

RHETORICAL DEVICES USED IN TOURISM NEWS HEADLINES ON BBC AND CNN

Alfarest Tarigan, Ika Kartika Amilia

English Department, University of LIA
2021410040@universitaslia.ac.id, ika.kartika@universitaslia.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of rhetorical devices in global news headlines from BBC and CNN, based on a sample of 50 headlines published between 2024 and 2025. The analysis is guided by Harris's (2017) framework, focusing on rhetorical devices such as amplification, personification, metaphor, hyperbole, antithesis, parallelism, simile, synecdoche, and metonymy. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, which includes reviewing relevant literature and analyzing the content of the selected headlines. The findings reveal that BBC headlines tend to employ amplification more frequently, with a percentage of 36.0%, in order to provide clearer explanations and deliver information effectively without exaggerating the facts. In contrast, CNN headlines show a preference for hyperbole, with a frequency of 33.3%, as a way to evoke stronger emotions and make the news more appealing to readers. Overall, this study highlights that rhetorical devices in headlines serve not only as tools for presenting information but also as strategies to shape readers' perceptions more persuasively. The research is significant because it contributes to a better understanding of how global media discourse is constructed and how language choices in international news reporting can influence audiences.

Keywords: BBC, CNN, news headlines, rhetoric devices

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan perangkat retorika dalam tajuk berita global dari BBC dan CNN dengan menggunakan sampel 50 tajuk berita yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2024 hingga 2025. Analisis dilakukan berdasarkan kerangka yang dikemukakan oleh Harris (2017), yang mencakup perangkat retorika seperti amplifikasi, personifikasi, metafora, hiperbola, antitesis, paralelisme, simile, sinekdoke, dan metonimia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan cara menelaah berbagai sumber literatur yang relevan dan menganalisis isi dari tajuk berita yang dipilih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tajuk berita BBC lebih sering menggunakan amplifikasi dengan persentase 36,0% untuk memberikan penjelasan yang lebih jelas serta menyampaikan informasi secara efektif tanpa melebih-lebihkan fakta. Sebaliknya, tajuk berita CNN lebih cenderung menggunakan hiperbola dengan frekuensi 33,3% sebagai upaya untuk membangkitkan emosi dan membuat berita lebih menarik bagi pembaca. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa perangkat retorika dalam tajuk berita tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat penyampaian informasi, tetapi juga sebagai strategi untuk membentuk persepsi pembaca secara lebih persuasif. Penelitian ini juga penting karena memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai bagaimana wacana media global dibangun dan bagaimana pilihan bahasa dalam pemberitaan internasional dapat mempengaruhi audiens.

Kata Kunci: BBC, CNN, perangkat retorika, tajuk berita

INTRODUCTION

Mass media has a significant impact on people's lives, with newspapers and television networks playing a key role through news coverage. Defining *news* remains challenging since there is no universally satisfactory definition (Duanprakhon, 2012; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017). News as information about current events that is important or has the potential to affect a sizable population (Napu, 2018). Headlines serve as the first impression of this content, shaping audience interest and perception (Rieis et al, (2015); Lee, 2022). For global media outlets such as BBC News and CNN, headlines are designed not only to inform but also to persuade, evoke emotions, and establish credibility, reflecting editors' views and choices (Lamichhane, 2017).

The language used in headlines differs from everyday language and narrative text. Headlines are typically written in the present tense, whereas narrative texts use the past tense (Chovanec, 2003; Zhang, 2023). In addition, the most crucial element of a headline is the language choice, as it captures reader attention and performs specific speech acts (Bell, 1991). Al-Hindawi & Ali (2018) highlight that headlines summarize news in a few words, stimulating curiosity while providing timely information. Headlines also function as communicative devices, creating an optimal alignment between the story content and the reader's interpretation. They, therefore, operate both semantically and pragmatically to guide audience understanding (Dor, 2003; Ismail, 2016; Svetsova, 2019).

Headlines serve multiple purposes, including drawing attention, summarizing content, and signaling importance (Hadidi et al, 2022; Mehmood et al, 2024)). The word choice and phrasing in headlines directly shape how readers interpret and respond to news stories, influencing perception, engagement, and emotional reaction across different news genres. To achieve these effects, headlines rely on rhetorical strategies that guide readers toward particular interpretations and responses.

Rhetorical devices, or figures of speech, are key tools in this process (Harris, 2017). By employing unique word choices, unusual arrangements, or specialized meanings, these devices clarify, emphasize, and enhance the persuasive power of a message. They provide conceptual frameworks that help readers comprehend

meaning at multiple levels, from individual words and sentences to entire paragraphs. Effective use of rhetorical devices ensures that news headlines are not only informative but also compelling, impactful, and capable of engaging readers while conveying intended meanings.

Harris (2017) provides a comprehensive framework for identifying and understanding rhetorical devices, outlining their functions in enhancing clarity, persuasiveness, and aesthetic appeal. Parallelism is a fundamental organizational tool that repeats similar structures across phrases or sentences, creating coherence, balance, and readability, especially in complex or lengthy statements. Antithesis, in contrast, emphasizes meaning through opposition, whether by contrasting words, clauses, or entire sentences, allowing even simple contrasts to produce significant rhetorical impact.

Hyperbole operates by exaggerating a statement to emphasize or draw attention to key points. While frequently used in daily communication and media, excessive use can reduce clarity, but when applied strategically, it intensifies urgency or importance. Amplification involves restating a point with added details, increasing the prominence and emotional appeal of a message. Similes, which compare two related concepts using terms like “like” or “as,” create vivid imagery and enrich understanding, whereas metaphors convey deeper connections by presenting one concept as another, integrating both factual and emotional dimensions.

