Название: Лингвистический анализ заголовков журнала “TIME”

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Аннотация:

Данная работа направлена на изучение языковых особенностей заголовков. Основное внимание уделяется захватывающим внимание приёмам, используемым в заголовках с целью вовлечения читателя в чтение всей статьи. Также подвергается рассмотрению проблема смысловой неопределенности заголовков. Поскольку заголовки передают наиболее важную часть новостей (то есть они кратко и интересно обобщают всю статью), они становятся важным элементом, исходя из которого читатель решает, стоит ли продолжать читать всю статью. В качестве основного материала исследования используются заголовки журнала “Time”.

Ключевые слова: новости, статья, журнал, письменное творчество, заголовок, язык, пиар, экспрессивность, журналистика

Abstract:

The study aims at investigating the linguistic features of headlines. It concentrates mainly on the expressive eye-catching techniques used in headlines in order to draw the reader into reading the whole article. The problem of ambiguity is also viewed in this work. As headlines represent the most important part of the news (since they summarize the article briefly and in a very creative way), they become vital elements through which the reader decides whether to read or leave the article. The headlines of the “TIME” magazine are used as the main research data.

Key words: news, article, magazine, writing, headline, language, PR, expressivity, journalism

**Linguistic analysis of TIME headlines**

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One of the journalists’ techniques is to promise the reader something valuable. For example, to teach them how to learn a new skill or persuade them to do something they have never done before or even unlock an ancient mystery. By writing a creative headline journalists aim at presenting us with more information than we expect. Journalists want to dare readers to read the article, sometimes even by over-promising.

Since the cover-lines are initially aimed at shocking readers, they use emotional words which are eye-catching, for instance: “The Unmaking of the President”, “The Temptations of Revenge”, “End of Forever”, “A Giant Leap for Mankind”, “In the Blazing Eye of the Inferno”, “The Ugly War”, “If You Want to Humble an Empire”. Expressive words make the whole story become even more newsworthy.

The main stylistic devices used creatively in headlines include:

* puns (“Laughing Matter”, “From Russia with gloves”, “Chinese celebrate the lucky swines born in the Year of the Pig”, “M\*A\*S\*H, You Were a Smash”);
* play on words (“Beech party this Sunday” standing for a furniture store sale; alliteration (“Modi needs his Mojo”, “Forgive and forget”, “Jumbo jet”), as well as emphasizing particular words: “RUSSIA just wants to be friends”;
* extensive use of metaphors (“Minnows swimming alongside whales as large and small flood fast-growing sector”) – “minnow” is a general term for small freshwater and saltwater fish, here used as a metaphor representing the small fast-growing sector in comparison to the large one represented as “whales” in another metaphor;
* extensive use of acronyms and abbreviations (“How Ab Fab1 changed my life”);
* parcelling: “Unlimited energy. For everyone. Forever”; “Was He Normal? Human? Poor Humanity”;
* repetition of particular words: “Are you ready for your long, long retirement?”, “The Show of Shows”;
* creation of intrigue: “Your heart may be older than you are”, “Unraveling the Double Helix and the Secret of Life”, “What it takes to forgive a killer”.

If we take a closer look at the headlines of a particular special health double issue, we immediately notice that such group headlines are almost a summary of the information contained in the articles: “New ways to disrupt aging”, “How to keep the body young”, “The anti-aging power of a positive attitude”, “Can brain games keep a mind young?”, “The best place to grow old”, “Meal plan for a longer life”. All together the headlines give a longevity report, they give answers to any questions the reader could come up with while reading the magazine.

The functions and the peculiar nature of headlines predetermine the choice of the language means used. There are specific vocabulary groups commonly found in headlines. For example, the most important words used when talking about the mind are: analyze, calculate, forget, infer, memorize, realize, recognize, remember; brainy, bright, gifted, imaginative, intelligent. Headlines also abound in emotionally colored words and phrases, as in the following examples taken from the issue: “Television breakout”, “The forgotten war”, “Little Airlines, Big Ideas”, “AGE DISRUPTERS”.

Moreover, headline writers often use proverbs, epigrams, quotations, allusions and metaphors. They are stylistic devices capable of producing a strong emotional effect, for example “Go Time for Hillary” – an allusion to a song “Go Time” by Volta Cab, also used as a metaphor to talk about a person who is ready for action; “Cheese busters” – an allusion to an American supernatural comedy film Ghostbusters (whereas the article is related to 47 blocks of cheese that a Tennessee couple was accused of stealing from a Walmart); “Help save the lipstick” – a set expression used in a hilarious way (usually it is used to talk about helping save our planet/the environment/rare animal species; “Beefed up” – direct, not figurative meaning creates a vivid expression (in an article about different types of burgers); “Presidential pranksters” – here this informal and peculiar word “prankster” (a person who plays pranks on others) accompanied by “presidential” works as a teasing set of words; “Fantasy sports” – at first sight these two words look like a metaphor, but actually they are used to name a type of online game where participants assemble imaginary or virtual teams of real players of a professional sport; “Convenient truths” – a very intriguing metaphor because we more often speak of inconvenient truths; “Don't crack under pressure” – in which the verb “crack” is used figuratively.

Along with neutral and literary (general and specialized) vocabulary one can find words used with emotive coloring: giant, shock, challenge, to scream, to die (rather than to pass away), the greatest, scandalous, frightening, terrifying, appealing, overwhelming, annoying, irritating, exceptional; colloquial vocabulary units: to sack, to crave attention, to matter, obnoxious, nasty, awesome, awesomeness; slang: busted, wasted, frenemy, supersize, awesomity.

