in structure between two items presented in adjoining sentences or clauses that would normally have the same structure, for instance: *Iraqi her nationality is; so Iraqi you can call her*, and
- c. **Given topic**, it is utilized in formal discourses, especially in written English, for instance: *This topic we have already considered in a previous unit and need no reconsider again.*

Aarts (2001) observes that this form of movement is used by speakers to emphasize the topicalized element, to appear like sentence topic, and to highlight contrast. He goes on to say that topicalization is just a principle, he adds "If we can topicalise a string of elements whose principal element is an X (where X stands for N, A, P or V) then that string is an XP (i.e. a phrase headed by X)" (ibid). The terminology that is used to describe topicalization and its semantics is various, still, it seems that all definitions are similar.

Topic Origin

The term topic is fundamentally a universal semantic deep-rooted notion that is known to every language, albeit with varying level of significance (Kamal, 1982). The relationship between topic and comment is considered as an indication of the relationship between subject and predicate relationship. Givon (1976) states that instead of being purely typological, the organization of topic and comment is syntactically related and universal. In traditional grammar, grammarians previously use the term subject to replace concepts of grammatical subject, logical subject, and psychological subject. Jespersen (1924) has referred to these different concepts as confusion of concepts. Then, he suggests sticking to the dichotomy Subject-Predicate and neglecting others in order to avoid confusion. Hockett identifies topic and comment as functions which differ from subject and predicate in syntactic term. Hockett (1966) adds that "Every human language has a common clause type with bipartite structure in which the constituents can reasonably be termed topic and comment". Topic is not necessarily to be the subject of a sentence, it could be other sentence's element like the object, which is put

in initial position since it identifies "what the speaker is going to talk about" (Hockett, 1958). According to Lyon, topic is the thing or the individual about which/whom something is stated, whereas comment presents statement which is made about this thing or individual (1968). The term Topic points to Subject, and Comment points to Predicate. As a result, topic is subject's referent.

Theme and Rhyme

Mathesius (1975, as cited in Leuckert, 2019) notes that the subject has, to a large extent, acquired thematic function, that is "the function of expressing the agent of the action has been appreciably weakened in favour of the function to express the theme of the utterance". Mathesius justification for this is that sentences need to follow a theme/rheme, or topic/comment, structures. The term Theme is defined by Halliday (2004) as "the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context". Whereas, the term Rheme is identified as "the remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed" (ibid). This dichotomy is used in analysing sentences structures. Crystal (2008) states that the communicative dynamism of rhyme is higher than theme. This can be illustrated in the following:

6. Rami his name is.

7. The water flow they can't stand. (Crystal, 2008)

Quirk et. al. (1985) agree with the definitions mentioned above, when they define theme as "the name we give to the initial part of any structure".

Given and New

The term given refers to an item of information that is already known by hearers, on the other hand, the term new refers to an item of information that is new from the hearers' views. The receiver can't get new pieces of information if they are not mentioned in entirety. On the comparison given pieces of information that are usually presupposed or indicated via the using of cross-reference expressions or proforms or others (Brown and Miller, 1980). To illustrate this, one can suppose that somebody received a text message that included:

8. You should know what happened with Ahmed

- He has fired

In first sentence, New item of information is presented, which is something happened with Ahmed. Then, when one hears/reads the second sentence, s/he regards the first as Given item of

information. one can note that *he* cross-refers to Ahmed, while the phrase what happened has not been mentioned, nonetheless New information unit, which is *Ahmed get fired*, has been added. According to Baker (1992), Given items of information establish common ground among speakers and their listeners, it provides hearers with a point of reference to which new information can be related. The dichotomy Given-New is traditionally treated together, Prague school grammarians link them with communicative dynamism concept. By defining the term Theme as a part that is known or clear from the situation and it enables the speaker of proceeding in the discourse, Mathesius relates Theme concept to Given (1939; as cited in Firbas, 1964). A similar position has been adopted by Chafe (1970). He also distinguished three kind of variables:

1. **Given & New**, information referred to in former situations of the speech,
2. **Presupposition & Assertion**, a proposition assumed or asserted to be true,
3. **Theme & Rheme**, or Topic & Comment, ideas at the forefront of speakers' mind, their starting points of sentences, if at all. This is best viewed as a psycholinguistic issue, a characteristic of language performance and processing (Chafe, 1976).

Halliday (1967) distinguishes between given and Presupposed on the basis that Given represents a precise detail or individual element of the sentence, for instance noun phrases, whereas Presupposition applies to incomplete or complete propositions which speakers expect form listeners to accept it as a fact.

Topicalisation and Thematization

The process that is used to move some elements to the beginning of the sentence are referred to as thematisation. For instance:

9. a. They parked a large van outside our door yesterday

b. *A large van* was parked outside our door yesterday

c. *Outside our door* they parked a large van yesterday

d. *Yesterday* they parked a large van outside our door

(Brown and Miller, 1980)

All the sentences mentioned above are similar in their meaning, i.e. they have the same propositional structure, however, they differ in terms of which part of the sentence is thematised. Topic has been considered as "the perspective from which a sentence is viewed, what the sentence is about" (ibid: 360). For example:

10. a. Jane scolded her baby's father

b. Her baby's father was scolded by her

(ibid: 360-61)

In 10a, *Jane* is the sentence topic, on the contrary, *her baby's father*, in 10b, is the focal point. Thus, topic and theme coincide significantly, as shown in examples 10a & 10b. They do not, however, have to coincide in all cases. In sentence 11, we can single out Raf Loren as the topic, despite the fact that it is put in end-focus.