Personification attributes human qualities to non-human entities, such as objects, animals, or abstract ideas, making abstract concepts more relatable and understandable. Synecdoche uses a part to represent the whole, or vice versa, allowing writers to present familiar ideas in new ways while implicitly conveying evaluation or emphasis. Puns exploit multiple meanings or similar sounds in words to produce humor and engage readers, highlighting linguistic creativity. Metonymy substitutes a word or phrase for a related concept, frequently employed in media discourse to simplify content and highlight critical elements. In news headlines, these devices enhance brevity and clarity while emphasizing key information, demonstrating how rhetorical strategies can shape interpretation and engagement.

Three previous studies discuss rhetorical devices. One of the previous studies that examined rhetorical devices in news headlines is Zhou's (2017) research entitled *An Analysis of Rhetorical Devices in English News Headlines from Thai News Media*. This study analyzed 50 headline samples from two major English newspapers in Thailand, namely The Bangkok Post and The Nation, focusing on their functions, persuasive appeals, and rhetorical devices. The findings revealed that logos was the most dominant appeal, while summarizing and informative functions appeared most frequently in the headlines. Moreover, the study discovered that rhetorical devices were not strictly tied to specific sections of the newspapers, but rather used flexibly across different contexts. The most common devices identified included metonymy (18%), metaphor (13%), alliteration (11%), oxymoron (10%), personification (8%), and quotation (8%), with less frequent occurrences of consonance, allusion, irony, paradox, rhetorical questions, assonance, and onomatopoeia.

The second previous study, *A Rhetorical Stylistic Analysis of English Political Headlines in Selected Newspapers* by Hassan (2024) explores how rhetorical and stylistic devices are used in reporting political news. Adopting an eclectic method that combines Mann and Thompson's (1988) rhetorical analysis model with Simpson's (2004) stylistic framework, the study emphasizes the interconnection between rhetorical and stylistic choices in shaping news discourse. The data were drawn from political headlines in the New York Times and the The Guardian. Through contrastive analysis, the study reveals that both newspapers employ different sentence patterns to highlight key components, reflecting distinct approaches to political reporting. Notably, The New York Times often used foregrounding as a deviation tactic to sustain readers' interest in combat-related news.

The third previous study, *The Rhetoric of Persian News Headlines: A Case Study of Euronews* by Monsefi and Mahadi (2017), examined how rhetorical devices, particularly wordplay, are used to influence readers and convey meanings beyond the literal level of the text. Using 100 Euronews online headlines as data, the study applied Leigh's (1994) framework, which categorizes different forms of wordplay. The analysis, conducted through a descriptive and textual rhetorical

approach, found that Persian headlines often contained one or more forms of wordplay. Tropes, especially metonymy, were the most common, while several types such as oxymorons, parodies, anthimerias, polysyndetons, anadiploses, antimetaboles, epistrophes, climaxes, and polyptotons were absent. Schemes were also underrepresented.

All three previous studies highlight the importance of rhetorical and stylistic devices in shaping news headlines, but they differ in theoretical frameworks and data sources. The first study by Zhou (2017) analyzed 50 English news headlines from Thai media (The Bangkok Post and The Nation) and found that devices such as personification, oxymoron, and metonymy were widely used to enhance persuasion and clarity. The second study, *A Rhetorical Stylistic Analysis of English Political Headlines in Selected Newspapers*, examined political headlines from The Guardian (UK) and The New York Times (US), applying rhetorical and stylistic models by Mann & Thompson (1988) and Simpson (2004) to show how rhetorical devices interact with stylistic choices to capture readers' attention and highlight structural differences across newspapers. The third study by Monsefi (2017), *The Rhetoric of Persian News Headlines: A Case Study of Euronews*, investigated 100 Persian headlines using Leigh's (1994) taxonomy of wordplay and revealed that tropes, particularly metonymy, were the most dominant. Together, these studies confirm that rhetorical devices play a vital role in enhancing the persuasiveness, memorability, and stylistic impact of headlines, yet they are limited by their focus on Thai news, political discourse, and Persian-language headlines.

Building on these insights, the present study focuses on the use of rhetorical devices in tourism news headlines from two leading international media outlets: BBC and CNN. Both are chosen because they are globally recognized, trusted, and widely read, and their use of clear English makes them suitable sources for examining rhetorical devices. A total of 50 headlines were collected, consisting of 25 from BBC and 25 from CNN. The choice of two different media sources allows for variation in the data and minimizes bias that could arise from relying on only one outlet. The analysis is guided by Harris's (2017) framework, which provides a classification of rhetorical devices such as amplification, metaphor, hyperbole, and

personification. The objective of this study is to analyze the types of rhetorical devices that appear in BBC and CNN tourism news headlines.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically descriptive content analysis, to investigate the use of rhetorical devices in tourism news headlines. According to Lim (2024) the qualitative approach is a research method that seeks to deeply understand the meanings, processes, and context of social phenomena using words or images instead of numbers. It focuses on real-life experiences and the complex relationships between research goals, frameworks, questions, methods, and validity in an interactive way. The descriptive method, part of this approach, aims to systematically describe facts and phenomena in detail without manipulation, providing a rich understanding of the situation as it truly is. The data are analyzed by employing Harris' (2017) rhetorical devices framework, which identifies ten rhetorical devices: metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, pun, simile, personification, amplification, antithesis, and metaphor.

