

THEORETICAL AND LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES IN ENGLISH

(WITH SOME UZBEK EXPLANATIONS)

Dilshoda Mirzayeva Ikromjonovna

Head of English department, PhD. Fergana State University

Jabborova Shokhsanam

2nd course Master's degree student of English Linguistics, Fergana State University

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Abstract. *This article gives a general introduction to the linguistic features of newspaper language, more specifically the language of headlines. There are discussions about outstanding scholars' concerns about the headline language and definition to the term "headline" itself. We tried to analyze theoretical and linguistic features of headline languages in terms of linguistic levels, such as graphetic level, graphological level, phonological level, grammatical level, lexical level and semantic levels.*

Key words: *newspaper style, headline language, graphetic level, graphological level, phonological level, grammatical level, lexical level, semantic level.*

ТЕОРЕТИКО-ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ГАЗЕТНЫХ ЗАГОЛОВКОВ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

(С НЕКОТОРЫМИ УЗБЕКСКИМИ ПОЯСНЕНИЯМИ)

Аннотация. *В этой статье дается общее введение в лингвистические особенности газетного языка, в частности языка заголовков. Ведутся дискуссии об опасениях выдающихся ученых по поводу языка заголовка и определения самого термина «заголовок». Мы попытались проанализировать теоретические и лингвистические особенности языков заголовков с точки зрения лингвистических уровней, таких как графический уровень, графологический уровень, фонологический уровень, грамматический уровень, лексический уровень и семантические уровни.*

Ключевые слова: *газетный стиль, язык заголовков, графический уровень, графологический уровень, фонологический уровень, грамматический уровень, лексический уровень, семантические уровни.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the main means whereby people communicate and it is a main tool of different fields of science. These various fields have developed different styles of language. They require to be studied carefully if we want to understand and use them to communicate and exchange facts and information from one person to another. Among several varieties of language styles, the language of newspaper reporting presents a wider range of linguistically distinctive. In order to attract the readers' attention, newspaper reporters have to use different techniques in writing news reports. The headlines of these news reports are also written in a special style which is different from ordinary language. They are used in unusual ways and some special rules of grammar. They must also appeal to the attitudes and interests of the intended reader because whenever a reader unfolds a newspaper, the very first ones the reader sees are the headlines and the photos. Therefore, the study of the language of newspaper headlines is very interesting and it is worthy to be examined carefully.

According to “The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language” by David Crystal (1987), the world of modern newspaper and magazine publishing presents a wider range of linguistically distinctive varieties than any other domain of language study. Newspaper reporting style is different from other styles of language as there are some fundamental constraints of using language which are the pressures of time and space. Information has to be compressed into a limited space, usually in columns. Interest has to be focused, captured, and maintained through the use of large type, dramatic headlines, short paragraphs, and succinct sentences. In various ways, the occurrence of photographs, the decency of the information reported and the need to maintain human interest will influence the choice of vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, a distinctive grammar is used in writing headlines as they are the most prominent features of a newspaper.

Headlines are the titles of a newspaper article printed in large letters. According to “The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language” by David Crystal (1987), most headlines differ from everyday language by omitting many of the less important words in a sentence, to produce an elliptical, ‘telegrammatic’ construction. They also display a very restricted range of sentence structures.

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

In “Investigating English Style”, David Crystal and Derek Davy (1969) noted that the term ‘journalese’ seems to be restricted to one kind of newspaper-reporting language only. But every newspaper has its own peculiar style of writing while they belong to the same variety. Similarly, according to the data from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, the term concerning headlines is known as ‘headlines’. It is an abbreviated writing style used in newspaper headlines. It consists of special syntax, short forms and commonly used short words. However, like the language of newspaper reporting, that of the news headlines will be different from one publication to another. According to the facts mentioned in the book “Investigating English Style”, a particularly piece of language, or a text can be studied in terms of a number of interrelated levels of description. The levels which should be considered in the study of the language of newspaper headlines are:

1. Graphetic level (In Uzbek, “*harflarni turlicha dizaynlarda ifodalash va ranglardan ta’sir vositasi sifatida foydalanish*”)
2. Graphological level (In Uzbek, “*gazeta sarlavhalarida maxsus qisqartma va abbreviaturalardan foydalanish*”)
3. Phonological level (*fonetik vositalarning sarlavhalarda qo’llanilishi*)
4. Grammatical level (*Grammatik vositalarning sarlavhalarda qo’llanilishi*)
5. Lexical level (*leksik vositalarning sarlavhalarda qo’llanilishi*)
6. Semantic level (*sarlavhalarning semantic xususiyatlari*)

1. Graphetics is the basic graphic substance of language. It is also a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of written or printed shapes. Different kinds of shapes and type sizes may give a stylistic effect. As the reporters of news articles have to try to catch the eyes of their regular and new readers, they use different shapes, font sizes and even colours in writing headlines.