11. The person who is usually being chosen is Raf Loren (ibid: 361)

The most prominent characteristic of predicative construction is suggested via the dichotomy topic-comment for their immediate constituents, speakers announce topic after that they state something about that topic (Hockett, 1958). For example:

12. a. The criminal | ran away
b. That new dress | I haven't worn yet
c.... whom | they visited there last night

We can notice that in 12a what is pointed to as the sentence topic is actually same as the subject. But actually this isn't always the case. In comparison, 12b the clause *That new dress* is situated initially because it specifies what the speaker is intending to talk about, this means it is the topic of that sentence 12b. Although it does fill the role of object in the conventional sentence, rather than the subject. In sentence 12c, the same thing can be noted, *whom* is the topic although it occupies object position in the sentence (ibid). According to the preceding debate, one could conclude that theme and topic are synonymous. Well, examining the following sentences may show that they differ in some ways:

13. Last week we discussed these issues.
14. Her marriage they cannot destroy

Allerton (1979) thinks that the reason behind shifting the adverb of time *Last week* to initial position of sentence 13 above is to make it more prominence. But, it is not the topic because there is nothing stated about it in the rest of the sentence or in the comment. Therefore, *Last week* is the theme of the sentence but not the topic. In the second sentence 14, on the other hand, the phrase *Her marriage* can be regarded as the topic because there is something stated about it in the sentence's comment. In addition, using empty *there* to fill the position of subject, and replacing NP is considered as a displaced subject. Accordingly, there is no appropriate topic available except *there*, for example:

15. There are cookies in my basket.

The possible subject is *cookies*, which can be considered as the notional topic of the present sentence, not *there*. In the case of regarding empty *there* as a topic, the sentence will have a null referent (Allerton, 1979). With theme the situation is different because *there* can be explained as being dummy theme.

Therefore, *there* is regarded here as a theme but not topic. The process of placing a constituent at the beginning of the sentence to be the theme of it is considered as thematisation, and sometimes called topicalisation or thematic fronting (Crystal, 2008). According to Aarts et al, displaying the topic or the theme of the sentence initially is labeled as topicalisation, thematisation, and fronting (2014). Topicalisation, according to them, is a process whereby a constituent or phrase of a sentence is made the topic of that sentence (ibid). What's more, they consider thematisation as shifting a constituent element or phrase in to the theme of a clause and this process is also labeled topicalisation, or fronting (Aarts et. al., 2014). Perfetti and Goldman believe that in discourse, topicalisation and thematisation serve two purposes. The latter gives permanent referential emphasis for new pieces of information whereas, the former gives a temporary referential emphasis for information presented currently (1975). According to Butters, topicalisation and thematisation are actually two distinct semantic phenomena (1976). The latter is a process that reorganizes constituents of the sentence from the standpoint of the listener into theme-rheme. On the contrary, the former is a process that reorganize constituents of the sentence from the standpoint of the speaker into topic-comment. It's worth noting that the construction of topicalisation in sentences is usually topic and then comment, however, this is not always the case since in some sentences, specially in spoken language, the topic appears after the comment. For instance:

16. a. Where's your book? b. On the desk my book is.

As a result, these concepts denote individual processes, each of which has a unique impact on the sentence's syntactic structure.

Methodology

Model of Analysis

In the present research, the aim is to analyse the utilization of Topicalisation types in selected political editorials. Because no single approach could possibly encompass all of the different constructions of Topicalisation types, the analysis model would be eclectic, relying heavily on Verma's (1976) divide as well as Quirk et al (1985).

Passivization

Passivization is a form of topicalization that marks the noun phrase that is currently the center of attention as thematic by moving it to the subject position (Verma, 1976). It allows the agent to be either an unmarked focus constituent

of the rheme or not to be mentioned at all. The primary distinction between active and passive is one of emphasis. When a sentence is written in the passive, the object takes prominence over the subject. At the level of clauses, altering from the active to the passive includes rearrangement of two clause constituents. The terms "object" and "subject" are utilized to indicate elements that serve a specific structural function; for instance, the subject is in agreement with the verb phrase and includes a subjective case pronoun rather than an objective case pronoun. Examine the following sentences:

17. Ahmed broke the window [Action]
18. The window was broken by Ahmed [Passive]
19. The lady respects him [Action]
20. He is respected by the lady. [Passive]

Despite the fact that the active and passive sentences tend to be completely different, the meaning relationships between their elements are the same: for instance, [18] and [19] have the same truth value, and [20] and [21] have the same truth value. Ahmed is the performer of the action in both Ahmed broke the window and the window was broken by Ahmed, despite the fact that structurally, Ahmed has a somewhat different function and position in each. However, the truth value of corresponding active and passive sentences is not always the same (Quirk et al., 1985).

Pseudo-cleft

Pseudo-cleft sentence is yet another tool by which the structure "can make explicit the division between given and new parts of the communication" (Quirk et al, 1985). It's basically an "SVC sentence with a nominal relative clause serving as the subject or complement." Thus, it differs from the traditional cleft sentence in that it is totally responsible "in terms of the categories of major clause and subordinate clause." The wh-clause is more commonly used as the subject of the pseudo-cleft sentence, as it can present a "climax in the complement":

21. "What you need most is a good rest."