BBC News and CNN are selected as the data sources because of their global influence and extensive coverage of tourism-related issues. To ensure data currency and relevance, the study analyzed tourism news headlines published between January 2024 and February 2025 across both platforms. A purposive sample of fifty headlines was collected, consisting of twenty-five headlines from BBC and twenty-five from CNN, all taken from tourism sections such as "Travel" and "Tourism News." The use of two international media outlets provides variation in the data and reduces the risk of bias that might appear if only one outlet was analyzed.

The data were collected through browsing and manual extraction of headlines from the official websites of BBC and CNN to ensure accuracy and authenticity. After collection, the headlines were compiled into a dataset and coded for rhetorical devices based on Harris's (2017) framework, which classifies devices such as amplification, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and parallelism. Each headline was examined to identify the rhetorical devices used, and the frequency of each device was recorded to see which types appeared most often. The analysis was

then carried out by comparing the results from BBC and CNN in order to describe the use of rhetorical devices in the two outlets.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that BBC headlines use five rhetorical devices—amplification, hyperbole, personification, metaphor, and synecdoche—while CNN headlines also use five devices, namely personification, antithesis, parallelism, amplification, and synecdoche. Among these, amplification is the most frequently used device in BBC headlines, followed by metaphor, whereas in CNN headlines, hyperbole appears most frequently. Amplification plays an important role in focusing readers' attention and emphasizing key points. These findings indicate that BBC relies primarily on amplification, while CNN emphasizes hyperbole, making their tourism news headlines more engaging and clear.

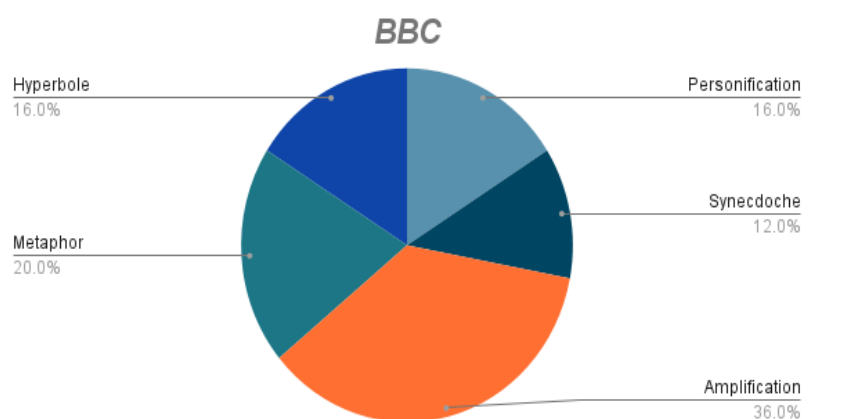


Figure 1. The Frequency of Rhetorical Devices in BBC Headlines

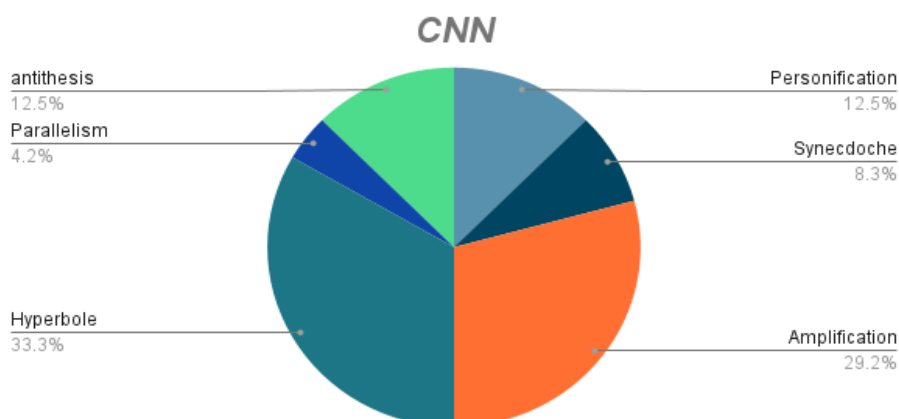


Figure 2. The Frequency of Rhetorical Devices in CNN Headlines

BBC Headlines

1. Personification

Headline 1: Is Italy Breaking Up With You?

This story talks about the issue of over-tourism in Italy, where the large number of visitors is starting to create problems for both local people and the environment. Italy has been known for a long time as a romantic and popular tourist destination, but now the government is starting to make some new rules to control the situation. For example, there is a selfie ban in Portofino, big cruise ships are being limited in Venice, and tourists can be fined if they break certain rules at famous spots. Some people who gave their opinions include local activist Marco Gasparinetti and Italy's Minister of Tourism, Daniela Santanchè, who said that tourism is important for the country's economy, but it also needs to protect the lives of its people. Basically, Italy is trying to find a way to keep welcoming tourists while also making sure that local culture and comfort are not lost.

The phrase *Is Italy breaking up with you?* has a personified meaning because Italy, which is actually a country and not a person, is described as if it has feelings and can end a relationship. Based on the Cambridge Dictionary, the term *breaking up* is used when a marriage or a romantic relationship ends. Thus, *breaking up* usually happens between two people who are in a romantic relationship. This phrase is normally used to talk about relationships between people, not between a country and its tourists. In this situation, Italy is being personified, which means it is given human characteristics, and this is shown through the use of the phrasal verb *break up*.

