

On Opinion and Persuasive Writing: Teaching English through Editorials

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Abstract

Learning a language becomes easier when it is interpreted through certain contexts, of which, the sociocultural ones are the most important. Sociocultural interests, norms, customs and values are represented by the language as forms of “persuasive social acts”. Media discourses can be cited as one example in this regard where language is an inevitable means of communicating opinions, making one’s voice heard. Persuasive use makes media discourse interesting to explore in the classroom given the specificities in editorial writing. This paper brings forth a comparative analysis of editorial contents from two newspaper editorials published in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The analysis draws attention to rhetorical strategies and persuasive type of language used by the editors which can be sourced to help in the teaching and learning of English in the classroom.

Keywords: media discourse, newspaper editorial, rhetoric

1. Introduction

This research paper presents how the rhetorical devices and persuasive strategies, constructed by the two newspaper editors in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, can be used in the classroom for the teaching and learning of English. The purpose of choosing editorials from these two newspapers is that cross-cultural research on editorials demonstrates some good samples of “persuasive writing” (Connor, 1996). Our intention is to focus on the use of newspaper editorials in classrooms as an awareness of language-in-use (in context) to enhance language writing skills and to expose learners of English as a second language (ESL) to the editorial genre, which is a particular type of text or “forms of communication that have become conventionalized through repeated use” (Tardy, 2012, p. 2278). We think editorials are useful for understanding rhetorical devices and persuasive strategies; as they represent the voice and opinion of a newspaper (van Dijk, 1995; Pak, 1996). Their discourse strategy is argumentative and persuasive which helps editors construct ideologies and opinions to represent events especially where sociocultural contexts are involved (van Dijk, 1989, 1992). Their concealed opinions are presented as realities to readers (Reah, 2002) and are built upon the ideological principles of a newspaper (Fowler, 1991).

Editorials as model writing compositions help students improve their writing skills (Gunsekera, 1989; Pak, 1996). The linguistic analysis of their reader-directed contents is a relevant practice for English language classes (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013). Moreover, editorials as argued by Vaughan (1994) are a “discourse genre comparable to each other because of the position they hold within their communities of readers” (p.38) and their target is “the social cognitions of the readers” (van Dijk, 1992, p. 244). They are the portraits of “sociocultural identities” drawn by media (Le, 2010); hence they can be practiced as a “context-based” language learning tool, which is a “crucial aspect of language pedagogy” (Bax, 2003, p.278). Babae (2011) presented the newspaper editorials as an example of “persuasive and argumentative writing” (p.5) other than portraying cross-cultural backgrounds and argued that such qualities of editorials imply their use as teaching texts. Therefore, we believe that editorials can serve as meaningful materials apart from course textbooks given that learners are exposed to the “socially preferred ‘ways of doing’ within the community” (Tardy, 2012, p. 2278).

For these unique features, the researchers analyzed the contents of this particular newspaper genre. They have suggested, through this paper, how the editors used certain rhetorical devices persuasively not only to communicate their view points but also to persuade the audience into accepting them. The rhetorical devices they employed included: epithet, hyperbole, labeling, comparison, generalization, expletive, alliteration and consonance, parallelism, allusion,

antithesis, irony, testimony and evidence, simile, metonym, rhetorical questions and cliché. So, on the basis of these findings, the researchers propose that editorials can assist learners to overcome composition writing barriers, to enrich their word repository and to strengthen their footing in using English as a target language. They hope that a comparative study of newspaper editorials like this can serve as a source of pedagogical enlightenment to the students of English language learners and hence promote the use of “genre-based” instruction in the form of editorials.

2. Theoretical Background

Our world is “media-saturated” and media discourses are present in our everyday experiences. One reason to study them, such as newspapers, is due to the important role they play in “mediating society to itself” (Matheson, 2005, p. 1). They are the reflections of our societal acts. As argued by Fairclough (1995), media texts are indicators of sociocultural change which makes them valuable material to study from different research angles. Therefore, according to van Dijk (1988), they should “be accounted for in their own right”, for instance, “as particular types of language use or text and as specific kinds of sociocultural practice” (p. 2). Media are the primary source of knowing the world such as through journalistic opinions (Talbot, 2007) of which the editorials are the best examples, as they provide perspectives to diversity of writing styles which speak volumes. They are the right place for the expressions of newspaper ideologies and opinions (van Dijk, 1995). As a part of media discourse, editorials are useful genre which can be engaged in the teaching and learning of English language. Such writing requires learners to notice the (persuasive) use of words and their construction in forming opinions.