If we look more closely at any article of TIME, we immediately notice its cover-lines and sell-lines. These are two types of headlines (headings, usually in large, heavy type, at the top of an article in a newspaper, magazine, or other publication, indicating the subject of the article). Constraints on space affect the language of headlines, sometimes known (in its more extreme forms, as has already been mentioned) as headlinese. It has developed from more or less conventional syntax to increasingly brief, generalized, powerful, and cryptic units. Cover-lines refer to the cover story and are the most important part of teasing an audience to buy the magazine. Sell-lines are other lines for other articles and features on the front cover other than the main cover line.

People choose papers that attract them because of the headlines and other front-page information. Therefore magazines use a dominant headline, only including part of the report on the front page: readers must turn to inside pages if they wish to finish reading. This means that the headlines must capture the readers’ interest, persuading them to continue reading on the inside pages. That is how magazine business works.

TIME usually selects one headline to dominate the front page, with a photograph to highlight what the editorial team see as the most important story. Both the headline and the photograph work on catching the eye.

A special health double issue TIME February 23-March 2, 2015, for example, entices an audience to buy the magazine by using the following cover-lines which catch the eye: THIS BABY COULD LIVE TO BE (capitalized letters) 142 YEARS OLD (capitalized, written in blue bold), featuring a very beautiful child who looks amazed by the headline himself.

People have always tried to find out how to live longer. What the magazine does is it makes a so-called “human interest” story the main story of the issue. It is not a secret we all believe in an incredibly bright idea that one day scientists will find drugs to cure all the diseases people die of today.

Yet, it is still very hard to believe that anyone could live to one hundred and forty two years. The numeral in this headline is eye-catching. The number (one hundred and forty two) excites the readers since it is difficult to believe people can live that long.

It is very interesting to see how all the different and essential techniques mentioned above are applied in practice. When analyzing a complete article from the same TIME issue looked at before, it can be noticed how the headline and the whole article correspond to each other. The cover-lines are: “THE NEW AGE OF MUCH OLDER AGE”. The sell-lines are: “EVERYONE WANTS TO LIVE LONGER, AND SCIENCE IS STARTING TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN. BUT LIVING BETTER WILL BE THE REAL CHALLENGE – AND OPPORTUNITY”. As we see, everything is written in bold capital letters. First of all, about the cover-lines: the word “age” is repeated twice in the headline (the two different meanings of the noun “age”) followed by different adjectives. The two phrases: “The *new* age” and “much *older* age” lead us to a comparison. They also look quite ambiguous because the readers need additional information to understand what it is all about. That is why the author supports the cover-lines with the sell-lines containing very intriguing information and attracting the reader’s attention even more than the cover-lines. The sell-lines add weight to the information contained in the cover-lines by making a reference to science as a reliable source of information (and *science* is starting to make that happen).

Interestingly enough, there is a strong connection between the cover-lines and the article on the whole. The author intentionally contrasts life expectancy now (“THE NEW AGE OF MUCH OLDER AGE”, meaning ‘the new epoch when people live much longer lives’) and e.g. a century ago.

Another feature to notice is excessive use of the first person plural subject and object pronouns “we” and “us”. The author also makes a regular use of the possessive pronoun “our”. It brings the author closer to the reader, there is no division between “I” and “you”. The pronoun “we” joins the author and the reader together, making them share one point of view on the problem and its solution. Coming across such expressions as “Consider,…”, “quite frankly” or “and – imagine this -…” the reader becomes involved throughout the article in a dialogue with the author. Feedback is a very important and desirable tool in journalism. There is no distance between the reader and the author. The article seems to be written in the style of a friendly conversation taking place among people the reader knows well, among friends.

Emotive words are widely used in the article too. Expressive adjectives – extraordinary, remarkable, troubling, breathtaking; expressive nouns – challenge, feat, centenarian; expressive verbs – trigger, fancy; expressive adverbs – scarcely, frankly. Some adjectives are followed by adverbs to make them more expressive: “mentally sharp”, “physically fit”, “financially secure”.

Numerals “60” and “15” in the same sentence play an important role as well. Such numerals are easy to memorize and compare.

Introductory words “*Indeed*”, “*Arguably*”, *Meanwhile*”, *Although*” connect the sentences and link different parts of the same paragraph.

As for grammar, the Present Perfect Tense is used widely: “*has improved”, “has increased”, “have grown”, “have come”*, *“have been completed”*.The Present Perfect is used to indicate a present result. This tense is used when someone wants to talk about unfinished actions started in the past and which last up to the present. The author is proud of scientific discoveries in the field of pharmacology and stresses that more results are predicted for the future. The process is not over, neither are the inventions.

The Passive voice forms “*were added”, “was carried out”, “has been reshaped”* indicates that the subject is not that important as compared to the object. This means that readers are focused on the result of the action rather than the person doing it. People are more interested in the name of a medicine rather that the name of the scientist who came up with this medicine.

Very few short sentences can be found in the article: “We live in extraordinary times”; “Long life is a remarkable achievement”, “This is no small feat”, “Average body size has increased”. Other sentences are complex and contain several subordinate clauses and different enumerations of factors. This may be explained by an attempt to make the article scientific and trustworthy. The author gives examples and provides the readers with relevant information.

The article observed has a great number of big words and high-sounding phrases which inspire readers and make them believe they are living in a better world than their ancestors. To my mind, it was the author’s original aim and the author, Laura L. Carstensen, would not have succeeded without the eye-catching headline.

To conclude, everyone is familiar with the saying “you cannot judge a book by its cover”, but it may be presumed that not many people will disagree if it is said “you always judge an article by its headline”.

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