

УДК 811.111

THE PECULIARITIES OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINE LANGUAGE IN MASS MEDIA
(BASED ON ONLINE VERSION OF 'THE TIMES')

*Балжанова А.М.,
старший преподаватель КГПИ
Танина С.Ж.,
учитель английского языка ФМЛ
г. Костанай, Казахстан*

Аннотация

Бұл мақала газет стилінің ерекшеліктерін, нақты айтқанда, газет тақырыптарының, олардың түрі және атқаратын қызметтерін зерттеу мәселесіне арналған. Зерттеудің практикалық бөлімі "The Times" ағылшын тілді газетінің он-лайн нұсқасынан газет тақырыптарын таңдауды және тақырып түрлеріне қатысты жасалған талдауды көрсетеді.

Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена проблеме изучения особенностей газетного стиля, а именно газетных заголовков, их типов и функций. Практическая часть исследования представляет выборку газетных заголовков из англоязычной газеты "The Times" в он-лайн версии на предмет анализа по типам заголовков.

Abstract

The article deals with the problem of studying of the main peculiar features of the newspaper style, the notion of newspaper headline, its types and functions. The practical part of the research represents selection of some newspaper headlines from English newspaper "The Times" in online version for the analysis according to the types of headlines.

Түінді сөздер: *газет, газеттік тақырыбы, тақырыбылардың үлгілері, тақырыбы функциялары.*

Ключевые слова: *газета, газетный заголовок, типы заголовков, функции заголовка.*

Key words: *newspaper, newspaper headline, types of headlines, functions of headline.*

1. Introduction.

Newspaper style is one of the mass media styles which deals with emotional, colorful vocabulary by means of which it attracts linguists' attention. This is a part of life of the society which is still developing and is the basis for language researchers.

Newspapers play a significant role in moulding public opinion and it enables people to get all news and information at their fingertips. In the present world of digital technology newspaper in

the print form still rules the roost and people who are avid readers of newspaper wait for their morning newspapers daily.

Nowadays the role of newspapers is very significant in the sphere of trade, commerce, and business. Big corporate houses and business houses promote their products by putting in giving roomy ads on papers. The readers get the knowledge of any and every activity happening in and around the area.

A modern day paper has done miraculous activity in recent years and shown that even in the age of internet and news portal, the radio and television, newspaper can still change the life, the thought and mind of the society. They can still help in creating a common opinion and work as a corporate social responsible tool and fight for justice if needed. Newspapers act as a link between the government and the people. Newspaper could make a great impact on its readers. So, they should concentrate on giving only the true picture of the society.

The content of newspaper material is fairly diverse, it comprises: news and commentary on the news; press reports and articles; advertisements and official announcements; short stories and poems; crossword puzzles; material for entertainment of the reader.

Newspaper readers are flooded on a daily basis with an amount of new information which they have neither the time nor the energy to process. When we read newspaper, it doesn't need to read all the articles. We just read the most interesting one for us, our choice is based on the headlines that help us to anticipate what it will be about. Newspaper headlines help them get the maximum out of this informational flood – for the minimal cognitive investment. Readers regularly scan the headlines, and only occasionally stop to read the actual story. As relevance-optimizers and relevance-based selection-devices, headlines function as negotiators between stories and readers (Dor, 2003).

As for newspaper headlines they attract a considerable amount of attention and are the topical issues for the research.

2. Materials and methods.

The methods of the research are: generalization, analysis, description, text search with the following interpretation of the data.

The material of the research: newspaper headlines from English newspaper “The Times” in online version for the analysis according to the types of headlines.

The headline is a title given to a news item of a newspaper article. If we look at the definition of a headline in Oxford dictionary we may found the following: the headlines are the most important items of news in a newspaper or a broadcast news bulletin, or, the headlines denote a particularly notable or important piece of news.

The main function of a headline is to inform the reader briefly of what the news that follows is about. Syntactically headlines are very short sentences or phrases of a variety of patterns: full declarative sentences; interrogative sentences; nominative sentences; elliptical sentences; sentences with articles omitted; phrases with verbals; questions with the forms of statement; complex sentences; headlines including direct speech (Galperin, 1981).