This study relies on the concept of “genre-based” teaching because it allows “more freedom to the participants in the teaching and learning process” (Bhatia, 1993, p.157). For instance, the inclusion of newspaper genre in a language curriculum can ease the learning practice. This can be attained “by using a daily newspaper”, as remarked by Bhatia (1993), which is easily accessible and encompasses “a wide variety of genres [editorials] and sub-genres that can enrich the linguistics repertoire of any language learner” (p. 157). Rhoades and Rhoades (1985) also argued that the use of newspapers as an “educational tool” in a language classroom, for the purpose of instruction, is widespread. Such approaches have been recommended by different scholars. So (2005), for instance, argued that genre-based approach to teaching is useful as it helps learners write “school genres” and reasoned that the use of newspaper genres can overcome writing compositions inadequacies inside the classroom. According to Cope and Kalantzis (1993), the four stages of genre-based instruction include: learners being exposed to the particular genre, learners analyzing the structural patterns of the genre, learners doing the exercise of constructing the genre and learners writing the genre on their own.

Genre features have rhetorical and argumentative constructions of the text (Fairclough, 2003) and it undertakes “writing tasks beyond the courses” (Rahman, 2011, p.1). We find that editorials are loaded with vocabulary and phrases that can stimulate learners’ thinking. What is more, genre-based activities such as the editorials ensure that language is communicated through context (Firkins, Forey & Sengupta, 2007) and consequently provide “an effective writing pedagogy” (Hyland, 2007, p.149). These genre-based pedagogical maneuvers enhance students’ awareness in variety of compositional matters (Brooks, 2002) as manifested in the editorials we analyzed. The rhetorical element in the editorials has wider classroom repercussions. As argued by Roskelly (2008), rhetoric makes “us more successful and able communicators and more discerning audiences” once it is known that “rhetoric works can transform speaking, reading, and writing” (p.7). Genre-based teaching helps learners to engage in critical thinking when they encounter the discourse (e.g., see Hyland, 2012). They have the opportunity to reflect on the social practice and culture of the writers. For example, why is it written in such a way and how is it written? Who are the writers? Genre informs learners of the language in use, the form and purpose as it relates to the communicative event as well as to the writers themselves. In the backdrop of these theoretical perceptions, the researchers find that editorials are worth analyzing as they are valuable resources for teaching in the classroom and are fascinating to explore.

3. Literature Review

Editorials have not been explored much when it comes to using such writings in the teaching and learning of English in the classroom for non-native speakers of English as illustrated by the studies we reviewed. However, they did prove that the use of persuasive figures dominates media discourses like editorials, where editors do rely on such practices to make their voice heard in a resounding way. As argued by van Dijk (1995), editorials are everyday texts which are often taken for granted even though they are rich with various communicative functions.

Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) examined the use of rhetorical strategies and types of presuppositions in the editorial headlines of the English newspaper *The New York Times* and the Persian newspaper *the Tehran Times*, to study their ideologies. By means of contrastive textual analysis, the researchers identified lexical and existential strategies as the most frequent types of presupposition. While, rhetorical devices included parallelism, alliteration, testimonial, metonym, pun, allusion, consonance, neologism and antithesis. In analyzing editorial headlines, the researchers shed some light on the genre-specific characteristics, which “would help the EFL/ESL teachers to guide their students toward a more critical analysis of the media discourse...” (p. 9). They also discussed that “equipping the EFL teachers and students with knowledge on the discourse conventions used in the headlines of the editorials would enhance using of this media discourse, newspaper, as a teaching device in the classrooms” (p. 9).

Fartousi and Dumanig (2012a) investigated rhetorical patterns and rhetorical devices used in the English editorial, *Wishing Iraq Well*, published in the Malaysian newspaper *the New Straits Times*. The study was based on the Systemic Functional (SF) theory of language and genre (Halliday & Hasan, 1989) which identified the following

rhetorical figures, such as, allusion, analogy, zeugma, antithesis, hyperbaton and so on. The researchers claimed that editorials can "... become a writing genre in institutional curriculums" (p.488) to teach students the technique of becoming persuasive writers through effective use of rhetoric. They also asserted that the influence of rhetoric on writing helps students to "involuntarily grow conscious of the persuasive purposes that authors reserve for them" (p.488), sharpen their critical thinking and rhetorical willpower to "not say YES easily to an argumentative written discourse" (p. 488).

