

Principles of Writing Paragraphs in Persian

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ABSTRACT: Important but ignored issue of writing paragraph in Persian is somehow so ingrained with minds of writers which are seen clumsily applied in writing. Of course its application is sometimes incorrect and it is attempted to overcome this problem by appropriate training. Considering different approaches and applications of the paragraph, various ideas about it have been defined. Common linguistic and visual elements are observed in all these definitions. Considering syntactic definitions, writing and categorization of paragraphs would be investigated in the press in this work. In academic linguistic or writing rules, paragraph is not merely a piece of writing which is distinguished from other similar pieces by line distances, but it means a structure and form which is inside this piece of speech and makes thought expression easier for the writer and makes content understanding easier for the reader. Thus, only because of lack of visual distinction of paragraphs in Old Persian written versions, it cannot be claimed that this basic structure is missing in Persian prose. Influence of order and configuration of paragraphs in the newspapers and the impact on the reader and more importantly content coherence and coherent appearance for the material are important factors in writing paragraph in newspapers.

Key Words: Paragraph, Press, Newspaper Writing

INTRODUCTION

Paragraph with French equivalent "paragraphe" has a Greek root including two parts: para (meaning side) and graphos (writing), and in overall it means "written in the side". Paragraph is in fact an old term which is applied to a sign drawn in left margin of the text in the form of a horizontal line. Definition of paragraph: in reference books such as a Larousse, paragraph has been defined as small part of prose pieces and book chapters and like that (Evans, 2010). Dehkhoda and Moeen dictionaries have also adopted this definition. Academy of Persian Language and Literature has offered a definition equivalent to clause for paragraph and considers it as part of writing which talks about a specific topic and it is separated from other parts by initiation of a separate line.

A paragraph is a set of sentences which explains a main concept. Usually this main concept is stated in "topic sentence" which is often the first sentence of the paragraph and it is written with indentation. Other sentences of paragraph should help development and explanation of the topic sentence which are called "supporting sentences". Some paragraphs contain also "closing sentence" which summarizes the main topic of the paragraph or reminds an important point about it. This sentence is given generally at the end of paragraph (Shomossi et al., 2012). In writing all these sentences, the writer should state a unique concept with a logical order.

In fact paragraph is an old term in version discussion and it is applied on a sign which is drawn in left margin of the text in the form of a horizontal line, and it is used with special signs (text, line or dots) for separation of text distinct parts.

Paragraph with French equivalent "paragraphe" has a Greek root including two parts: para (meaning side) and graphos (writing), and in overall it means "written in the side". Paragraph is in fact an old term which is applied to a sign drawn in left margin of the text in the form of a horizontal line. Definition of paragraph: in reference books such as a Larousse, paragraph has been defined as small part of prose pieces and book chapters and like that (Evans, 2010).

Among different definitions for paragraph and its parts, the definition proposed by Philip von Guttman, French researcher, is more clear and detailed and it seems more consistent with the view of Abdul Khaliq Mihani. He defines paragraph structure as follows:

Paragraph structure: paragraph is a semantic unit or information set which is essentially including 4 elements:

Connection with previous paragraph (topic + predicate)

Short information sentence (subject + predicate)

Extension of information (with supporting sentences)

Short but rich summarization (closing sentence) (Gorjian and Pazhakh, 2012).

Von Gutman argues that this paragraph structure seems somehow rigid. However, after learning it is possible to apply it with flexibility in different combinations and forms. Of course it should be noted that the first element, connection with previous paragraph is a semantic issue and can be provided in different eloquence form. The principle is that the connection with previous material is provided anyway. The fourth element, paragraph summarization, is the same to a large degree and it has been considered as optionally in most sources (Amini, 2010).

Paragraph has a formed organization and system with three major parts:

Topic Sentence: it states the main topic of the paragraph.

Supporting Sentence: it expands the topic sentence by providing more informant and giving examples.

Closing Sentence: it shows that the clause is ending and reminds an important point which would be memorized by the reader (Amini, 2010).