The headlines in English language newspapers can be very difficult to understand. One reason for this is that newspaper headlines are often written in a special style, which is very difficult from ordinary English. In this style there are special rules of grammar and words are often used in unusual ways:

a. Headlines are not always complete sentences. Many headlines consist of noun phrases with no verb.

b. Headlines often contain string of three, four or more nouns; nouns earlier in the string modify those that follow.

c. Headlines often leave out articles and the verb ‘be’.

d. In headlines, simple tenses are often used instead of progressive or perfect forms. The simple present is used for both present and past events. The present progressive can be used, especially to talk about changes. Be is usually dropped.

e. Many headlines words are used as both nouns and verbs, and nouns are often used to modify other nouns. So it is not always easy to work out the structure of a sentence.

f. Headlines often use infinitives to refer to the future, e.g. PM to visit Australia.

g. Auxiliary verbs are usually dropped from passive structures, leaving past participles.

A question mark (?) is often used when something is not certain. Short words save space, and so they are very common in newspaper headlines. Some of the short words in headlines are unusual in ordinary language (e.g. curb, meaning 'restrict' or 'restriction'), and some are used in special senses which they do not often have in ordinary language (e.g. big, meaning 'attempt'). Other words are chosen not because they are short, but because they sound dramatic (e.g. blare, which means 'big fire', and is used in headlines to refer to any fire).

English newspaper writing dates from the 17th century. The first of any regular series of English newspapers was the Weekly News which first appeared on May 23, 1622. It took the English newspaper more than a century to establish a style and a standard of its own. And it is only by the 19th century that newspaper English may be said to have developed into a system of language media, forming a separate functional style (Galperin, 1981).

Thus, English newspaper style may be defined as a system of interrelated lexical, phraseological and grammatical means which is perceived by the community as a separate linguistic unity that serves the purpose of informing and instructing the reader (Kukharensko, 1983).

As the newspaper seeks to influence public opinion on various social, political or moral matters, its language frequently contains vocabulary with evaluative connotation, such as *to allege* (*the person who allegedly committed the crime*), or *to claim* (*the defendant claims to know nothing about it*), which cast some doubt on what is stated further and make it clear to the reader that those are not yet affirmed facts. A similar idea is expressed by special grammar structures, e.g. *The man is said to have taken part in the affair*, or *The chief of the police is quoted as saying ...*. Evaluation can be included in the headlines of news items (*Government going back on its own promises*) and in the commentary on the news, in feature articles, in leading articles (editorials), where emotionally coloured vocabulary is widely employed (Gurevich, 1995).

Headlines often contain elements of appraisal, i.e. they show the reporter's or the paper's attitude to the facts reported or commented on, thus also performing the function of instructing the reader. English headlines are short and catching, they "compact the gist of news stories into a few eye-snaring words. A skillfully turned out headline tells a story, or enough of it, to arouse or satisfy the reader's curiosity" (Halliday, 1991, p.302).

In some English newspapers sensational headlines are quite common. The practices of headline writing are different with different newspapers. In many papers there is, as a rule, but one headline to a news item, whereas such papers as *The Times*, *The Guardian* often carry a news item or an article with two or three headlines, and sometimes as many as four, e.g.

FIRE FORCES AIRLINER TO TURN BACK

Cabin Filled With Smoke;

Safe Landing For 97 Passengers;

Atlantic Drama In Super VC 10 (The Times)

Such group headlines are almost a summary of the information contained in the news item or article.

The functions and the peculiar nature of English headlines predetermine the choice of the language means used. The vocabulary groups considered in the analysis of brief news items are commonly found in headlines. But headlines also abound in emotionally coloured words and phrases, as the italicised words in the following:

End this Bloodbath (Morning Star),

Milk Madness (Morning Star),

Tax agent a cheat (Daily World)

No Wonder Housewives are Pleading: 'HELP' (Daily Mirror) (Skrebnev, 1994).

Furthermore, to attract the reader's attention, headline writers often resort to a deliberate breaking-up of set expressions, in particular fused set expressions, and deformation of special terms, a stylistic device capable of producing a strong emotional effect, e.g. *Cakes and Bitter Ale* (*The Sunday Times*), *Conspirator-in-chief Still at Large* (*The Guardian*).