Pulido (2011) investigated rhetorical features of Philippine editorials written in English in *The Philippine Star* and the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* by following Systematic Functional Framework (Ansary and Babaii, 2005). The researcher concluded that editorial compositions being argumentative in nature can be implemented "as samples in the teaching of argumentative writing" and there is a possibility that by doing so the "developing writers [students] become more proficient in argumentative writing, a rhetorical pattern required in the academe" (p. 60).

Ashipu (2013) rhetorically analyzed editorials of the *Newswatch* and the *Tell Magazines* through the application of various stylistic models. The researcher maintained that "rhetorical devices are essential components for embellishing thought and to reflect the local colour of language" (p.48). The findings of the study involved rhetorical figures such as simile, personification, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, cliché and idioms, graphology and tone.

Fartousi and Dumanig (2012b) identified the rhetorical pattern of an English editorial *The Hoodies of NWO* published in the *Tehran Times*. The theoretical framework of the study was based on the Systemic Functional (SF) theory of language and genre (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). The researchers discovered several rhetorical figures such as alliteration, allusion, anaphora, metonymy, analogy, parallelism, antithesis, meta-basis, epithet, zeugma, and parataxis as influencing devices for readers.

Miki (2009) analysed how subject-verb (SV) expressions as a rhetorical device contribute to the assertion of expressing editorial stances published in the British newspapers *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph*. The researcher identified two types of editorial groups which involved non-human lexical subjects and human pronominal subjects.

Badarneh (2009) analyzed how the use of rhetorical questions in editorials influences readers to opt for a particular position on certain volatile and controversial issues. The researcher focused on the editorial discourse of the Arabic language newspaper *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and examined several functions of these questions. They included rhetorical questions as a dialogic device, hidden polemic and so on.

Taylor (1995) examined different types of ironic devices used in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, *The Telegraph* and *The Economist*. Some common examples included the use of hyperbole, understatement, exaggeration, paradox, alliteration and so on.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the present paper consisted of ten English language newspaper editorials printed in *The News International* (NI) and the *Arab News* (AN) during January 2011 to December 2012. The corpus included coverage of the crises which broke out in Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The sampling of the research was purposive which represented the editorial coverage of these crises. We categorized the editorials according to their use of rhetorical devices. We then applied content analysis technique to scrutinize rhetorical devices plotted by the editors of the two selected newspapers, as it is appropriate for drawing implications from mass-media messages data (Krippendorff, 2004) and studies wide range of texts, narrations, discussions, editorials and newspaper contents (Macnamara, 2003). The researchers depended on qualitative research design which was considered appropriate for the study of sociocultural developments (Wodak & Busch, 2004) as it includes rich accounts of human attitudes and opinions (Savenye & Robinson, 2008). We compared the following two newspapers to explore how the editors in the two countries varied in their style of writing in terms of the word choice and in the manner in which the editorials were written.

The News International and the Arab News

According to their official websites, both the newspapers have a fair amount of readership which puts them among the elite broadsheets in their respective community of readers. *The News International* is a daily English language newspaper published in Pakistan. It was launched in 1991 and has a circulation of 140,000 copies per day (Newspaper Readership Survey: Aftab Associates for M. Consulting, 2008). The newspaper publishes editorials daily except on Sundays. It is available online (www.thenews.com.pk) and in print. The other newspaper, which is the *Arab News*, is also an English language newspaper and is published in Saudi Arabia. The daily was established in 1975 and has a circulation of 110,000 copies (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2006). It publishes editorials regularly on Fridays and occasionally on other days of the week. The newspaper is also available online (www.arabnews.com) and in print.

Editorial Layout

Editorials usually have of formal length of 200-500 words. They have a fixed place in the newspaper, a special lay-out and a typical header (see for e.g., van Dijk, 1992), as evident in the two newspapers we examined. Their schematic structures have three categories of definition, evaluation and conclusion. Their purpose is to define news events,

evaluate the situation and recommend future strategies of action (van Dijk, 1992). In case of the present study, the two newspapers differ in terms of their editorial layout. For instance, The News International has only one-column structured editorials but the Arab News has one-column structured editorials and two-column structured editorials both. The position for editorials is fixed in both of the newspapers; they are placed on opinion page of their respected newspapers under a typical header. The study revealed that the discourse strategy of the two newspapers demonstrated uniformity and largely depended on rhetorical devices to make their opinion discourse (writing) persuasive.

