

JESI, 2009: Other Sentence Patterns

Cumulative Sentences

A cumulative sentence has a base form that typically carries the agent and the action (usually subject and verb) followed by a modifier or series of modifiers, typically in parallel form.

Cumulative Sentence: The muckraker skirted the issue, hiding spurious sources, submitting long-winded responses to simple questions about the veracity of his article.

A good article on using the cumulative sentence appears when you click the following link.

<http://www.atteg.org/conferences/c5/horlivy.htm>

Period Sentences

A periodic sentence builds up to the main idea with a series of clauses or phrases. The agent and the action (sometimes only the action) are typically at the end, with several modifiers, usually in parallel form, preceding them. A periodic sentence attempts to convey the idea elegantly. For example:

Remaining calm at the prospect of recession, bolstering the electorate's morale with eloquence, promising unprecedented reforms, the dark horse candidate won the election handily.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/periodicsenterm.htm>

Cleft Sentences

Cleft sentences are made up of two clauses, a dependent clause and an independent clause. The independent clause is the "It is..." construction, while the dependent clause starts with that and has the predicate nominative of the dependent clause as an elliptical object of a preposition. Take the following as examples.

Cleft Sentence: It is the President's health reform plan that so many citizens object to.

Simple Sentence: So many citizens object to the President's health reform plan.

The cleft form **emphasizes** the health reform plan, rather than the citizens' objections. If you choose to teach the use of cleft sentences as a rhetorical strategy for spoken or written discourse, please make sure that your students understand that its use is for emphasis, as in

It is for emphasis that writers should use a cleft sentence.

See http://mbgortiz.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/cleft_sentences1.pdf for some exercises.