Pseudo-cleft is less constrained than the cleft sentence in one respect, since it allows for more emphasis on the predication due to the use of the substitute verb do:

22. What she is done is spoil everything.
23. What we are going to do with them is teach them a lesson.

Each of the above sentences, one would have an anticipatory focus on the do item, the major emphasis coming at the usual end-focus position. Therefore: DONE, THING!. These sentences' complement usually appears in an infinitive clause. The pseudo-cleft sentence is more limited in certain respects than the proper

cleft sentence. It is in fact, only with wh-clauses one can directly compare, or choose, between the two structures. Clauses that include where, when and who are sometimes appropriate, but only in the case of wh-clause as a subject complement:

24. Here is where the crime happened.
25. In spring is when the wild is most beautiful" (Quirk et. al, 1985) Cleft

Cleft is considered as a powerful device, since it combines predication and topicalisation techniques. Cleft structure functions as a deictic category, directing the listener's attention to a specific element of the sentence. The topicalised element is preceded via predication: it + be and succeeded via sentence. It and There are syntactic devices used to anticipate the topic of discourse.

26. a. It's Zuha you should try. b. There's Zuha you could try.

In these kinds, there and it, the extraposed of the relative clause is compulsory. There kind means: There is an individual you could try Zuha, there may be other individuals. It kind means: The individual you should try is Zuha, Zuha and no one else. The pronoun it points out to Zuha and no one else. There points to Zuha, probably among other individuals. With the empty pronoun it the theme is defined in an unique way. Whereas, with there it is defined in non-unique way (Halliday 1967, as cited in Verma, 1976). The mechanism of cleft structure can be utilized to predicate and topicalise any of the elements: subject, object, or adjunct. According to Jespersen, cleft structure could be regarded as one of the instruments via which the deficiencies of the comparatively inflexible grammatical order (SVO) could be avoided. This demonstrates why analogous structures aren't found, or aren't utilized extensively, in languages with a less strict word order than English (Jespersen, 1969b, as cited Verma,1976). Cleft construction allows the writer to postpone the presentation of the main theme/topic. When listeners hear a construction of prediction like It is..., the dummy it piques his interest, and he anticipates thought completion.

Extraposition

Grammarians approach English sentences with particular expectations contingent via the long acquaintance with the fundamental, nontransformed sentence patterns. One arrives expecting a subject first, followed by a predicate. When s/he encounters something out of the ordinary that defies his/her expectations, s/he immediately recognizes that the speaker/writer shifted particular features to "the foreground" or shifted to "the background" to achieve a desired effect. The normal order of constituents in a

sentence is represented by Subj + Pred. The normal order within Pred. is: V + O+ ADJ. One type of non-normal stylistic shifting that is possible: Subj. can be shifted from its usual position initially to the final-position to postpone the introduction of the major theme, keeping the readers/listeners in suspense. One of the distinctive characteristics of the shifting of Subj. is that "it leaves a trace behind either in the form of a dummy it/there or in the shape of some other proform." (Verma, 1976). This shifting is termed extraposition. Objects also, when back shifted, a trace in the form of 'it' may be left behind:

27. "To play with explosives is dangerous.
[SVC]"

28. "It is dangerous to play with explosives.
[SVCS]"

Indeed, sentence (29) is marked via the existence of two subjects, a dummy *it* and the actual subject "*to play with explosives*" in extraposition. These two sentences, i.e. (28) and (29), are "stylistically variant forms of the same set of basic constituents: they are allosentences" (Verma 1970b, as cited in Verma, 1976). The topic of (28) and its subject are the same "to play with explosives". However, by utilizing the extraposition mechanism, in (29) the speaker distinguishes between these two rules: s/he introduces a dummy subject "as the grammatical subject and puts his listeners in an anticipative mood for the delayed topic which appears at the end of the sentence" (ibid).

Data Analysis

North Korea Nuclear Weapon: A Case Study

As the United States (US) presidency passed from Bush administration to Clinton in 1993, dismantling the North's nuclear program became a top priority (Jackson, 2016). In late 1990s, US and North Korea held several rounds of discussions with the goal of stopping North Korea's ballistic missiles. US and the North are involved in Six-Party Talks with South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia. The meetings focus on establishing a regional multilateral security accord to resolve the North's ballistic missiles (Pinkston, 2008). Those talks reached critical milestones in 2005, when North Korea vowed to eliminate all nuclear weapons and ongoing nuclear projects and rejoin the NPT, in 2007, the parties agreed on a number of measures to carry out that 2005 commitment. However, in 2009, the talks broke down due to disagreements over verification and a widely criticised North Korean missile test. Pyongyang has since stated that it will never return to the talks and that the accords are no longer valid (Davenport, 2020). The North sees its nuclear weapons as a way to compel

erstwhile allies and adversaries to back it and reduce its isolation. Others have no authority to interfere with North Korea's nuclear weapons, according to the North Korean government. It has the authority to impose whatever security measures are necessary also, as a sovereign nation it has the ability to create nuclear weapons if it so chooses. Attempts to deprive it of that right are dangerous.

Data Collection

The data of the current study composes of thirty-three political texts, which are chosen in a random way from seventeen editorials: Six editorials from The Washington Post, another six ones from The New York Times, and five from The Wall Street Journal. The selected texts are taken from the newspapers' online archives. They accustom some editorials to address various affairs they are related to the North Korea nuclear weapons published between 2006 and 2021. The selected editorials are randomly chosen.

The Analysis of Passivization

Text No.1

"Even if they disagreed about the nuclear program and relations with the outside world, however, reformers and hard-liners are driven by a shared goal of survival, experts said" (NYT, June 28, 2008)

The employment of passivization here reorganizes the sentence according to Given-New principle. Via topicalizing the direct object which is the notional topic of the above underlining sentence and the Given unit of information. This shifting of the position gives prominence to the sentence topic "reformers and hard-liners". The subject of the above underlining sentence "a shared goal" is considered as the New unit of information and the shifting of the positions, from the initial to the end position, makes the end-focus falls on it. Thus, the passivization process helps the editor in organizing the units of information in the above underlining sentence, as well as, assigning the prominence to the sentence topic. The editor intends to convince readers that because of the U.S threat the North decides to give up its cooling tower. And this event could be a step toward denuclearization.