4.2 Research Questions

For the purpose of this paper, we explored the following elements:

- 1- How does the use of rhetorical figures make the editor's voice sound convincing?
- 2- Do the editors of the two selected newspapers employ similar rhetorical devices?

4.3 Rhetorical Devices and Persuasive Techniques

Newspaper editors make use of such devices and techniques to deliver their opinion in an effective way and to deeply impact on the social insight of readers. As argued by van Dijk (1988), the purpose of these operations is to create "tighter organization", "better memorization" and "enhanced persuasion" such as through the use of parallelism, understatements, alliteration, hyperbole (overstatements, exaggeration) and so on (see van Dijk, 1993). After a careful scrutiny of the selected editorial texts, the rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques which the researchers identified are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Rhetorical Devices and Persuasive Techniques in The New International (NI) and the Arab News (AN)

No	Devices & Techniques	NI (Examples)	AN (Examples)
1	Epithet	<i>brutal and increasingly bloody suppression (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>hard Syrian response (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>dreadful prospect (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>would be the principal loser (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>violent protests (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>western puppet (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>hated former interior minister (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>slake economy (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>latent social unrest (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>circling wolves (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>ailing dictator (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>more brutal and corrupt (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i> <i>cruel and widely hated dictatorship (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i> <i>old faces (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>unpopular government (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i> <i>old guard (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>peaceful protest (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>profound betrayal (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>peaceful revolution (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>sterile and corrupt political order (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>thuggish police force (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>long-festering discontent (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>dramatic turnabout (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>velvet revolution (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>unprecedented event (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>reasonable life style (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>bloody assault (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i> <i>bloody conflict (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i> <i>ruthless tyrant (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>odious tyrant (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>diehard allies (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>diehard views (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i> <i>heartless bombs (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i> <i>blood-thirsty slaughter (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i>
2	Hyperbole	<i>dozens die by the day (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>leaders of decades (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>an audible intake of breath (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>looked set to hand the reins of government on to his sons and other relatives (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>reportedly taking with him as much as 40 million euros in gold bullion (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>there's no question that the primary authors of his overthrow were the Egyptian people (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>millions in US aid (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i>
3	Labeling	<i>Syria's death machine (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>Alawite minority (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i>	<i>Assad's police state tyranny (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i> <i>Qaddafi's crimes (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i>
4	Comparisons	<i>Egypt is very far from achieving what South Africa did in the post-apartheid period (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>Syrians are more likely to be open to back-channel efforts than direct confrontation (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i>	<i>Yemeni president made a Mubarak like promise to stand down (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i>
5	Generalization	<i>options for Assad are few (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>will do nothing to solve any of Egypt's problems (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>few expect him to return to his country of birth (NI, Jun. 07,2011)</i>	--
6	Expletive	<i>ultimately (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>elsewhere (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>there (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>alongside that (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>since then (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>although (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>may be that (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>in effect (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>but if (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>worse (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>for that reason (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>on the plus side (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>indeed (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>in practice (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>yet unfortunately (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i> <i>yet if (AN, Jul.20,2012)</i>
7	Alliteration & Consonance	<i>the old order is fighting (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>far from clear (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>democratic regimes replace despots (NI, Jun. 07,2011)</i> <i>political and social unrest (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>astonishing accomplishment (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>individual initiative (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>how powerful, and peaceful, such a demonstration . . . (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>but not just yet (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i>
8	Parallelism	<i>but for real threat, real change (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>revolutions are never tidy, and the revolution that is still in process in Tunisia is no exception (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>it is the Tunisian people who have made change happen – not the army, not the political establishment . . . , not the opposition, not the unions (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>too many regulations, too much red tape, too much economic power. . . in the hands of an elite (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i>
9	Allusion	<i>bête-noir of Uncle Sam (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>Pahlavi regime (NI, Mar.22,2011)</i> <i>the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>communist Russia (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>Berlin Wall (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>Mussolini (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>Ceausescu (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i>
10	Antithesis	<i>sick but still defiant (NI, Aug.06,2011)</i> <i>no matter that it satisfies a desire for vengeance or creates an illusion of accountability (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i> <i>it is clear that an era has ended in Egypt but it is far less clear what will follow (NI, Aug.10,2011)</i>	<i>Friday was the climax of that rare thing: A popular and peaceful revolution (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>age-old techniques of popular protest and new tools of social media (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i>
11	Irony	<i>a year ago he was the president. . . he is on trial for murder (NI, Aug.6,2011)</i> <i>he suffered the same fate as most dictators (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i>	<i>the president of 23 years. . . . has been forced out of the office. . (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i>
12	Testimony & Evidence	<i>the waves of revolutions in Europe that saw the end of communist Russia (NI, Jan. 21,2011)</i> <i>as evidenced by Colonel Qaddafi in Libya and President Assad in Syria (NI, Jun. 07,2011)</i>	<i>some steps are self-evident (AN, Feb.27,2011)</i> <i>. . . has there been such as dramatic testimony to the desire. . . (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i>
13	Simile	<i>Saleh regime as a bulwark against Al-Qaeda (NI, Jun. 07,2011)</i>	--
14	Metonymy	<i>The upheavals in Yemen may have started from the seeds planted by Tunisia and Egypt (NI, Jun. 07,2011)</i>	--
15	Rhetorical questions	--	<i>How – and even if – that revolution will be translated into a broad-based, democratic government isn't clear. (AN, Mar.13,2011)</i> <i>Will Tunisia return to stability quickly? (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>Will exiles be allowed to come back and compete? (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>Will the public demand retribution for the violence that left so many dead in the riots? (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>Will they turn against the new leadership? (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>Will this open a door for jihadists? (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i> <i>Could it be the turn of the Ali Abdullah Saleh to be forced out of office by popular unrest? (AN, Mar.24,2011)</i>
16	Cliché	--	<i>part and parcel of the same elite. . (AN, Jan.15,2011)</i>

