

Press Phonology

What is it? Journalistic exploitation of the sound system in print
Why? to make an impact on the reader: "grabbing your attention by playing on your sense of sound"
How? by the deliberate decision to produce (in print) parallelisms that correspond to pronunciation in news headlines, subtitles, photo captions and feature titles
Where? on every page, if possible, but abiding by rules of social propriety ("taste")
When? practised by the staff at The Mirror and The Guardian, at least
Who?

- RULES:**
1. Avoid it in tragic or otherwise serious news, and obituaries; a small concession to it is permissible if the item concerns an entertainer, eg in Sir Alf Ramsey's obituary, he is called **Manager of Conviction**.
 2. Use it in other news items, especially in items with a pleasant or a comic element.
 3. Lay it on thick in opinion, leisure and entertainment features.
 4. Lay it on doubly thick in sport.

METHODOLOGY: In each section that the newspaper divides itself into, count the number of headlines, subtitles, photo captions and feature titles; they are usually prominent in print (eg by size, typeface, position). Look for, and count, all cases of phonological play: rhyme, alliteration, assonance (eg **job lot**), consonance (eg **think tank**), paronymy (eg **loving and living**), reverse rhyme (eg **hula hoops**), onomatopoeia (eg **whoosh!**) and (phonologically motivated) puns. (Keep a distinction between phonologically motivated puns such as **Writes and Wrongs**, and other techniques that cleverly allude to familiar phrases such as **The Price is Wrong**; remember that newspaper people have other resources besides phonology at their disposal – even though this poster focuses on just the phonology!). Calculate the proportion of cases of phonological play against the totals.

Source Data: The Mirror 1st May 1999 (Saturday) Total 30%
News: 20% (15/75 - puns: 8, alliteration: 3, assonance: 3, rhyme: 1)
Features: 30% (22/73 - puns: 14, alliteration: 6, rhyme: 2)
Sport: 51% (25/49 - alliteration: 11, puns: 10, rhyme: 2, consonance: 1, paronymy: 1)
Weekend: 21% (6/28 - alliteration: 3, puns: 2, assonance: 1)
The Guardian 1st May 1999 Total 26%
News: 10% (8/82 - alliteration: 5, assonance: 1, reverse rhyme: 1, pun: 1)
Features: 28% (7/25 - puns: 3, rhyme: 2, alliteration: 2)
Finance: 14% (4/28 - alliteration: 2, puns: 2)
Sport: 23% (15/65 - alliteration: 9, puns: 5, rhyme: 1)
Review: 37% (18/48 - alliteration: 6, puns: 6, rhyme: 3, assonance: 2, consonance: 1)
Travel: 34% (14/41 - puns: 6, alliteration: 4, assonance: 2, rhyme: 1, consonance: 1)
Jobs & Money: 36% (20/55 - puns: 9, alliteration: 8, rhyme: 3)
Weekend: 40% (19/47 - puns: 11, alliteration: 7, assonance: 1)

NB: Phonological play does not have to be original, to count; eg, full flight, Poles apart, some cases may be "accidental": eg Calves cost... Hague hits at cash hypocrisy; some cases count twice; eg O'Leary Leads way (alliteration + pun). • An extensive selection from the 6th September appears below; you may wish to re-interpret some of them; you may well find others I've missed: • No cases of onomatopoeia! • The higher proportion on a Monday appears to be accounted for totally by sports reports.

Mirror Investigates

Who'd you think of the figure?
Cash hit sponsors rap Reds
CALL FOR MEMORIAL
Our round investment
Peace deal
Odd-job
WELCOME TO FIGHT

Fast Track
Wins of change
COOL CYMRU STAR
WID: Actress Kira Whistler tries her stuff before the Venice Film Festival
ETNA ALERT
GANG STICK
PUNY PUNY PUNY

THE QUIET BRIGADE
It's top of the shops
Hit and miss
Stars insist: We must back Mac
IM SO SURE OF SHEARER
Grandson loves to do a flavour
SHEAR CLASS: Main scores at

BROWN'S BRAVES
Sweden bid in good nick
Adel's key to victory
Swedish bid in good nick
Adel's key to victory

Webster's
Willing to
Banal chat
Wrong track
GOAL-DEN BOYS
BARD-BOY RESSUES THE
HORON HEROES
The main man in F-1?
Schu must be joking

Press phonology is to the ear what press photography is to the eye.
Paul Tench, September 99

Wales wait for the world

6th September 1999 (Monday) Total 40%
News: 22% (17/77 - puns: 6, assonance: 4, alliteration: 4, rhyme: 2, consonance: 1)
Features: 40% (11/27 - puns: 4, alliteration: 4, rhyme: 3)
Sport: 58% (50/86 - puns: 22, alliteration: 18, assonance: 5, rhyme: 4, consonance: 1)
Finance: 0% (0/2)
6th September 1999 Total 33%
News: 26% (18/67 - alliteration: 11, assonance: 3, rhyme: 2, puns: 2)
Features: 32% (12/37 - alliteration: 8, puns: 3, consonance: 1)
Finance: 37% (6/16 - alliteration: 4, assonance: 1, pun: 1)
Sport: 40% (28/69 - alliteration: 17, puns: 8, rhyme: 2, assonance: 1)
G2: 24% (11/45 - puns: 5, rhyme: 3, alliteration: 3)
Media: 40% (17/42 - puns: 12, alliteration: 4, assonance: 1)

Fugitive financier cornered!
Culture clash!
Carpets floored back to basics
Wonder drugs
Hague hits at cash hypocrisy
cash hypocrisy
Super think-tanker
Essaying zeal
Blair bounces back
Blair bounces back
But should tone down the moral
Widows windfall

Natwest at UK tops European working hours
L&G launch signs of a scramble
lobby blitz
Hateley happy to take a final
Highland find
Vale's joy come
Fovle wrapped
Translation's saving the nation
Whales at birth off
Which junction on the M1
Which celebrates the 40th birthday

Moisturiser
Super think-tanker
Essaying zeal
Blair bounces back
Blair bounces back
But should tone down the moral
Widows windfall
Chase for justice
Licence to thrill
Beating the bullies

Beating the bullies
Secret agents in the battle against bullies
Beating the bullies
Beating the bullies

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Beating the bullies