



Functional Analysis of English Headlines Based on the Reuters News Portal: A Study of the Lexical-Semantic Level

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Abstract

The article aims to examine a headline as a component of a media text, which is intended to name the text and provide primary information about it. The headline is intended to influence the feelings and emotions of the readers in order to maximize the publication's popularity. The study focuses on lexical and semantic features that are used to draw the attention of a specific number of readers. A news portal (Reuters) was used as a source of English headlines for this purpose. The analysis revealed that *Reuters* publications are characterized by a high degree of standardization and the use of clichés, metaphors, and terms, but also by the use of expressive language and evaluative epithets to attract readers' attention. For a wide audience, English-language media uses simple headlines. The differences in the headlines could be attributed to the article's topic and the media's editorial policy. Furthermore, publications aimed at a broad audience contain elements of literary and artistic genres aimed at attracting and entertaining the audience.

Keywords: English Headlines; News Portals; Media.

1. Introduction

Before defining and describing "media," it should be noted that communication is not only one of the most important and fundamental aspects of human group life, but it is also the cornerstone of society and the foundation of social structure formation. What if culture did not exist without communication, and society did not exist without culture? As a result, communication has played an important role in the transfer of knowledge and skills, attitudes, beliefs, and values in small and large social systems such as family, rural, urban, national, and international communities, and can form and lead to a change in cognitions, opinions, values, and human behavior. As a result, communication is regarded as one of the most important tools for social and political change. It is obvious that communication does not occur on its own but requires tools. They considered using the media as a form of communication.

The research topic was chosen because of an interest in analyzing journalistic texts of various subjects in order to identify stylistic features, as well as the study of the vocabulary used, its composition and formation. This work is important because there has recently been a noticeable increase in interest in the versatile study of functional and stylistic language systems used in the most key areas of communication in modern society. This includes the realm of mass communication (Sabirova et al., 2019). News portals, as a means of mass information and communication, represent an inexhaustible resource of modern language, reflecting changes in public consciousness and societal life on the one hand and ongoing language changes on the other. Today, linguistic research focuses on the structural, stylistic, and grammatical characteristics of newspaper headlines.

This study aims to investigate the lexical and semantic levels of analysis pertaining to English headlines sourced from Reuters news portals.

2. Literature Review

Such distinguished researchers as van Dijk, 1988; Lindemann, 1990; Bell, 1991; Nir, 1993; Dor, 2003; Infantidou, 2009; Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013; Khamahani & Tahirov, 2013; Montejo & Adriano, 2018; Scammell, 2018; Shevtsova, 2019; Yanwen, 2023 have investigated the issue of the linguistic features of news headlines. T. A. van Dijk (1988), for example, saw headlines as categories that comprised "the summary" of news reports. Bell (1991) and Nir

(1993) distinguished between headlines that function as an abstract of the main event of the story and headlines that promote one of the story's details. Some newspaper headlines, according to Lindemann (1990), present their readers with fairly complex riddles that neither summarize nor represent the details of the news reports. In turn, Dor (2003) defined headlines as relevance-optimizers and relevance-based selection devices, as well as negotiators between stories and readers. According to Dor (2003), the impact of headlines on readers is likely to be enhanced because certain linguistic features of titles make them particularly memorable and effective.

However, Ifantidou (2009) claims that newspaper headlines serve only one purpose: "attention-getting rather than information-providing device because headlines do not accurately represent the articles they introduce." In other words, newspaper headlines are more persuasive than informative." Furthermore, Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) propose that, in addition to indicating the topic and summarizing the main content of the news text, newspaper headlines attempt to help the reader understand the meaning of the text.

3. Materials and Methods

Qualitative content analysis occurs where quantitative analysis reaches limitations. As a result, qualitative content analysis can be regarded as a research method for the subjective interpretation of textual data content via systematic classification, coding, and thematization or design of known patterns. Furthermore, one of the fundamental characteristics of qualitative research is theorizing rather than testing the theory. The experimental, methodical, and controlled step-by-step approach, taking into account the studied elements, can be considered with qualitative analysis.