Headline 2: How TikTok is embracing the food of 'third culture kids'

These headlines talk about how TikTok has become a place where people who grow up with two or more cultures can show off their cooking creativity. One of the main people mentioned is Jon Kung, a chef and TikTok creator who is well known for making unique recipes that mix different food cultures. Some of his examples are Shanghai-style meatballs with spaghetti and wontons filled with buffalo wing-flavored chicken. This story shows that on social media, especially TikTok, young people from different cultural backgrounds celebrate and share their experiences through food. It also shows how food can help people feel connected

to who they are and remind them of home. The word *embrace* means to hug someone as a way of showing love or care.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word *embrace* means *to welcome or accept something enthusiastically or to accept a new idea, opinion, religion, etc. with enthusiasm*. These meanings show that the word *embrace* involves a clear and emotional kind of acceptance, which is something only living things can do. In the headline *How TikTok is Embracing the Food of 'Third Culture Kids,'* the app is described as if it can actively and warmly accept and support food culture. Since TikTok is a digital platform and not a person, this action of showing excitement and approval is a human characteristic that is given to it. Therefore, the use of the word *embrace* is an example of personification in this sentence.

2. Amplification

Headline 1: Skiing Mount Etna, Europe's tallest and most active volcano

Skiing on Mount Etna is a story that shows the special experience of skiing on Europe's tallest active volcano, which is found in Sicily, Italy. With amazing views of snowy mountain tops next to black lava and signs of volcanic activity, Etna has different ski routes for people of all skill levels. Skiers can enjoy the beauty of nature while also getting the exciting feeling of skiing on the side of a famous active volcano. The words *tallest* and *most active* functions as amplification by layering descriptive superlatives onto the core noun phrase to describe Mount Etna.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Mount Etna is the highest active volcano in Europe and is located in Sicily, Italy. It has been erupting for more than 2.5 million years and has shaped the land around it through many eruptions. The volcanic soil in the area is very fertile, which helps local farming, and the eruptions have also played a role in the region's history and mythology. Mount Etna is still one of the most active and most researched volcanoes in the world. Physical features like height or activity don't naturally show human characteristics.

The Cambridge Dictionary states that *tallest* is the superlative form of *tall*, which means something is higher than everything else in a certain group or place. It also explains that *most active* is the superlative form of *active*, meaning doing a lot of physical things or having a high level of activity. By using *tallest* and *most*

active in the headline is a way to highlight how powerful and important Mount Etna is, which is called amplification.

Headline 3: Shrovetide football: England's ancient and chaotic ball game

This story talks about the English tradition of Shrovetide football, an old ball game that happens every year and is known for its loose rules and wild, energetic atmosphere that brings the community together. The game is more than just a sport—it is also a cultural event that helps keep historical traditions and local identity alive. The headline uses the words *ancient* and *chaotic* to make the sports' unique and special nature stand out more.

The Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football Game is a historic and one-of-a-kind event held every year in Ashbourne, England, on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. The game is played by two teams based on which side of the Henmore River the players are from, and it takes place over a wide area with goals that are three miles apart. Players use a handmade leather ball and try to score by tapping it three times at the other team's goal. The game is kind of like rugby, with not many rules, and a lot of players pushing and pulling to get the ball. It goes from 2 pm to 10 pm on both days and is a fun tradition that has been around for hundreds of years.

The Cambridge Dictionary says that *ancient* means something that comes from a very long time ago, which shows how important and historical the game is. It also says *chaotic* means something full of confusion and disorder, which fits the way the match is played with all its unpredictability and energy. These words help make Shrovetide football sound more exciting and meaningful by showing its old roots and crazy style of play. Thus, the headline is an example of amplification because it makes the game sound more intense and interesting.

3. Metaphor

Headline 2: Where to find Italy's dolce vita in real life

This BBC headline introduces an article examining authentic, slow-paced Italian lifestyle experiences for tourists. It explains how this idea became popular during Italy's economic growth after World War II and was made famous by Federico Fellini's movie *La Dolce Vita*. It shows how this idea still plays an important role in Italian culture today. The article points to well-known cities like

Rome, Florence, and Venice as places where people can experience this lifestyle by doing things like drinking coffee slowly in public squares, having long meals with loved ones, and enjoying art and nature. The story includes Italians who live by this way of thinking, focusing on friendliness, style, and being present in the moment. Overall, it shows that *dolce vita* is more than just a phrase—it is a cultural approach to living fully and happily in everyday life.

The headline introduces the phrase *dolce vita*, which means sweet life in Italian and describes a lifestyle about relaxing, enjoying food and beauty, and connecting with people. *Dolce vita* is about living in a fun, calm, and enjoyable way, where people take time to enjoy small things and beauty in life. The metaphor in this phrase comes from how *dolce vita* does not just mean a sweet life literally, but represents a dream lifestyle or mindset that many people admire and want to live. The headline asks readers to explore where this idea of a sweet life can actually be found, making something abstract feel more real. By using *dolce vita* as a metaphor, the headline makes the story more interesting and emotional, connecting readers with feelings of joy, beauty, and Italian culture.

Headline 3: The magic of the legendary 'enrosadira'

The BBC headline *The magic of the legendary 'enrosadira'* talks about a special natural event in Italy's Dolomiti Mountains, where the mountain peaks turn pink and orange during sunrise and sunset. This event, called *enrosadira* by locals, is seen as magical and full of legend, and it attracts many tourists who are amazed by its stunning beauty. The article shows how this natural sight is not only beautiful, but also important to the culture and traditions of the local area. The headline uses metaphorical language, especially with the word *magic*, which is not meant in a literal way, but instead describes how beautiful and surprising the event feels.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines *magic* as a special, mysterious, or powerful quality that makes something seem exciting or beautiful. In this case, *magic* does not mean actual supernatural powers—it is a way to describe how the *enrosadira* makes people feel amazed and full of wonder when they see it. This use of the word *magic* gives the natural event a human-like quality, as if it has power to emotionally move people, making the headline feel more interesting and emotional. The word *legendary* means something very famous or something that

has been talked about in stories for a long time, and this adds even more strength to the metaphor by making the phenomenon feel even more special.