Source: Researchers' data (2013)

5. Findings

Rhetoric is the use of linguistic tactics and play of words by writers or speakers to sway an audience. Editorial rhetoric simply refers to how effectively newspaper editor impose their will through certain devices of persuasion. Results and findings of this cross-cultural analysis revealed that the two newspapers, to a great extent, proved identical in their use of rhetorical manoeuvres. However, on comparison, it was analyzed that some devices were less-frequently used and some were preferred over others by the editors of the two different backgrounds as shown in Table 2. Five categories of variances were spotted in this regard. First, the editors of the *AN* outnumbered those of the *NI* in using rhetorical

devices and persuasive strategies of epithet, expletive, rhetorical questions and cliché. Second, the editors of the *NI* used devices such as allusion, hyperbole, comparison, generalization, antithesis, irony, simile and metonym more than those of the *AN*. Third, in some cases both the newspapers stood equal in their use of these tactics, for instance, labeling, alliteration and consonance, parallelism and testimony and evidence. Fourth, the common devices used by both the newspapers included epithet, hyperbole, labeling, comparison, expletive, alliteration and consonance, parallelism, allusion, antithesis, irony and testimony and evidence. Fifth, in their rare use of devices, rhetorical questions and cliché were not found in the *NI* and generalization, simile and metonym were absent in the *AN* editorials.

Table 2. Frequency of Rhetorical Devices and Persuasive Techniques in *The New International (NI)* and the *Arab News (AN)*

No	Devices & Techniques	<i>NI</i> (Frequency)	<i>AN</i> (Frequency)
1	Epithet	16	18
2	Hyperbole	5	2
3	Labeling	2	2
4	Comparisons	2	1
5	Generalization	3	0
6	Expletive	6	10
7	Alliteration & Consonance	4	4
8	Parallelism	2	2
9	Allusion	4	3
10	Antithesis	3	2
11	Irony	2	1
12	Testimony & Evidence	2	2
13	Simile	1	0
14	Metonym	1	0
15	Rhetorical questions	0	7
16	Cliché	0	1

Source: Researchers' data (2013)

It has been proven, through the findings of this research, that the newspaper editors greatly relied on persuasive techniques to communicate the voice of their respective newspapers and to shape the opinions of their readers. The style adopted by the editors openly demonstrated their typical editorial way of approaching the crises subjectively and categorizing the actors through certain figures of rhetoric. This identical approach in handling the crises implies that newspaper editors of different societies and cultures behave in a similar style to build their argumentative strategies on a particular issue. Their silent power of pen speaks volumes when their ideological opinions are expressed in the form of editorial texts. However, such ideological stances may not serve the purpose all the intended audience but their very existence, as shown in the editorials we explored, witnesses the use of pen-supremacy possessed by newspaper editors.