According to these definitions, qualitative content analysis enables researchers to subjectively but scientifically interpret the authenticity and truth of data. The presence of a systematic coding process ensures that the results are objective. Themes or patterns that are obvious or hidden as obvious content are examined in qualitative content analysis, which goes beyond the words or objective content of the texts.

This article's source material includes English headlines from the news portal Reuters. The articles under consideration were published between February and May of 2023 and cover a variety of topics. The article employs a complex approach to the material under evaluation, incorporating both traditional text analysis methods and those provided by the modern paradigm, particularly in analyzing various national media texts.

4. Results

An examination of the lexical means employed in English headlines enables us to identify differences and similarities in the approach to producing spectacular and memorable headlines. The core of the journalistic style's lexical and phraseological foundation is terminological vocabulary. This vocabulary includes the following phenomena and concepts from various spheres of sociopolitical life:

- Public opinion;
- Great problems of today.

Words with no assessments in their semantics (*mandate, production*) can acquire color in context, depending on the commitment to a specific block of the newspaper. The desire to win over the reader leads to the use of a large number of emotional and evaluative lexical means in the newspaper text. The evaluation fund of journalistic vocabulary is made up of qualitative and evaluative nouns and adjectives, phraseological units, various tropes, and their application in accordance with the newspaper's "image." The main principle uniting various categories of the vocabulary of the newspaper style is evaluation.

Separate functional and genre types of texts with stable features at the level of format and language content are clearly distinguished among the many texts produced and distributed by the mass media on a daily basis. As a result, the level of the newspaper format entails a combination of external features such as the size of the strip, the number of pages, the thematic heading, the presence of illustrations, the systematic arrangement of the material on the strip, and the fonts used, among others.

5. Discussion

Readers will understand the article's topic better if it is described in more understandable and simple terms. The restrained official style of British business publications has traditionally changed to adapt to the Internet audience. It is becoming less popular, and most English-language news websites now use the official language. The following are some examples of English-language press headlines that use colloquial vocabulary and are based on the Reuters portal.

However, according to many economists, the last thing the US economy needs now is a dose of austerity. If anything, there has been too much already (Reuters, 02/13/2023). The phrase "a dose of austerity" refers to the colloquial style in this title. *The IRS denies their motives were political and has portrayed it instead as an organizational mess-up (Reuters, 03/15/2023).* The expression an organizational mess-up can also be interpreted as "disorderly action" and attributed to the conversational style. *Anger at the Internal Revenue Service scandal boiled over at a congressional hearing on Tuesday when a senior Republican senator accused one of the former heads of the agency of "lying by omission" (Reuters, 05/13/2023).* The term boiled refers to the conversational style in this heading.

The budget for social security is being butchered (Reuters, 05/23/2023). In this case, the budget is bloodthirstily chopped up with a butcher's axe rather than simply "killed." This example includes not only limited vocabulary but also an eloquent metaphor. According to the statistics above, the lexical use of colloquial speech in the English-language press was detected in 24 cases or 24% of the time. As a result, colloquial terminology is more prevalent in the English-language edition. The problem of choosing the word as a process we connect with different operations: first, on the level of inner preparation, the speaker analyzes the differential-semantic features and their potential pragmatic opportunities, supported by knowledge of the native language as a system; second, the choice of secondary nomination is determined by the speaker's inner lexicon, their individual world view, because thinking means introducing new words; third, the speaker's inner lexicon determines the choice of secondary nomination, their individual world view, because (Smirnova et al., 2016; Sabirova et al., 2018).

Recently, neologisms – new words and expressions reflecting modern trends and phenomena – have been increasingly appearing in press headlines. Some of them are already well-known, while others are just getting started in the language. English has assumed the role of an international language in the context of globalization, resulting in a mass migration of English vocabulary into the vocabulary of other languages. Neologisms, according to Voloshin, are "any modern words formed in the language at this stage of its development." Neologisms can also denote new concepts that have emerged as a result of scientific and technological progress, changes in people's daily lives, socio-political changes, or express existing concepts more vividly and emotionally" (Voloshin, 2000). Many neologisms that emerge in journalistic language to denote new phenomena in sociopolitical life have a distinct expressive and stylistic coloring. Word formation (word composition, affixation, conversion, abbreviations), changing the meanings of words, and borrowing from other languages are the most common ways of forming neologisms in the language of an English newspaper. In English, we saw the addition of verbs with prepositions (sit-in, stay-in) as well as nouns with prepositions in the headlines (take-over, lay-out, drop-out, follow-up). The following are examples of English-language headings with neologisms.