Features of Topic Sentence

Topic sentence is the most important sentence of the paragraph. This sentence in summary says what is going on in the paragraph. Thus, topic sentence is a good guide for the reader and writer. The writer knows which information should be contained in the following sentences. The reader understands the topic of the paragraph and is prepared for better understanding of the paragraph (Evans, 2010).

Five points about topic sentence:

It is perfect and short

Example: "language width of each nation and its interpretation power represents culture richness and thought depth of its people". The richer the culture and more thoughtful the people, inevitably wider language is required so that the people can express their minds and internal world. Thus, if it is said that the language is means of thinking, it is not vain. It is clear that someone whose language is messy and unorganized, he would have also disturbed and unstable thought, and vice versa (Amini, 2010).

Nor too general neither too specific

Learning English language is very difficult (too general)

One of the difficulties in learning English language is because of memorizing foreign words (it is appropriate)

It is clear and non-ambiguous

Such terms as 'it is interesting', 'it is good' or 'it is unique' may beautify your text, but they are ambiguous. It's better to have clear and accurate description of the topic instead of using such terms (Amini, 2010).

It is sometimes stated in question form.

It is sometimes located in other parts of the paragraph (Amini, 2010).

The first sentence of each paragraph is initiated by indentation which shows another point. This indentation in the first line of the paragraph is about 0.5-1 cm and it is shown in typing by 4 spaces (Tebeaux, 2011).

Paragraph integrity

Paragraph is a set of sentences that extends a core belief.

Central vision is usually set in the original sentence.

Each sentence of the paragraph should help to extend the original sentence (Amini, 2010).

Distancing

The first sentence of each paragraph has always a distance so that the reader knows he deals with a new topic- or a different aspect of the same topic. This indentation in the first line of the paragraph is about 0.5-1 cm and it is shown in typing by 4 spaces. The writer does it by indenting in the beginning of each paragraph. The reason for indentation in the beginning of the sentence is as simple as any other writing signs. As a sentence begins with a dot, a new paragraph also begins with a distance (Mir-Abedini, 2005).

Paragraph Length

Paragraph may be too long. Some paragraphs are totally short. Some are very long. Mostly paragraphs contain over three sentences and 100-200 words.

Paragraph History in Language

"Has the paragraph been considered in ancient Persian literature?"

As it was mentioned at the beginning, principles of writing paragraph has been regarded as a kind of mental order regardless of recent definitions in edition and writing books.

By investigating ancient texts with probability of deviation or changes, sometimes a special order can be observed in the texts which reflect material distinguishing and distinction, or even some material may have

been written separately for indicating its important. It can be discussed by observation and comparison of the pictures and manuscripts, however, it cannot be obviously said that ancient writers paid attention to this issue (Tebeaux, 2011).

Findings for signs for this attention in manuscripts shows paying attention to an unconscious mental order. By studying related research papers and comparison with ancient manuscripts, it seems that our ancestors had a kind of mental clarity and order while writing and observed it, although it is not possible to state obviously that principle of paragraph writing have been observed in the ancient texts. However, it can be accepted that organization of material and form of lining has been observed in some specific cases (like Al-Anbiah) (Mohammad and Moradian, 2011).

Writing Paragraph in Press

The topic of this discussion is principles of writing paragraph in press. Journalistic prose of newspapers, due to their precipitance and edition points specific to press and paging which is done based on material importance, have special methods. Observing such methods help organization of the material form, and lack of their observance leads to confusion of the reader and his reluctance to pursue more. Main parts of journalistic paragraphs include: 1. Topic sentence, 2. Supporting sentences, 3. closing sentence.

Topic sentence is very important in writing journalistic papers, since it gives the major idea of the material with proper encapsulation. These paragraphs usually contain 150-200 words. Journalistic paragraphs are started by an attractive sentence or question because of lack of time. Proposing a question may be in such a way that shows the writer knows the material and persuades the reader to pursuing the remaining. One or two material is not stated in such paragraphs and the reader doesn't feel to be invaded by the materials. If the material has complex and long clauses, it should be divided into several short and summarized paragraphs so that its reading and understanding is easy for the reader.