Text No.2

"Although North Korea is not believed to be capable of delivering warheads to the U.S. mainland, it is considered a threat on U.S. troops in South Korea and Japan."

(WP, Sept 9, 2016)

While describing the American attitude toward the North threat the editor utilizes passivization process twice. He topicalizes the object "North Korea" of the sentence "somebody doesn't believe North Korea" to make it the topic of the sentence "North Korea is not believed". The same process is applied on the sentence that follows the first sentence in the above text. The editor topicalizes the object "it" of the sentence "somebody considers it" to be the topic of the present sentence. The pronoun "it" has an anaphoric reference, the editor replaces the noun "North Korea" by the pronoun "it". The agent of the above two sentences is omitted for two reasons. The first reason is to put the focus on the VP, i.e. the action of the sentence "is believed" in the first case and "is considered" in the second one. The second reason is that the agent is identified in the previous discourse, i.e. the international community, and it is obvious from the context, therefore, the editor views that he doesn't have to mention it again. The employment of topicalization process here reorganizes the two sentences according to Given-New principle. That is, the topicalizing of the noun "North Korea", which is the notional topic and the given information of the first underlining sentence of the above text, and the pronoun *it*, which is the notional topic and the given information of the second underlining sentence, reorder the two sentences as follow:

- 1.a. Somebody doesn't believe North Korea
[New] [Given]
- 1.b. North Korea is not believed
[Given] [New]
2. a. Somebody considers it
[New] [Given]
2. b. It is considered
[Given] [New]

The aim of the editor here is to give some prominence to the main topic of the above sentences, which is "North Korea", and divide the focus between the Given and New units of information in the sentences. As well as, the non-canonical order of the sentence draws the reader's attention on this particular parts of the text. He intends to convince the readers that North Korea nuclear weapon does not represent any threat to the U.S.A, but it may do so for the American troops in Japan and South Korea.

Text No. 3

"Despite a number of failed missile tests this year, North Korea's nuclear ambitions have barely been mentioned in this year's U.S. presidential race."

(WP, Sept 9, 2016)

The editor topicalizes the direct object of the sentence "The candidates have barely

mentioned North Korea's nuclear ambitions in this year's U.S. presidential race" in order to focus on the sentence's action and give prominence to the notional topic "North Korea's nuclear ambitions" of the above underlining sentence. Also, the topicalizing of the NP "North Korea's nuclear ambitions" reorders the sentence to follow the principle of Given-New. The editor intends here to seize the reader's attention and convince them that despite the ripe development of the North nuclear program, its repeatedly and frankly challenge to the U.S.A, as well as its threat to the U.S.A troops in Japan and South Korea, the government and the presidential candidates don't give the matter, i.e. "North Korea's nuclear ambitions", much importance.

Text No. 4

"The launch was even commemorated with a monument, featuring a poem devoted to "the eternal and immortal achievement that has borne great power." Today Mr. Kim faces a range of problems, including severe economic sanctions, a spate of natural disasters and the pandemic, but his hold on power was made far more secure on that night in 2017"

(WSJ, Nov. 25, 2020)

The editor topicalizes the object, "the launch", of the sentence *The North Korean commemorated the launch with a monument*. The purpose of using this type of Topicalization is to mark "the launch", which is the center of attention, as thematic. The subject isn't mentioned since it is obvious from the context. The employment of Topicalization here is to give the noun phrase "the launch" prominence and thus convince the reader that North Korean's missile is a real threat since they are celebrating in launching, in contrast to the Americans who are celebrating "Thanksgiving". The editor returns to employ Passivization in the same text. He adds that in spite of the economic problems, natural disasters, and the pandemic, which the North faces, but "his impoverished country's nuclear deterrent", as he describes it, made Kim's hold on power more secure. He topicalizes the object "his hold on power" to highlight this constituent of the sentence in order to emphasize the action of the sentence and obviate the need for a lengthy active subject. The using of Passivization here serves the editor's aim, which is to represent North Korea as a poor country that leaves its main problems and runs behind building nuclear weapons and expanding its nuclear arsenal.

Text No. 5

"Any NC3 system must be nimble enough that nuclear weapons are always working and can be used when needed, but must also have robust enough checks and balances that the bombs are never used without proper authorization or detonated by accident."

(WSJ, Nov. 25, 2020)

The editor topicalizes the object "nuclear weapon" of the canonical sentence "*Someone can use a nuclear weapon*". Passivization is used here because the editor views that there is no need to mention the doer of the action, either the identification of the doer is not significant or it is clear from the setting. He adds that nuclear weapons should be checked and balanced to make sure that "the bombs are never used without proper authorization or detonated by accident". Again, the editor uses Passivization to highlight the object "the bombs", at the same time, to emphasize the actions "used and detonated". Also, he places the end focus on the adverbial phrase "by accident". The editor employs Topicalization to give prominence to certain elements in the text, *the launch, the bombs*. He tries to manipulate by introducing flimsy reasons to prove that North Korea can't control her nuclear weapons.

The Analysis of Pseudo-cleft Transformation

Text No. 6

"Here's what the North's intercontinental ballistic missile looks like, at least as experts can best determine." (NYT, Sept. 3, 2017).

