

Advanced 2
Unit 4 Language Focus 3
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Parallel & Non-Parallel Structures

A non-parallel structure refers to a lack of consistency in the grammatical form or structure of elements within a sentence or text. This can disrupt the flow and clarity of the writing. Non-parallel structures often occur when elements that should be in a similar grammatical form are not matched correctly.

Point:

The words or phrases which we use inside a part of the sentence (like the subject, the object, or the subject complement) have to belong to the same grammatical category.

Point:

If a part of the sentence is made up of several words or phrases which do not belong to the same category, that part of the sentence is considered as non-parallel.

Examples of Non-Parallel Structures:

Lists or Series:

Non-Parallel: "She likes swimming, to jog, and biking."

Parallel: "She likes swimming, jogging, and biking."

Paired Constructions:

Non-Parallel: "He is not only a great teacher but also is a good friend."

Parallel: "He is not only a great teacher but also a good friend."

Comparative Constructions:

Non-Parallel: "Running is faster than to walk."

Parallel: "Running is faster than walking."

Correlative Conjunctions:

Non-Parallel: "She wanted either to go shopping or a movie."

Parallel: "She wanted either to go shopping or to watch a movie."

Stylistic Implications:

Clarity and Readability: Non-parallel structures can make sentences cumbersome and harder to follow, affecting the overall clarity and readability of the text.

Flow and Rhythm: Parallel structures create a sense of balance and rhythm, making the text more enjoyable to read. Non-parallel structures can disrupt this flow.

Professionalism and Persuasiveness: Consistent and parallel structures enhance the professional quality of writing and can make arguments and narratives more persuasive.

How to Achieve Parallelism:

- Ensure that elements in a series or list follow the same grammatical form.
- Match grammatical structures in paired and comparative constructions.
- Be consistent with the use of verbs, nouns, and phrases in corresponding parts of sentences.

By maintaining parallel structures, writers can create more effective, cohesive, and aesthetically pleasing texts.

More Examples:

Non-Parallel: *Playing a musical instrument and to sing a song simultaneously is a very difficult task for many musicians.*

The subject of the sentence is made up of two different grammatical categories: a gerund and an infinitive. Therefore, the subject of the sentence is non-parallel.

Parallel: *Playing a musical instrument and singing a song simultaneously is a very difficult task for many musicians.*

The subject of the sentence is made up of two gerunds, so it is parallel.

Non-Parallel: *All the villagers were honest, hospitable, and they were kind.*

The subject complement is made up of two adjectives and an independent clause. Therefore, it is non-parallel.

Parallel: *All the villagers were honest, hospitable, and kind.*

The subject complement is made up of three adjectives, so it is parallel.

Source:

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