2. In terms of graphology, the distinctive uses of punctuation, special symbols, abbreviations and contractions are needed to study as graphology is the study of a language’s writing system. Headlines use many contractions and abbreviations: in the USA, for example,

Pols for “politicians”, **Dems** for “Democrats”, **Lib Dems** for the Liberal Democrats. Or in Uzbek language, **O‘zLiDeP** for *O‘zbekiston liberal demokratik partiyasi* and etc.

3. Phonological level. As mentioned in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1985), phonology is the establishment and description of the distinctive sound units of a language. As the newspaper headlines are only written and printed, their language cannot be studied thoroughly in terms of phonology. However, the reporter may use *rhymes* and *alliterations* to attract the attention of the readers. A rhyme is a word that has the same sound or ends with the same sound as another word. For example, a rhyme for “rain” is “pain”. As mentioned in “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005)”, alliteration is the use of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together, as in “sing a song of sixpence” where the /s/ sounds are repeated. The examples of such headlines using alliterations are as follows:

- **P**riate **p**layer **p**redicts insurance;
- **M**edia **m**akes **M**adonna **M**ad.

This phonological features can be found in Uzbek newspaper headlines, for instance:

- **Q**ishloqlarimizning **q**adrdon **q**adriyatlari;
- **S**iyosiy **s**avodxonlik **s**irlari.

4. At the grammatical level, as mentioned in the book “Investigating English Style”, the main aim of grammar is to analyze the internal structure of the units called sentences in a language, and the way these function in sequences. In the language of newspaper headlines, the use of simplified but distinctive grammar can be found. According to the facts from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, as the space is limited, headlines are written in a compressed telegraphic style, using special syntactic conventions:

- a) Forms of the verb “to be” are omitted as in “*model killed by doctor*” instead of “*A model was killed by a doctor*”.
- b) Articles are usually omitted as in the first example.
- c) Most verbs are in the simple present tense, e.g. “*Governor signs bill*”.
- d) The future is expressed as “to” followed by a verb, e.g. “*Governor to sign bill*”.
- e) Conjunctions are often replaced by a comma, as in “*Bush, Blair laugh off microscope mishap*”.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Headlines use strong syntactic rules because they have evolved to maximize into output and minimize space because this has been optimal for newspapers. In many headlines, as with the example above “model killed by doctor”, the verb ‘to be’ is not necessary. It can be used, but in most cases should be avoided. In fact, there are mainly three forms of verbs used in the headlines: Present Tense, Simple Past Tense and To+V-infinitive form. But “Simple Present Tense” is mostly used to give the readers the sense of immediacy.

5. Lexical level. According to “Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1985)”, lexis is the study of the vocabulary of a language. In terms of lexical level, headlines often use extremely short words in unusual ways to save space. For example, the following short words are commonly used in the newspaper headlines:

quiz (V) meaning “interrogate”

row (N) meaning “disagreement/ argument”

wed (V) meaning “marry”

6. Semantics is the study of meaning. The reporter can also play with the meaning of the language by punning. Pun is the clever or humorous use of a word that has more than one meaning, or of words that have different meanings but sound the same. The need to keep headlines brief occasionally leads to unintentional double meanings. For example, if the story is about the president of Iraq trying to acquire weapons, the headline might be “IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS”. Therefore, such ambiguous headlines may lead to multiple humorous interpretations and they should be studied from the semantic point of view.

CONCLUSION

In this article, the language of news headlines used in English are studied through different linguistic levels. The style of the newspaper language is found obviously through its headlines. A headline’s main purpose is to quickly and briefly draw attention to the news report under it. According to the restrictions to use complete sentences to save time and space as much as they can, the reporters invented incomplete but striking sentences or phrases which make the headlines more dramatic. The use of puns, alliterations, distinctive grammar and the choice of emotive vocabulary altogether make the headlines more memorable and effective. Therefore, it is hoped that the study of the language of news headlines will be helpful to some extent for the readers of English newspapers both in scanning the headlines and in understanding the headline language.

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