6. Discussion

The study has illustrated that editors commonly use persuasive elements to formulate opinions, such as, through the choice of words and the functions they perform and through their ideologies and argumentative strategies. They do employ rhetorical tactics, which, according to McGuigan (2011), majorly function to enhance composition, persuade, inform and express. Andrus-Henry (2008) commented that rhetoric and composition should be incorporated into English classes so that students can produce "good writing" in different contents and contexts to meet the standards of sophisticated audience. This practice will enable them to "demonstrate a critically conscious understanding of reading and writing in personal, professional, social, cultural, and political contexts" (p.75). For instance, this is true in case of newspaper editorials which are an epitome of all such contexts. Hence, the researchers argue that editorials can be implemented as *writing-exploring tools* in ESL classrooms to identify the language used in a particular context. Their analysis sharpens students' awareness of the world they live in. As stressed by Graff (2010), students' rhetorical analysis of newspaper articles can "provide important insights for them about how language works in everyday life" (p.376).

In view of the above arguments, some ESL classroom activities are suggested to practice the use of rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques. Student writers can be prepared through the following editorial-based classroom learning activities. For example, a classroom instructor may assign learners to study a particular piece of editorial and later ask them to identify and explain the devices used to construct arguments. He can also help them practice such devices by referring to a particular context in which a device is placed. As a group task, he may enlist several rhetorical terms and let students cite an example for each from editorial excerpts distributed to class. Students can be tested by giving multiple choices about these devices and by giving justification for each rhetorical use. They can also be examined through Wh-questions of which, when, why and how by making them analyze a particular instance of rhetoric.

In addition, rhetorical situations can be created in the form of peer groups with each group having a specified audience. Or, students can be asked to write about their daily life experiences or real life incidents by giving supportive arguments and facts to convince audience. Such steps will help learners learn how ideas are communicated through different modes of persuasion. According to Roskelly (2008), it is the job of instructors to make student writers familiar with rhetorical understandings. This can be done by giving them some written assignments with specific instructions on the use of rhetoric where they know what their audience expects from them and what it will look for. Pulido (2011)

suggested that editorials may be used as “topics for discussion since it appears that the argumentative nature of these texts begs for the reaction of their readers” (p. 61) and students can agree or disagree by defending themselves through logical arguments.

Thus, persuasive pieces of writing are produced in the guise of editorials. It is due to this *camouflaged* feature of editorials that they become qualified models to be used in language classrooms for teaching writing and inspiring critical thinking skills of students. This is evident in the choice of words and through the writing style explored in the various stances of the editors. This contextual use of persuasive language in editorials enables language learners to study a particular rhetorical device within the context and also increase their knowledge of genre and the art of rhetoric. Since genre informs learners of the language in use, therefore genre-based teaching can be done in the classroom using the editorials. In that way, both teachers and students can make use of the editorials to understand how ideas are posited through the words and the writing style. The use of rhetoric in editorials is advantageous to reinforce the skill of academic writing by switching over learners to wide-ranging practices of persuasive tools.

7. Conclusion and Implications

In this paper, we have demonstrated how “one’s voices can be heard” through the choice of language expressed in the editorials, how such pieces of writing can play an important role in the teaching and learning of English and how the ideas are represented rhetorically. English lessons can then be made *fun* when students and teachers discuss and share their reactions to the issues in daily life. By exploring the editorial contents, students can better understand why and how these opinions are constructed and to some extent how words are manipulated. The study was conducted to emphasize on the use of editorials as an interesting aid to English teaching and learning. The analysis has enough evidence to suggest editorials as suitable teaching material for the advancement of the writing skills of English language learners given that their discourse is not limited to a sentence or two. Rather, these persuasive units of writing are viable teaching tools and their proper application in language classrooms can bring fruitful results.

The researchers hope that this study will contribute to the genre-based language teaching in language for specific purposes and English for specific purposes realms. In addition, it will be a good source of encouragement for teachers who are interested in building the writing skills of their students. Equally, it will boost the ambition of student writers to imitate the use of such persuasive compositional styles and opinion writing in a real world environment. Therefore, a full-scale and profound study is recommended to further explore and focus on opinion discourses of newspaper editors due to their wide-ranging implications from language classrooms to general public.

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