4. Synecdoche

Headlines 1: Fort Mose: The first free Black town in the US

The headline highlights Fort Mose's history as the first officially recognized free Black settlement in the United States, which was founded in 1738 in what was then Spanish-controlled Florida. The community was made up of enslaved people who escaped from the British colonies, especially from the Carolinas, and found safety under Spanish rule as long as they converted to Catholicism and joined the militia to help protect the area from British attacks. Francisco Menéndez, a former slave who became the leader of Fort Mose's militia, played a key role in defending the community's freedom, especially during the 1740 battle of Bloody Mose, when they successfully took back the fort from the British. In 1763, when Spain gave Florida to the British, the free residents of Fort Mose were forced to leave and move to Cuba so they wouldn't be sent back into slavery. After that, Fort Mose was mostly forgotten until archaeologists and museums brought its story back to life as a powerful symbol of Black struggle and freedom in America.

Fort Mose refers to a specific place—the first free Black town in what is now the United States. According to the National Park Service (NPS), Fort Mose was the first legally recognized settlement for free Africans in the country, created in 1738 by the Spanish governor of Florida. It gave protection to people who had escaped slavery, as long as they converted to Catholicism and swore loyalty to the Spanish Crown. However, Fort Mose was more than just a place—it became a symbol of freedom, resistance, and unity for formerly enslaved Africans who wanted a better life. Even though Fort Mose is not a person and does not have human traits, the name is often used to represent the shared experiences, strength, and hope of the people who lived there. This is an example of synecdoche, where the name of the town stands for the larger human story and meaning behind it. That is why Fort Mose is remembered today as a place that shows courage, freedom, and the strong spirit of a community.

Headlines 3: Michelin chefs and gingerbread queens reign

The headline tells the story of Ormskirk, a town in Lancashire, England, that is becoming well-known as a food destination, with three Michelin-starred restaurants and a long tradition of baking gingerbread that goes back nearly 300 years. The town is famous not only for its top-quality restaurants like Moor Hall and sōō, led by well-known chefs such as Mark Birchall, but also for its unique local tradition of *gingerbread queens*—women who became famous for selling gingerbread and even caught the attention of the British royal family. This tradition is still alive today thanks to the Thompson family, who run the well-known gingerbread shop, and through a yearly festival that celebrates the town’s food culture. The story shows how Ormskirk mixes fine dining with local traditions in a special way.

The headline uses synecdoche, a figure of speech where a part of something stands for the whole or one word represents a larger idea. The term *gingerbread queens* literally talks about the women who became known for making and selling a certain kind of gingerbread cookie, which is popular in places like Ormskirk. The Cambridge Dictionary says *gingerbread* is a type of cookie made with ginger, but *gingerbread queens* is a nickname for the women who kept this tradition going over generations. These women have become a symbol of the town’s culture and heritage through their connection to this special local food.

5. Hyperbole

Headline 1: The 25 best places to travel in 2025 – adventures you absolutely can’t miss

In this headline, phrases like *best places* and *adventures you absolutely can’t miss* exaggerate the importance and appeal of these travel destinations. The word *best* suggests these places are superior to all others, which is subjective and meant to attract attention. *Absolutely can’t miss* is an overstatement emphasizing urgency and necessity, implying that missing these adventures would be a significant loss. Such exaggeration is intended to engage readers emotionally and entice them to read further, consistent with Harris’s explanation of rhetorical devices emphasizing

amplification for persuasive effect. Therefore, this headline uses hyperbole to make the travel list seem exciting, urgent, and essential to the reader's experience.

Headline 2: Explore Europe's hidden gems: Vacation spots that will blow your mind

The headline is an example of hyperbole based on Harris's (2017) theory of rhetorical devices. Hyperbole involves exaggeration to create a strong emotional effect or emphasize a point. The phrase *hidden gems* exaggerates the uniqueness and special value of these vacation spots, implying they are rare and precious discoveries. *Vacation spots that will blow your mind* is an overstatement suggesting that these places will create an overwhelmingly amazing or astonishing experience, which is a strong exaggeration meant to excite and attract readers. This exaggeration amplifies the appeal of the destinations, encouraging the audience to explore and engage with the content, which aligns with Harris's view of rhetorical devices as tools for amplification and persuasion.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a *hidden gem* is something, especially a place, that is very good, pleasant, or useful, but not well known or recognized by many people. It refers to a valuable or beautiful thing that is not immediately obvious or easy to find. Hence, this headline uses hyperbole to make the travel locations seem extraordinary and tempting, capturing reader attention through dramatic language.

CNN Headlines

1. Parallelism

Headlines 1: Closed doors and price hikes: Travel is getting expensive

This headline uses the rhetorical device called parallelism because it includes two phrases that have similar grammatical structures: *closed doors* and *price hikes*. Both of these phrases follow the adjective + noun pattern and are linked by the word *and*. According to Harris (2017), parallelism happens when the same or similar sentence structure is used in two or more parts of a sentence to make the meaning clearer and more balanced. In this headline, the use of two phrases with the same structure draws attention to the two main issues currently affecting the travel industry, helping the message stand out and be easier to remember.