Compare respectively the allusive set expression cakes and ale, and the term commander-in-chief.

There are four functions of a headline: to grab the readers' attention, to pre-screen or select the readers, to deliver a complete message, to draw a reader into the story.

A headline grabs the readers' attention

A headline's best tools for getting attention are to appeal to the reader's self-interest or to give news. A web reader is always, either consciously or subconsciously, searching for something.

A headline pre-screens or selects the readers

The headline needs to be specific enough to screen the viewers. It tells the reader if the article is for them. The headline "The Buying Process" is a story about the how the buying process can be related to a website, so the headline has had at least some indication of the fact that the story related to websites.

A headline delivers a complete message

When people read a headline than read the complete article, the headline can be used to deliver a complete message. Here's a headline from Google News: "Rogers buys Call-Net". You can get the whole story from the headline.

A headline draws a reader into the story

The ways to draw someone a story usually involve humor, intrigue or the desire to find out more: curiosity. The very effective: "Top 10 Tips for Getting Rich" style headlines make a promise of practical, easy to use information. If you aren't feeling rich it's difficult to not click a headline like this.

Concerning lexical features of the headlines, Znamenskaya T.A. in her "Stylistics of the English language" distinguishes the followings:

- newspaper cliches and set phrases
- terminological variety: scientific, sports, political, technical, etc.
- abbreviations and acronyms
- numerous proper names, toponyms, anthroponyms, names of enterprises institutions, international words, dates and figures
- abstract notion words, elevated and bookish words

Diana Burns in her work "Introduction to Journalism" distinguishes the following types of Headlines:

Banner Headline: A newspaper headline written in large letters across the width of the page. When the heading is given below the nameplate of the newspaper and over all columns from left to right, it is called banner headline. Some may call it streamer, which also covers the entire column but is normally given on the inside page. Sometimes the streamer may leave one column.

Skyline: for very exceptional and exclusive events, the headline of the story is sometimes given over the nameplate of the newspaper. It means that the event is even more important than the authority of the newspaper.

Rectangle: in such headings, all the lines are equal from left to right. Normally, it is of three lines but sometimes it can be of 2 to 4 lines too.

Hanging indentation: the heading with more than two or more lines which are justified on the right side and unjustified on the left are called hanging indentation.

Waist: this is of three lines where the first and the third line cover the column but the centerline is smaller and placed centrally.

Full one/one line: the headline is normally single line heading covering all the columns of the story.

Crosser/highlighter: crosser are normally one line headline which is given in the middle of the story. Sometimes in the story, a few important points are highlighted in the middle of the story. They are also included in this category.

Flash: a recent development in the newspaper is to highlight the stories of inside pages on the first page, just below the flag. Flag (The Times of India).

Over line: this is also called the eyebrow or strap line. This is normally given over the main heading.

Oval: in such headlines, middle line is longer than the above and below lines. This is normally of three lines.

Multi deck headings: the descending lines get smaller in size, after the main heading

Sub-heading: these are the small subsidiary headings in the body of the story.

Symbolic headline: this headline will show the special effects of the story.

Left step: here the lines of the headline are justified on the left and unjustified on the right.

Step line: the headline with two or more lines, displayed so as to give an effect of a stair. (Ladder)

Inverted pyramid: in this heading, there are three or more than three lines which are centrally set from large to small. In some cases, there could be two lines only, set in such a fashion.

3. Results and discussion.

“The Times”, daily newspaper published in London, is one of Britain’s oldest and most influential newspapers. John Walter was the creator of “The Times” in 1785.

The development of technology allows us to obtain information on the Internet, and, respectively, every newspaper has its online version, its own site, which allows you to keep the track of events any time of the day. The positive aspects of the electronic version include more visual representation of the data, the ability to watch videos, searching for information is now easier.