An image of the North Korean missile is attached preceded by the above underlining sentence. The canonical structure of the above underlining sentence is "*the North's intercontinental ballistic missile looks like here*". The sentence is nominalised by utilizing wh-mechanism and the result is an equative sentence. That is, identifying the constituents which convey the new piece of information.

- Non-identifying Construction:

the North's intercontinental ballistic missile looks like here

- Identifying Construction:

Here's what the North's intercontinental ballistic missile looks like.

The notional topic of the pseudo-cleft sentence is "*what the intercontinental ballistic missile*", while *here* is a grammatical topic. By using this type of topicalisation the editors identify to the readers the most important piece of information in the present sentence. The topic of the sentence "*the intercontinental ballistic missile*" is emphasized and the end-focus falls on it. The adverb *here* is topicalized to occupy

topic position although it is not the topic of the present sentence. It is topicalized to gain focal prominence. The adverb *here* points forward to the following visual information in the editorial. The editors use Pseudo-cleft to combine the visual and verbal information. Also, they give the readers directives regarding the scope of the sentence focus by the explicit division of the information carried into two distinct parts.

Text No. 7

"What's clear is that the North is trying hard and making progress." (NYT, Sept. 3, 2017)

The subject complement "clear" of the non-identifying sentence "that the North is trying hard and making progress is clear" is topicalised. Then the wh-clause is inserted. The result of this manipulation is to identify the sentence "What's clear is that the North is trying hard and making progress". The wh-clause "what's clear" is the topic of the sentence, or the given piece of information. While the second clause of the sentence "that the North is trying hard and making progress" is the comment, or the new piece of information. Through the employing of pseudo-cleft construction, the editors tend to provide a strong clarification of this issue, or provide an answer to the question, which is asked by the editors in the title of the present editorial "Can North Korea Use it with a Nuclear Weapon?".

Text No. 8

"What it said was the new weapon. But it was unclear whether the test was actually of a hydrogen bomb" (NYT, Sept.3, 2017).

The sentence "what it said was the new weapon", from the above text, is manipulated from its regular non-identified structure "it said the new weapon". Pseudo-cleft construction gives the given unit of information "what it said" some prominence and increasing the communication dynamisms of the new unit of information "the new weapon". The employment of this construction here helps to clarify the division of focus between the sentences' clauses. Thus, the reader pays more attention on the new information unit "the new weapon", which gains additional focus. Although there is no shifting to the left periphery of the sentence, the editors succeed in giving prominence and highlighting the sentence's topic "what it said". The editors intend to draw the reader's attention on this sentence of the text. The highlighting of the topic "what it said" reflects that the editors here are not convinced of the North last announcement, that its last test was of a hydrogen bomb. The editors' unconvincing is

approved in the next lines of the same text by utilizing extraposition. They topicalise the new information "was unclear" of the sentence "whether the test was actually of a hydrogen bomb was unclear" and delay the given one "the test was actually of a hydrogen bomb". The purpose behind the topicalising of the comment of the sentence "was unclear" is to introduce the editors' opinion in a rhetorically effective way and at the same time increasing the communicative dynamism by delaying the real topic of the sentence "whether the test was actually of a hydrogen bomb". Thus, this process helps the editors in evaluating the present stance as unclear.

Text No. 9

"But one thing we've learned about Kim is that he doesn't like to be ignored for long." (WP, Apr. 15 2021).

The expression "one thing" is extended form of "what". The editor cleaves the underline sentence into two clauses. The first clause contains the notional topic of the sentence "we've learned about Kim". The question posed by this pattern is "what is we have learned about Kim?" This pattern is more precise than what-pattern. It's simply identifying the second clause as the most prominent part of the sentence "he doesn't like to be ignored for long". By using pseudo-cleft construction, the editor divides the focus between the given information "one thing we've learned about Kim" and the new one "he doesn't like to be ignored for long". The purpose of employing this topicalisation type is to draw the reader's attention on this sentence. Also, the editor replies, through the utilization of this version of pseudo-cleft construction, to the implied question, which is what have we learned about Kim?

Analysis of Cleft Transformation

Text No. 10

"It is a card that the North is unlikely to give up easily." (NYT, June 28, 2008).

The editor cleaves the simple sentence "the North is unlikely to give up a card easily" into two clauses. Firstly, the direct object of the simple sentence is topicalised: "A card (that) the North is unlikely to give up easily", then, the dummy subject *it* and the present form of the verb to be are inserted in order to make the sentence grammatically accepted: "It is a card (that) the North is unlikely to give up easily." The employment of cleft construction here makes the above underlining sentence the most prominent sentence among the other sentences in the text. Also, it makes the clefted constituent more

prominent element in order to be introduced as the topic of the following discourse. The function of the cleft construction here is to define the noun phrase "a card". That is, the sentence "It is a card that the North is unlikely to give up easily" could provide a new definition of the word card, regardless of other definitions of the word card, but its reference here is different. A card here means what "the North is unlikely to give up easily", i.e. the nuclear weapon. The editor intends, through utilizing this type of topicalization, to draw the attention of the readers on a particular element of the sentence "a card". Since it will be the topic of the following discourse.

Text No. 11

"Here are some of the systems the North needs to advance or master."