The Cambridge Dictionary explains that *closed doors* means that something happens in private or secretly, away from the public eye. It shows situations where access is limited, which reflects human traits like valuing privacy, having control over sensitive matters, and being careful in handling personal information. On the other hand, *price hikes* mean rising prices, which influence people's financial decisions and behavior. It also shows how people need to adapt and solve problems when dealing with changing economic conditions.

Headline 2: Amtrak Announces New Trains, Vows to Improve Service, Promises Faster Travel

The headline *Amtrak Announces New Trains, Vows to Improve Service, Promises Faster Travel* from CNN Travel uses structural parallelism. The structural parallelism is utilized through a triadic coordination of verb phrases sharing the identical syntactic pattern: Action Verb + Direct Object/Infinitive Complement (*Announces New Trains, Vows to Improve Service, and Promises Faster Travel*). This symmetrical repetition creates a rhythmic cadence that emphasizes the cumulative scope of Amtrak's operational commitments.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *vows* means to make a serious or formal promise or decision to do something. In *Vows to Improve Service*, it means Amtrak is making a serious promise to make their service better. *Promises* means to say that you will definitely do something or that something will certainly happen. It implies that Amtrak guarantees or assures that travel times will become quicker. Both words show commitment and assurance, with *vows* being a strong formal promise and *promises* a clear assurance about future actions or outcomes. Thus, this headline uses parallelism to emphasize Amtrak's multiple commitments in a structured and impactful way.

2. Antithesis

Headlines 1: Jeff Bezos is planning a lavish Venice wedding. But it might not have the best view in town

This article addresses the high-profile wedding of Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, and his plans to marry Lauren Sánchez in Venice, Italy, in late June 2025. The wedding has drawn a lot of attention because of how fancy it is, its

exclusive location, and the long list of celebrities expected to attend. However, behind all the luxury and excitement, there are protests and complaints from some local people and activists. They believe that the event is making problems like mass tourism, loss of public space, rising prices, and social exclusion in Venice even worse. While the city government and the event organizers say the wedding will not affect daily life for locals, there is still tension between the money it brings in and the social problems it may cause.

The headline uses the rhetorical device called antithesis because it presents two opposing ideas in the same sentence. The first part, *Jeff Bezos is planning a lavish Venice wedding*, shows the luxurious and impressive nature of the event. The second part, *but it might not have the best view in town*, suddenly contrasts this with a more realistic or imperfect image, showing that the event might not be as flawless as expected. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *lavish* means *large in quantity and expensive or impressive*, and it often refers to things done in a generous and luxurious way. Meanwhile, the phrase *might not have the best view* points to a possible shortcoming or flaw. It shows qualities like realism, modesty, and the idea that even the most perfect plans can still have imperfections.

Headline 2: City Lights or Silent Shores: Your Ultimate Travel Dilemma for 2025

This headline from CNN is an example of antithesis. The contrasting phrases *City Lights* and *Silent Shores* represent opposing travel experiences: the bustling, bright energy of cities versus the calm, quiet nature of shores. *City Lights* refers to the bright lights and lively atmosphere of a city, especially visible at night. It suggests a busy, energetic urban environment full of activity. *Silent Shores* refers to quiet, peaceful coastlines or beaches. It suggests calmness, relaxation, and natural beauty away from the noise and movement of cities. Together, these contrasting phrases represent two very different types of places—one full of excitement and activity (city lights), and the other calm and tranquil (silent shores). This contrast emphasizes the choice or dilemma faced by the traveler, making the decision more vivid and engaging for the audience. Harris (2017) explains that antithesis enhances clarity and appeal by juxtaposing opposing ideas, which draws attention and makes the message more memorable through balanced structure and contrast. Thus, the

headline uses antithesis to highlight the travel options clearly and create a compelling, thought-provoking choice for the reader.

3. Amplification

Headlines 1: Mother in viral video says airline told her she had to take son off breathing machine before takeoff.

This article reports a change in the UK's immigration policy. Starting on April 2, 2025, European Union (EU) citizens who want to visit the UK for a short stay will need to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) and pay a £10 fee. Before this change, EU citizens could enter the UK without needing to go through this process, but now they are required to apply online before departure, upload necessary documents, and wait for approval. The new rule applies to visits for tourism, business, short-term study, and transit, and it includes children and infants as well.

A *viral video* refers to a video that becomes very popular and is widely shared online, which shows human behaviors like communication, social interaction, and collective interest. Meanwhile, the phrase *breathing machine* is used for a medical device that helps or controls a person's breathing, especially for those who have trouble breathing on their own. These two terms both show important human experiences—like the need for care and survival—and the role of support and connection in people's lives. In the headline, using specific and emotional words like *breathing machine* and *viral video* helps amplify the seriousness and emotional impact of the story, making it more powerful and attention-grabbing for readers.

Headline 2: A flight attendant's secrets to surviving long-haul flights

This article gives tips from Kris Major, a UK flight attendant with years of experience, on how to handle long-haul flights. He shares practical advice like when to eat or sleep, bringing your own travel items, and planning breaks to make the flight more bearable. The headline uses amplification through the words *secrets* and *surviving*. The word *secrets* raises the reader's expectations, making the advice seem special or more valuable than regular travel tips. The word *surviving* also adds emphasis, making it sound like long-haul flights are difficult experiences that

require serious effort to get through—not just simple trips. Both words highlight different sides of human experience—*secret* points to social interaction and selective sharing, while *surviving* shows the mental and physical effort people use to overcome tough situations. Their use in the headline makes the topic feel more intense and personally relatable for readers.