In our research we have set a goal to investigate different types of newspaper headlines and analyze them in online version of “The Times”. We studied 80 headlines in accordance with the classification given by Galperin I.R., who distinguished nine types based on their syntactic structure:

a) Full declarative sentences, e.g. *Politicians won’t save us, so the Bank must* (The Times), *The Times Opinion pages are named the best in Britain* (The Times), *Allies Now Look to London* (The Times)

b) Interrogative sentences, e. g. *Do you want to live for ever?* (The Times)

c) Nominative sentences, e.g. *Borrowed Time* (The Times), *‘Atlantic Sea Traffic’* (The Times)

d) Elliptical sentences:

a. with an auxiliary verb omitted, e.g. *Giraffes in danger of quiet extinction* (The Times)

b. with the subject omitted, e.g. *Marking 50 years as the world’s most exclusive basement* (The Times)

c. with the subject and part of the predicate omitted, e.g. *Power Down* (The Times)

e) Sentences with articles omitted, e. g. *Clinic that treated Joan Rivers accused of multiple failings* (The Times)

f) Phrases with verbals–infinitive, participial and gerundial, e.g. *Keeping Prices Down* (The Times), *Speaking parts* (The Sunday Times)

g) Questions in the form of statements, e.g. *State schools will never compete?* (The Times), *The worse the better?* (The Times)

h) Complex sentences, e. g. *China has been watching Putin and likes what it sees* (The Times)

i) Headlines including direct speech:

a. introduced by a full sentence, e.g. *I studied Monty Python to play Moses, says Bale (The Times)*, *What Oils the Wheels of Industry? asks James Lowery-Olearch of the Shell-Mex and B. P. Group (The Times)*

b. introduced elliptically, e.g. *Philip Collins: he was good. He was never a monster (The Times)*.

The analysis showed the usage of all the types of headlines according to syntactical classification by Galperin R.I. in newspaper headlines of “The Times”. We found the examples of headlines with full declarative sentences – 37, interrogative sentences – 5, nominative sentences – 9, elliptical sentences: with an auxiliary verb omitted – 9, with the subject omitted – 2, with the subject and a part of predicate omitted – 2, sentences with the article omitted – 14, phrases with verbals – 1, questions in the form of statements – 4, complex sentences, headlines including direct speech: introduced by a full sentence – 3; introduced elliptically – 4.

According to the analysis the most frequent types of headlines are: full declarative sentences, and sentences with article omitted. As for the least frequent used newspaper headlines they are phrases with verbals, questions in the form of statement, and headlines including direct speech.

4. Conclusion.

Newspaper headlines are paid a great attention in our society. It is the first thing the reader sees when he takes the newspaper or open online newspapers’ site. It is very important when you are busy, so that you just scan the newspaper, surveying photos, headlines to decide if they want to commit more time to reading the stories that interest them.

After studying the scientific literature and doing our own research, we may say that the editors pay attention to writing headlines more clearly and full. That is why the majority uses full declarative sentences to make the reader understand the content of articles. At the same time the editors use other syntactical types of newspaper headlines to increase the readers’ interest, to draw their attention. Such types like elliptical sentences, questions in the form of statements and headlines including direct speech introduced elliptically are best way to fulfill the function of hooking the readers and develop their curiosity. Phrases with verbals and complex sentences are less common of all.

Headlines do not reveal a sufficient amount of information in their content. They do so in order to encourage the reader into reading further. They should be vague to arouse curiosity and draw attention

Headline is a dependent form of newspaper writing. It is in fact a part of a larger whole. The specific functional and linguistic features of the headline provide sufficient ground for isolating and analyzing it as a specific “genre” of journalism.

References

Daniel Dor. On newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35, 2003, 719-720.

Galperin I.R. *Stylistics*. 1981, pp.295-305.

Gurevich V.V. *English stylistics*. 1995, pp. 20-26.

Halliday M. *Linguistic function and literary style*. The Hague, 1991.

Kukharenko V. A. *Seminars in Style*. Moscow: Higher School Publishing House, 1983.

Skrebnev Y.M. *Fundamentals of English stylistics*. Moscow, 1994.

<http://europeandyou.eu/significant-role-and-importance-of-newspapers-in-the-modern-society/>

<http://www.publishyourarticles.net/knowledge-hub/essay/an-essay-on-the-role-of-newspapers.html>

<http://www.fuldafreepress.com/the-role-of-newspaper-in-the-modern-society/>

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/headline>

<http://www.smartmoneydaily.com/diy/4-functions-of-an-effective-headline.aspx>

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/596228/The-Times>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/>