(NYT, Sept. 3, 2017)

The editors divide the simple sentence "The North needs to advance or master some of the system here" into two clauses. Firstly, the phrase "some of the system" is topicalised: "some of the system the North needs to advance or master"; the adverb here is also topicalized to occupy the topic or subject position, then the present form of verb to be is inserted to make the sentence more acceptable grammatically. Topicalization is employed here to give more prominence to the topicalised elements "some of the system", which is a new piece of information. Simultaneously, the end-focus falls on the cleft clause "The North needs to advance or master", which is already known or given information. The purpose of topicalising the adverb here is to "fit the scene-sitting to the weightier information" that follow it. Thus, the place adjunct here is a grammatical subject while the notional subject is "some of the system". One can notice, by reading loudly the simple form of the above sentence and the complex one, that the editors try to draw the reader's attention on a particular part of the sentence which is "some of the systems". Through the utilizing of the non-canonical form of the above sentence, the editors intend to hold the interest of the readers on what is coming in the rest of the editorials. The function of the cleft structure is to identify to the readers the phrase "some of the systems" as the most important piece of information in the present discourse.

Text No.12

"It's a numbers game that can play to the offense." (NYT, Sept. 3, 2017).

The clefted sentence "It's a number game that can play to the offense" is derived from the

simple sentence "a numbers game can play to offense". The NP "a numbers game" is the topicalized element, although it does not shift to the left periphery of the sentence, since it is already there, but it gains the most important feature of clefting which is focal prominence. The above sentence begins with empty *it* which is followed by a present form of verb to be, which is in turn succeeded by the NP "a numbers game", on which the focal prominence falls. The clefted constituent "a numbers game" is New unit of information while the rest of the sentence conveys Given information unit. The editors intend to mark the contrast between the NP "a numbers game" and the previous discourse of the editorial.

Text No.13

"It is a point that he frequently mentions" (WSJ, Oct. 1, 2020).

The editor calves the simple sentence "*he frequently mentions a point*" into two clauses by topicalizing the direct object "*a point*": "*A point he frequently mentions*", then, he inserts the empty *it*, as the subject of the matrix clause, and the present form of the "verb to be" to make the sentence acceptable grammatically: "*It is a point that he frequently mentions*". Thus, the purpose of using cleft construction here is to emphasize the noun phrase "*a point*". The editor intends to call the reader's attention on the above underlined sentence. In the conclusion of the editorial, the editor represents the North Korean nuclear weapon as the strength point which it shoots a line about. The function of the cleft sentence here is identifying to the reader the thing which is frequently mentioned in North Korean leader speeches.

Analysis of Extraposition

Text No.14

"Although it may take several days to determine how powerful it was." (WP, Sept. 9, 2016).

The editor topicalises the comment of the sentence "*may take several days*" and simultaneously delays the notional topic of the canonical sentence: "*to determine how powerful it was may take several days*", and inserts anticipatory *it* to occupy the position of the subject. The editor utilizes extraposition to present his evaluative view in an effective rhetorical manner, as well as give some prominence to the topicalised part of the sentence. He intends to say that the North Korean's claim that its last nuclear test was "its biggest" is untrue since the determination of the test power takes "several

days". Thus, the editor here makes use of extraposition process to criticize North Korea for the inaccuracy of its statements.

Text No.15

"Though it is difficult to assess North Korea's claims about the potency of its nuclear test" (WP, Sept. 9, 2016).

In the above sentence, the editor topicalizes the comment of the sentence "*to assess North Korea's claims about the potency of its nuclear test is difficult*". The editor inserts anticipatory *it* to fill the gap, which results from the delaying of the subject, and it refers to the non-finite clause which is placed the extraposed clause. The editor is motivated to employ extraposition here because of the heavy information load which the topic contains "*to assess North Korea's claims about the potency of its nuclear test*". Therefore, extraposition is employed to redistribute the sentence according to end-focus principle. This process places the focal prominence on the topicalized comment "*is difficult*". Through the utilization of extraposition, the editor intends to evaluate the truthfulness of the information included in the extraposed clause, notwithstanding the fact that it is not explicitly stated in the text. Thus, he confirms to the readers that it is still ambiguous whether the North claims concerning its nuclear capacity is true or false.

Text No.16

"It was never inconceivable that North Korea would develop a nuclear weapon and put it on a missile. This is hardly new technology. While only a few countries have built ICBMs, that is because only a few countries have felt the need to deter threats from across the globe. Both the Soviet Union and China were able to establish sophisticated rocket programs even though they lagged behind the West in other sectors. Some early North Korean tests inevitably failed, but there was never reason to think that failures would stop North Korea when they did not stop others." (NYT, Aug.3, 2017).

In the present text, the editor topicalizes the main verb and subject complement "*was never inconceivable*" of the sentence "*that North Korea would develop a nuclear weapon and put it on a missile was never inconceivable*". Through this kind of Topicalization, the editor expresses his own opinion concerning the North Korean nuclear weapon. This structure can help the editor in his attempts to persuade the reader that the North's possession of nuclear weapons is a danger to the United States. Not only by topicalising his evaluate comment, but also by assigning end-focus on the sentence topic

"would develop a nuclear weapon". The editor returns to use extraposition in the conclusion of the text. He topicalizes the main verb and subject complement "was never reason" of the sentence "To think that failures would stop North Korea when they did not stop others was never reason". Though, the function of the topicalized constituent doesn't change, yet the postponement of the subject clause gives more prominence to the complement of the subject "was never reason" and reduce the awkwardness of the sentence. The subject position is occupied by the pronoun *there*, which is considered as a dummy pronoun to fill the trace resulting from the delaying of the notional subject. The editor tends to utilize extraposition at the end of the text as a kind of conclusion. As well as, to reinforce his previous argument concerning the U.S ignorance of the North Korean nuclear weapon.

Text No.17

"It is not known whether the reclusive regime has successfully tested the smaller design"(WP, August 8, 2017).