4. Personification

Headlines 1: North Korea's sacred Mount Paektu designated as UNESCO Global Geopark

This news reports that Mount Paektu, a mountain considered sacred by North Korea, has now officially been named a UNESCO Global Geopark. This recognition shows that the mountain is important not just for its geology, but also for its cultural meaning. The main parties involved are the North Korean government, UNESCO, and the people who see Mount Paektu as a meaningful and spiritual place. CNN's headline uses personification, which is a literary device where non-human things are described with human qualities.

The phrase *sacred Mount Paektu* gives the mountain a human-like trait, suggesting it holds deep emotional and cultural value rather than being just a physical place. Mount Paektu, also called Baekdu Mountain, is the tallest mountain on the Korean Peninsula and has long been important in Korean culture and history. It is at the center of Korean creation stories and plays a key role in North Korean national symbolism, standing for ancestry and identity. In 2025, the part of Mount Paektu located in North Korea was given the title of UNESCO Global Geopark. The phrase *sacred Mount Paektu* shows that the mountain is seen as holy and worthy of deep respect, mostly because of its spiritual or religious meaning. The Cambridge Dictionary defines *sacred* as something considered holy and respected, especially due to its connection to a god. This sense of reverence is a human quality, reflecting how people give spiritual and cultural meaning to natural places. By calling Mount Paektu *sacred*, people show human traits like spirituality, respect for heritage, and the need to protect symbols that represent identity and belief, all of which are important in culture and society.

Headline 2: You've come across a bison in the wild. It's looking at you. Do you know what to do next?

This story shares tips and advice for readers who might come across a bison in the wild, especially focusing on how to respond in order to stay safe. The discussion centers around how humans interact with wild animals, particularly bison. According to National Geographic, the American bison, often wrongly referred to as buffalo, is a major symbol of the Great Plains and the Old West, and is the largest land animal in North America. Recognized by its huge size and shaggy coat, the bison has played a major role in the ecosystem and in the cultural traditions of Plains Indigenous peoples. The phrase *looking at you* means turning one's eyes toward someone, which shows attention, awareness, and sometimes intention. When this phrase is applied to a bison or another non-human animal, it personifies the animal by suggesting it has human-like awareness or purpose in its actions. This shows human traits such as observation, focus, and the ability to connect or interact, because *looking* often includes not just seeing, but also thinking and reacting. Thus, when the bison is described as *looking at you*, it is given a human quality where it responds to the world and others around it.

5. Hyperbole

Headline 1: The worst-behaved travelers of March so far

This news article talks about how some travelers acted badly during March, including cases of violent passengers, people breaking airline rules, and even causing flights to be redirected. CNN made a list of the worst incidents to serve as a warning and reminder for travelers to behave better in the future. The key people involved in this report are the misbehaving passengers, airline staff, and aviation officials. The headline uses hyperbole in the phrase *worst-behaved travelers*, which makes the actions sound like they were the absolute worst, even though there are many different types and levels of bad behavior. This kind of exaggeration is used for dramatic effect. The term *worst-behaved* describes individuals or groups who act in the most improper or unacceptable ways compared to others. The Cambridge Dictionary defines *behavior* as the way someone acts, especially towards other people.

The word *worst* is the superlative form of *bad* and is used to emphasize just how unacceptable the behavior is, which makes this a strong example of hyperbole. This kind of phrase points to human qualities like knowing how to follow rules, using self-control, and understanding what's right and wrong. In short, calling someone the *worst-behaved* highlights how far their actions stray from what is normally expected in society, showing how human behavior reflects deeper values and social norms.

Headline 2: We found the best flight deals to Hawaii starting from \$177 round-trip

This news story provides information about round-trip airfare deals to Hawaii starting at \$177. The article is aimed at travelers who are searching for an affordable vacation and compares different airlines as well as the best times to buy tickets at low prices. The main figures in the story include travelers, airline companies, and travel agents. Hyperbole is used in the phrase *the best flight deals*, which claims that these offers are the absolute best, even though the term *best* is subjective and can vary depending on each person's preferences and travel needs. The phrase *only \$177* also adds to the dramatic tone by stressing how low the price is.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *best* is a superlative form that suggests something cannot be outdone. People naturally seek the highest value, compare different options, and aim to make the smartest or most rewarding choices in many aspects of life. Thus, using the word *best* in the headline is a clear example of hyperbole—it exaggerates to catch attention and stress how good the deals are. When the word *best* is applied to flight deals, it signals that these offers are considered top-tier or unbeatable.

6. Synecdoche

Headline 1: We asked six teens about their travel essentials. Here's what they pack for every trip

This article from CNN discusses the results of interviews with six teenagers about the essential items they always bring when traveling. It gives insight into current teen trends and preferences in choosing travel gear, including gadgets,

grooming products, and accessories that they consider must-haves. The people mentioned in the article are the six teens, along with readers who are interested in useful packing tips and the latest travel habits. The term *travel essentials* refers to the basic items someone packs for a trip, such as clothing, toiletries, important documents, and tech devices. The term travel essentials demonstrates metonymy as the phrase ‘travel essentials’ uses an attribute closely associated with packing and preparation to represent the overall travel experience.