Paul Fletcher, director for youth engagement with Rathbone, a training organization that works with older teenagers, said he could see the merit in picking up potential drop-outs at an early age (Reuters, 04/16/2023). *Children can use these role-play templates to transform themselves into characters, from supermarket owners to consumers to Fairtrade cocoa farmers, in preparation for an informed debate. Find some additional information on the chocolate trade in Ghana and prompt a follow-up discussion to extend and clarify learning (Reuters, 03/15/2023).*

Among the English-language headlines on the Reuters news portal, neologisms were found in 67 of the 100 headlines, or 67 percent. Impersonation is a literary technique commonly used in English-language media to help readers understand and relate to complex topics. This technique entails imbuing non-human entities with human characteristics such as ideas, concepts, objects, and human features. Writers can use this technique to create drama, make abstract concepts more concrete, and elicit emotions from their audience. We encountered the impersonation technique in 21 cases out of 100, or 21%, of the headlines in the English press. This technique is not widely used in English-language headlines. Despite this, we found some quite interesting examples of titles that used this technique.

Thus, for example: *"London gets its first shot at an elected mayor, and the Guardian stays silent rather than endure the egomaniacal breakaway independent or the bearded" (Reuters, 02/13/2023).* In this case, the personification

is represented in the phrase "London gets its first," which makes this statement interesting and attractive to the reader. In addition, quite an interesting example of impersonation is: "Cyprus makes frantic effort to prevent a run on its banks. Pandemic tightens its grip on the UK with the surge in cases" (Reuters, 02/21/2023) – the personification of the pandemic seizing the UK as a strong power. "Stock markets rollercoaster ride as trade tensions escalate" – the personification of stock exchange rates as an amusement park attraction (Reuters, 04/14/2023). "Vaccine race heats up as scientists rush to develop COVID-19 solution" – the personification of the race of scientists in the background waiting for the creation of a vaccine against COVID-19. "China's economy roars back to life as factory activity surges" – the personification of the Chinese market, rushing forward with a victorious market (Reuters, 02/14/2023).

One of the most striking methods of attracting attention is the use of words in a figurative sense. Because the metaphor does not provide an unambiguous meaning to the statement but instead allows the reader to comprehend the title, it has gained popularity among article authors. Metaphors evoke specific images and associations in the reader's mind, making the title text more understandable and interesting. Furthermore, titles that employ this stylistic device stick with the reader for a long time. During the analysis of the headlines of English-language media such as Reuters, we found a large number of metaphors; the most popular (24 headlines or 24%) among them were "Prescription for Disaster," "Catch the Wave, " and "Dementia mocked. " Examples of titles are the headlines: "Prescription for Disaster: The heartland's pain-pills problem, "; "Still waiting to catch the gravitational wave, "; "Colorado arrest: Woman with dementia mocked by US police" (Reuters, 04/24/2023).

6. Conclusion

We can identify the following linguistic and stylistic features of media language after analyzing headlines from the electronic versions of the news portals Reuters: 1) A high degree of standardization: a large number of set and clichéd expressions, metaphors, standard terms and titles (this is especially important in news headings, where the author must emphasize the absolute objectivity of what is stated); 2) Expressiveness of language as a means of attracting the audience's attention, expressing attitude toward the transmitted information, the presence of evaluative epithets, direct appeals to the reader; 3) Frequent use of realities (social, political, and cultural life), allusions (from literature, history, and cinema), quotations; 4) The use of colloquial, reduced vocabulary; 5) Extensive use of figurative phraseology and idiomatic vocabulary, play on words, puns, proverbs, and sayings; 6) use of other figures of speech, such as hyperboles, litotes, figurative comparisons, metaphors, and metonymy, among others. Headlines, which are frequently based on wordplay, puns, and allusions, should be classified as a separate category. Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates that journalists often rely on standardization, clichés, metaphors, and terminology to attract readers' attention, but they also use expressive language and evaluative epithets.

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