Paragraphs which are written in vertical columns and express a short material in compressed manner usually lack organized form and the sentences are mounted in one line. In such paging, writing signs and appropriate use of them guide the reader for pauses and emphasis (Rasooli et al., 2011). In observing these structures, semantic unity should be preserved and connection of each paragraph with the previous one should be considered and the reader should be able to provide a detailed and perfect conclusion. The difference between general paragraphs and paragraphs in journalistic papers, which are usually not over 7 to 10 sentences, is that paragraphs are more brief in newspaper columns and general rules of paragraph are not applied on them (Mir-Abedini, 2005).

For writing paragraph in newspaper, key words should be considered and the major points should be mentioned at the end. If a question is proposed by the writer, it should be answered. It is better that each key concept is dealt with in separate paragraphs. Some abbreviations in names and numbers and positions as well as jobs should be observed, but observing them is not necessary in all papers (for address, abbreviations should be used, but numbers and figures are always used). Quotation is used for naming title of books, TV programs or radio archives, poems, and speeches, but it is not used for magazines and newspapers. Newspapers use small lines stating topic and subject matter for bolding the paper and foster it within paragraph lines.

In classification of writing principles in journalistic papers it should noted that in the topic and structure is introduced in initial paragraph and lines, then ideas of the writer and his analysis and arguments are provided. Finally report conclusion is given. First 5-6 paragraphs are the main part for the beginner journalists for completion of the paper and impressing the audience.

Multi-page papers which are published in specialized journals are classified into separate parts with more detailed topics and subjects, and specific materials are given below each topic. For example, in blogging style paper in Persian, after mentioning the abstract and instruction, research steps are stated:

Style

Stylistics

Features of writing and speech,

And below each topic, the subject is discussed in one or more paragraphs and definitions and analysis are given. Then continuation of the material is provided in the following numbering (Mir-Abedini, 2005).

Research Method

Data Analysis

Classification of Blogs

Writing Stylistic Features of Blogs

Grammatical Features

Lexical Features

Common Terms Use in Daily Language in Web Pages

CONCLUSION

Thus although it is assumed that paragraph is merely division of a writing to short pieces for easier reading or writing, according to previous theoretical and academic studies in other languages and especially English, this work showed that this is only one of various features of paragraph.

Paragraph is regarded as a fluid and multifaceted discourse unit, accurate definition of which requires more thought and study, because its minimum unit is one sentence and in some cases it may extend to several pages. Thus examination, analysis and definition of paragraph is an important linguistic matter which may also be considered in terms of philosophical and sociological perspectives due to its structure and writing style being influenced highly by the culture and thought.

Writing paragraph not only is important in creating communication with the audiences, but it is also important in terms of aesthetics and provided text. This aspect not only helps elimination of ambiguity from the text, but also helps attracting the audience directly. News, report, interview or paper which are written by short sentences and paragraphs beautify newspaper paging and prevent from rapid boredom. It also helps modification after typesetting. Writing paragraph has a historical root in all nations. It has been considered in ancient Persian texts in the old letters of Beihaghi History. Writers of this text preferred to specify work steps by numbering and stated the main matters in each paragraph. Of course, it is not the same pattern preserved in all papers and it is not recommended for all papers, but it is a good and rapid method in this way that helps clarification and reading paper. In review of research periodicals it can be concluded that in the papers which are published in periodicals, mostly separating paragraphs and changing direction of the material and subject is done using such titling, and each time paragraphs are used below a topic for expressing a single subject, however, in newspapers as well as in papers with lower volume published in compressed columns, there is no specific limits for paragraphs and there is no tool for separating them, and the change between lines to new lines is done by a question or a sentence. Lack of observing visual appearance of paragraph in such papers causes that the reader moves in a flat path with not ups and downs and thus reads the paper in one line like newspaper; as if one reads a 200-sentence paper in one very long sentence, and then analyzes it to smaller lines. The suggestion is that a set of new writing signs specific for Persian language is developed so that the theme is not lost and the reader is not reluctant and discouraged. By such signs it is possible to show division between introduction, abstract and the main text body with conclusion within a detailed and brief volume, and even lack of space and compressing the text in columns do not hurt the material.

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