The findings of this study show that BBC headlines primarily use amplification, while CNN headlines rely most on hyperbole, with both media also employing other devices such as personification, metaphor, synecdoche, antithesis, parallelism, and rhetorical questions. Amplification emerged as the most prominent device overall, highlighting its role in drawing attention and emphasizing key points. In comparison, Zhou’s (2017) study of Thai English news headlines found metonymy (18%), metaphor (13%), and alliteration (11%) to be the most frequent devices, with personification appearing less often (8%), and amplification was not a dominant feature. This indicates that while rhetorical devices are widely used across different media, the most prominent devices vary depending on the outlet and type of news, with BBC and CNN favoring amplification to engage readers in tourism reporting.

Similarly, Hassan’s study on political headlines from The New York Times and The Guardian showed that rhetorical and stylistic strategies, such as foregrounding, were used to structure sentences and highlight key elements, demonstrating that careful selection of rhetorical devices helps capture reader attention. In Monsefi and Mahadi’s (2017) study of Persian Euronews headlines, wordplay—particularly metonymy—was the main device, while many schemes and other wordplay types were absent. Compared to these previous studies, the present research shows that BBC and CNN emphasize clarity and reader focus through amplification, rather than complex wordplay or structural deviations, reflecting a more direct approach in tourism news reporting.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the rhetorical strategies used in global news articles published on BBC and CNN between 2024 and 2025. Harris's (2017) framework is applied to identify and measure the frequency of various rhetorical devices in the articles. The analysis reveals distinct patterns in how the two outlets employ rhetorical strategies. BBC primarily relies on amplification to increase reader engagement and communicate content clearly, while CNN prominently uses hyperbole to enhance emotional appeal and capture attention. These findings suggest that CNN employs hyperbole not only to convey information but also to shape and influence audience perceptions.

The BBC, traditionally regarded as a formal and balanced news outlet, often uses amplification to provide detailed explanations, add context, and clarify key points, reflecting its goal of delivering accurate and thorough information without exaggeration. Amplification enables the BBC to build credibility by presenting essential points in a measured way. In contrast, CNN, known for its dynamic and fast-paced reporting style, frequently uses hyperbole to produce dramatic, attention-grabbing headlines and stories that evoke strong emotional responses. Hyperbole acts as a persuasive tool to attract and retain viewers in a competitive media environment by emphasizing urgency or significance. These differences highlight not only editorial decisions but also the influence of cultural and market-driven factors on how each outlet constructs its narrative to engage its audience.

This study is limited by its focus on only two news outlets, BBC and CNN, and a sample of 25 headlines from each. The small dataset may not fully represent the broader use of rhetorical devices across other media platforms or over time. The findings may also have limited generalizability due to the exclusion of full articles, broadcast scripts, or social media content. Future research should expand the scope by including a larger and more diverse sample of news items, investigate rhetorical strategies in full-length articles or multimedia formats, and compare the use of rhetorical devices across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

REFERENCES

- Al-Hindawi, F. H., & Ali, A.A. (2018). A Pragmatic Study of CNN and BBC News Headlines Covering the Syrian Conflict. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(3), 43-55.
- Bell, A. (1991). *The language of news media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chovanec, J. (2003). The uses of the present tense in headlines. *The Prague Journal of English Studies*, 1, 83-93.
- Dor, D. (2003). On newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(5), 695-721.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. (n.d.). Mount Etna. In Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved September 21, 2025, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Etna>
- Hadidi, Y., Taghiyev, I., & Ahmadova, S. (2022). Linguistic devices used in newspaper headlines. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 25(2), 5-21.
- Harris, R. A. (2017). *Writing with clarity and style: A guide to rhetorical devices for contemporary writers*. Routledge.
- Hassan, S. (2024). A Rhetorical Stylistic Analysis of English Political Headlines in Selected Newspapers. *Al-Adab Journal*, 2(148), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.31973/hmOct638>
- Ismail, H. M. (2016). Pragmatic and semantic potential of newspaper headlines. *US-China Foreign Language*, 6(3), 483-491.
- Lamichhane, M. (2017). The stylistic features of newspaper headlines (Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Education Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur Kathmandu, Nepa).
- Lee, N. Y. (2022). Headlines for summarizing news or attracting readers' attention? Comparing news headlines in South Korean newspapers with the New York Times. *Journalism*, 23(4), 892-909.
- Lim, W. M. (2025). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Sage Journals*, 33(2), 123-145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>
- Mehmood, A., Rashid, S., & Kaleem, M. (2024). Representation of Political Marches in The Headlines of Selected English Newspapers. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 137-150.

- Monsefi, R., & Mahadi, T. S. T. (2017). The rhetoric of Persian news headlines: A case study of Euronews. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(2), 36-45.
<https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.2p.36>
- Napu, N. (2018). English and Indonesian newspaper headlines: A comparative study of lexical features. *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies*, 2(4).
- National Park Service. (2020, April 12). Fort Mose - Fort Matanzas National Monument. U.S. Department of the Interior. Retrieved September 21, 2025, from <https://www.nps.gov/foma/learn/historyculture/fort-mose.htm>
- Rieis, J., de Souza, F., De Melo, P. V., Prates, R., Kwak, H., & An, J. (2015). Breaking the news: First impressions matter on online news. In *Proceedings of the international AAAI conference on web and social media* (Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 357-366).
- Shevtsova, A. (2019). Stylistic features of British newspaper headlines in the diachronic aspect. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture and FLT*, 5(2), 66-76.
- Zhou, Y. (2017). An analysis of rhetorical devices in English news headlines from Thai news media. *RSU International Research Conference 2017*, 338-345. Rangsit University.