The comment of the above sentence "is not known" is topicalized. Simultaneously, the topic of the sentence "whether the reclusive regime has successfully tested the smaller design", which conveys Given unit of information, is delayed and the end-focus falls on it. Anticipatory *it* is inserted to fill the gap that results from the delaying of the topic. Extraposition helps in increasing the communicative dynamisms of the above sentence, through putting the new unit of information at the end position. Subsequently, the new information gains the end-focus. What's more, it helps the editors express their evaluation view in an effective rhetorical manner via topicalizing the evaluative comment of the sentence. The editors call the readers' attention on specific sentence among others by employing non-canonical structure. They can't confirm the assessment of the American analysts or refute it, therefore, they evaluate the present stance as unclear or "not known".

Text No.18

"It is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire to play down provocations" (NYT, May 4, 2019).

In the present sentence, the editor delays the subject clause, which is "to play down provocations and dismiss" and, at the same time, topicalises the predicate "is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire".

Subject Predicate

The canonical form: To play down provocations and dismiss is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire.

Trace Predicate Subject

Subject-Shifting: ___ is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire to play down provocations and dismiss.

Predicate Subject

Extrap: It is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire to play down provocations and dismiss.

The anticipatory *it* is inserted to occupy the subject position and it stands for the extraposed subject. In addition, anticipatory *it* places the focus on the delayed topic, since it refers to it cataphorically. One can notice that the extraposed clause includes "a heavy information load." If the editor puts it in topic position, utilizing the canonical construction as in the manipulated instance "To play down provocations and dismiss is perhaps a measure of Mr. Trump's desire", the topic will be overloaded. Therefore, the editor topicalizes the comment of the sentence and simultaneously delays the topic of the sentence. This shifting in the positions produces more balanced sentence. Moreover, extraposition allows the editor to express his opinion via putting the comment in the initial position of the sentence. This Topicalization type supplies the editor with a grammatical structure to evaluate the present stance in a rhetorically effective way. Thus, the editor evaluates the recent North Korean nuclear tests as an intentional move to pressure on the U.S. to get some benefit.

Discussion of the Results

In newspapers' editorials, the various syntactical patterns are employed to create new interesting patterns in form and meaning. One way to do this is by utilizing the different types of topicalization mechanisms. In this study, four types of topicalization are found in the selected data. The following tables will display their occurrence frequencies, their utilization percentages, as well as comparing between the types to display which type of topicalization is dominating and find out the reason behind that. In table (4.1), the number and percentages of each topicalization type in the selected texts of American newspapers' editorials are presented:

Table 1.

Number and Percentage of Topicalization Types

TOP. Type	Total Number	Percentage
Passivization	16	38%
Pseudo-cleft	7	17%
Cleft	6	14%
Extrapolation	13	31%

The result shows that passivization is the dominant type among other types of topicalization. It represents 38% of topicalization types that are used in seventeen American newspapers' editorials. There are many reasons that motivate the political editorialists to employ this type of topicalization: to avoid repetition through the omission of the subject of the sentences. As can be notice in texts number 2 & 3. To reorganize the constituents according to the principle of Given-New. Therefore, the direct object, which is the topic of the sentence that conveys Given information, is topicalized to get back to its original position. Thus, it allows the editorialists to put particular items in the initial position, when there are other items could occupy this position. Likewise, they can easily keep the sentence in connecting with the previous discourse. This can be notice in texts 4 & 5. Another reason is to place the subject at the end of the sentence because it carries new piece of information. As it has been illustrated in texts number 1.

The second dominant type of topicalization in the selected data is Extrapolation. It represents 31% of topicalization types that are used in 17 American newspapers' editorials. Extrapolation occurs thirteen times in eleven texts. It is obviously one of the favorite topicalization types according to the editorialists for some reasons. When the notional topic of the sentence, which carries given information, involves a heavy information load, extrapolation is utilized to delay it and put it in the final position. Simultaneously, when the topic is delayed the comment, which carries new information, is topicalized. Thus, this type manipulates particular sentences to agree with the principle of end-focus, by putting the heavy information in final position which in turn increase the communicative dynamism of the sentences. What's more, it facilitates the processing of information for the readers, and reduces the awkwardness of the sentences. Another reason is to express uncertainty in effective and evaluative comment. In most of the selected texts, the topicalised comment carry an evaluation of probability. Editor evaluates the certainty of the information unit, that are conveyed in the extrapolated clause. Via placing an evaluative comment in initial place of the sentence, where reader expects Given unit of information takes place, not New unit, the

evaluation gets difficult to refute, as a result it becomes rhetorically influential. These kinds of structural roles are observed in most of the analysed data.

It is worth noting that in some cases, editorialists combine between extrapolation and passivization to reinforce objectivity impression. Lastly, one could say that the highly employment of passivization and extrapolation in political editorials is the sense of impersonality. The cold war between America and North Korea due to nuclear weapons and its dangerous consequences that may be seen by other nations and its reflection in the media, and newspapers in particular, imposes on editorialists some responsibility to show objectivity as much as possible.

Pseudo-cleft construction represents 17% of topicalization types that are identified in the data under study. It occurs 7 times in seven texts. In comparison to passivization and extrapolation, pseudo-cleft utilization is limited in the political editorial, however, it is more flexible than them. The main role of pseudo-cleft is to draw the readers' attention on a particular element, of the sentence by placing focal prominence on it, which is the essential feature of topicalization. Although, there is no shifting in the topic or comment position of some pseudo-cleft sentences, they give prominence to the topic and the comment of the sentence. This can be noted in text number 8. The division between Given and New information enables editorialists of grabbing the reader's attention on a particular ideas and then trying to persuade him. Thus, additional focus is put on the items that the editorialist wants the readers to pay attention to. The proper construction of pseudo-cleft is employed when editorialists want to mark explicitly the division of information the sentence and grab the attention of the reader on it. Whereas, other constructions, in which what is replaced by *one thing* and *thing that*, editorialists employ them to answer a presupposed question. This can be noted in text number 9. Another version of pseudo-cleft construction topicalizes the comment of the sentence and delays the topic, that is X + be + Wh-..., which is called reverse pseudo-cleft. This version occurs for one time in the seventeen editorials under study. It is employed to combine the visual and verbal information. Also, they give the readers directives regarding the scope of the sentence focus by the explicit division, as can be noted in text number 6. Thus, Pseudo-cleft is employed in the political editorials to enable editorialists of grabbing the reader's attention on a particular ideas and then trying to persuade him/her, providing an answer to a presupposed question, combining the visual and verbal information, as well as giving the reader directives regarding the

scope of the sentence focus by the explicit division of the two salient parts of the sentence.

Cleft construction represents 14% of topicalization types that are identified in seventeen editorials. It occurs 6 times in 6 texts. It is employed for its significant of organizing the textual of the discourse, it highlights for the readers the piece of information that editorialist wants to focus on, or the center of attention, and the topic of the whole paragraph. As can be noted in the following text:

- a. "It is a card that the North is unlikely to give up easily. In Thursday's declaration, the North disclosed its plutonium-related activities at the Yongbyon reactor, its main nuclear plant. But the much more difficult task of persuading the North to give up its existing nuclear weapons, estimated at roughly half a dozen, comes in the next stage of talks." (NYT, June 28, 2008)

The word card is highlighted and given prominence to be the center of attention. It is launched to be the topic of the whole text.

A double topicalization could occur with cleft construction. This case occurs for two times in the data under study, in the following sentences:

- b. "Here are some of the systems the North needs to advance or master."
(NYT, Sept. 3, 2017)
- c. "Here are three ways talks could be useful even if denuclearization is not realistic" (WP, March 9, 2018)

The above sentence is derived from the canonical sentence "the North needs to advance or master some of the systems here". Instead of inserting dummy *it* to fill the gap resulting from the delaying of the topic, the editorialist chooses to topicalize the adverb of place *here*, which helps to fit the context scene for the coming heavier information. Then, he topicalizes the new information unit "some of the system". The same process is applied to the second sentence above.

As it is the case with pseudo-cleft, cleft construction not always involves shifting in the position between the topic and the comment of the sentence, this can be noted in the following sentence:

- d. "It's a numbers game that can play to the offense." (NYT, Sept. 3, 2017)

In the above sentences the focal prominence is placed on the topic of the first sentence "a numbers game" without the need to shift any element.

Although, cleft construction is supposed to be used widely in written texts, it occurs only 6 times in the data under study. And it is the least frequent among the other type of topicalization. The present study reveals that the reason could be attributed to the type of discourse genre. That is, newspapers editorials usually use literal

language which employs words to point to fact statements. Whereas, cleft construction tends to occur with figurative language, this can be provided by noticing texts number 10, 12, & 13.

There is no occurrence of the VP-Topicalization in the data under study. The reason could be attributed to the present genre of discourse. Thus, VP-Topicalization doesn't occur in the political discourses.

Conclusions

The present study has concluded that there are many purposes behind using topicalisation in political editorials. Topicalisation aids editors to reorganize the constituents of sentences, with an apparent distribution between topic-comment of the sentence. Hence, their messages are efficiently communicated. Shifting positions between topic and comment when there is an overload of information, in the initial position, aids in easing the readers' processing of that information. This characteristic also aids editors to express their evaluation comments concerning the certainty of the mentioned information. Furthermore, topicalisation provides a flexibility in the arrangement of sentence's elements, which gives editors of political editorials a sort of freedom to determine which element of the sentence can fill topic place, and which one can fill comment position. As a result, there is a space to put forward particular theories and ideas, after that trying to persuade or manipulate readers with. In some situations, the restricted flexibility of topicalisation process aids to restricted the changing of original syntactic construction. Consequently, the restricted changing of syntactic construction can be accepted and understood by readers. Through topicalisation process, editors can construct a salient sentence from a simple and normal sentences. This characteristic aids them of grabbing readers' attention on a particular points of the discourse. Also, It assists to strength the sense of impersonality in the discourse through displacing the agent from topic position, which is considered as a very significant feature specially in political discourse, due to the sensitive nature of subjects that this genre of discourse deals with. Topicalisation encourages editors to combine between verbal and visual data via topicalising adverbs of place to point to images or diagrams, which are attached within the editorial text.

As a syntactic device, topicalisation has many structures that can serve diverse purposes. For example, when New information unit occupys initial position, passivization can be utilized to reorganize the sentence according to the principle of Given-New by delaying it to the end of the elements of the sentence. Or, in the

case of New information unit need to be placed in the initial position, extraposition or cleft can be employed. Also, when an obvious division between Given and New units of information need to be displayed cleft and pseudo-cleft are used. Semantically, topicalisation places focal prominence on topic, in order to signal that the most important thing, from the perspective of the editor, is said firstly. As well as, the topicalising of sentences' elements could sometimes cause postponing of other elements, as a result, the postponed elements have the highest level of communicative dynamism. Hence, the resulting sentences are both syntactically and semantically salient. The analysis of data has shown that cleft is restricted in this discourse genre, i.e. political discourse, and it is mostly utilized when the editor's discourse in figurative language. Editors utilize extraposition in political discourse in order to express uncertainty in an effective and evaluative comment. In most of the selected texts, the topicalised comment conveys an evaluation of probability.

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