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HEADLINES IN BRITISH NEWSPAPERS: STRUCTURAL AND LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS

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The aim of the research is to define some common structural and language characteristics of headlines in British newspapers. Headlines are special texts that have their own pattern of structuring for informing and attracting readers' attention and they are the first visual element of a news story composition. Many both foreign and Russian experts in press-media studies analyze headlines and their features to help beginners in journalism to write effective and creative headlines. E. A. Lazareva "Headline in a newspaper", G. I. Shostak "The language of English newspaper headlines".

To specify typical features of headlines we have examined some British newspapers since 1994 to 2015 and made analysis of journalists' communication practice in two aspects: structure and language devices of headlines.

According to the traditional British classification, newspapers are divided into three kinds: the quality newspapers that is The Telegraph, The Independent, The Times and The Guardian; the middle-range tabloids that is The Express, and the Daily Mail; and the tabloids that is The Sun, The Mirror and The Star.

British newspapers give readers wide range of items: world news, home news, comment and analysis, advertising, entertainment. The most of a newspaper space is devoted to news coverage. The quality newspapers give more information about important social issues and tabloids devote more space to celebrities, sensational news that usually dominate. The analysis of structure and language of headlines allows to define the ways in which writers of headlines inform and entertain their readers. One of the effective ways to attract readers to a news story is to include key words into a headline structure.

A news story usually contains information only about one fact and a key word represents the focus of information and even plays the role of advertising. It provokes the audience to read.

The headline "Lend him your ears" (The Sunday Times, April, 2015) helps us to clarify the key word role as a structure element.

The word "ears" in the headline is from the phrase "lend an ear" meaning "to listen". The news story appeals to the new boss of Radio 3 and advises him to make his news presenters use the tone right: not to disappoint the radio listeners, who will "lend him their ears". All key words in the story: tone of voice, the tone, airwaves, listeners add and explain the main idea of the text: Radio 3 new boss should listen to the advice because the station must inform in the right way: not talk down to people.

The headline "Lend him your ears" informs readers about an important event in the life of the Radio 3 listeners and the headline itself is "a right tone" to describe the problem and invites readers to be more active listeners and the boss himself to remember about their tastes and lifestyle.

The headline “Miley Cryus jumps on the celebrity bandwagon by posting selfies of ‘VitaminPush’ therapy” is taken from the tabloid paper *The Mirror* April, 2015 and contains the celebrity’s name Miley Cyrus as the key word and its function is to catch readers’ attention. The person’s name here is a structural element of the headline and it is used to persuade prospective users and buyers to pay attention to a new remedy for stress, allergies, headaches as well as cold and flu. The celebrity’s name turns into her titles: “the singer”, “celeb”, “star” and they are effective communicators between readers who know the singer very well, trust her and the story message helps to advertise a new treatment.

Therefore, we see that key words are usually repeated in a story in different ways and help the reader to understand the headline and the story under it. They are good communicators between a headline and a news story.

Besides key words, writers of headlines use short words that are more preferable to make the headline structure more compact and attractive.

Short words help to inform, keep readers attention, express some intonation and rhythm of a headline. “Drug gangs beat radar” (*The Times*, March, 2013)

British amateur pilots fly across the channel for a weekend away and it has become an easy way of transporting drugs by gangs from North Africa into European markets. It allows them to avoid patrolled roads and ports. Traditionally headline writers use Present Simple instead of Past as a structural element.

“Irvine moves to halt trial delays that cost millions” (*The Daily Mail*, December, 2000). The Lord Chancellor yesterday launched a big shake-up of the criminal courts aimed at saving the taxpayer millions of pounds. The Present Simple helps to make the event closer to the readers.

A compound-noun phrase is usually used instead of a longer clause: “Bridge cost” for the “Cost of the bridge”. The phrases of the kind are chosen as devices to save newspaper space and very often headlines avoid using verbs.

“Anti-smoking pill “threat to health” (*The Times*, December, 2007). The headline doesn’t contain any verb but the word order attribute + noun + noun + preposition + noun helps to restore the verb “to warn” because an anti-smoking pill carries warnings about risks of side-effects.

“Coppers’ car baby” (*The Sun*, July, 2014). The headline is attractive but not clear in its meaning. It contains some intrigue and invites the reader to start reading. Two cops helped to deliver a baby in a car in the early hours because his parents were busy with their broken-down vehicle.

Examples of headlines with compound-noun phrases help to specify and clarify a very particular idea: writers of headlines tend to select words and construct a word order in order to make each word “tell”. The structure of the kind can inform, communicate and entertain.

British newspapers are a product of the culture they originate from. Headline writers often use a wide range of familiar phrases and proverbs.

In the following headline the author refers to the proverb “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” (*The Daily Mail*, July, 2002) but just in opposite meaning: “Why the British like life to be all play and no work”. The idea of the news story under the title deals with the social problem: millions of Britons like

to relax, forgetting about work. They become less interested in their job and more keen to have fun. Over time headline writers have developed a special vocabulary using words that help to structure headlines and make them short, attention-getting and effective.

Another aspect that helps to understand the nature of a headline is. Its language features.

Headline writers may select words that carry an emotional loading; roar, probe, soar, snub and many others: “Stars snubbed by Oscar” (The Daily Mail, August, 2010). The word “snub” means ignore, neglect, rebuff and all the meanings contain the main idea of the headline: many famous and great actors have failed to receive a nomination.

“The Lion King makes Disney figures roar”. In this headline, “roar” is a loaded word and means “increase” (The Guardian, October, 1994).

“Green shipbuilders hark back to age of sail” (The Times, December, 2007)

Hark back – phrasal verb – to return to events of an earlier time.

German engineers built a new vessel that can watch the ocean wind power and calculated that the sails will reduce fuel consumption by 50 % depending on the wind condition. So the age of sail is coming back.

The phrasal verb “hark back” is used here to present the revolutionary idea of the German inventors, do it in sensational and effective way and attract attention of readers to the problem of cutting gas emissions released by the world’s shipping fleets.

To make newspapers more creative and expressive writers use rhythm and rhymes.

“Tiger’s Top of the Kop” (The Sun, July, 2014); “Too late to stop hate” (Sunday Mirror July, 2007). The literary device here is rhythm and rhymes.

“To be or not to be, actually” (The Times, August, 1996) is the reference to Shakespeare’s tragedy “Hamlet”.

“Saints and sinners” (The Express, November, 1998); “Prince rich in talent but so poor in spirit” (The Express, October, 1998). In the above headlines the literary device antithesis is used.

“Anony-mouse” (The Sun, November, 2012); “Who Els, but the latest greatest” (The Guardian weekly, October, 1994). Both omophones “else” – “Els”, “anonym” – “Anony-mouse” are used here to grab readers’ attention and provoke their reading.

“Darkness with a light touch” (The Express, November, 1998). Thanks to the omonym “light” with a meaning “gentle” and another omonym “light” with a meaning “bright” the headline has a double-meaning, making the headline emotional and attractive.

Newspapers of the examined period helped to analyze news stories under creative and effective headlines. In addition, they helped to define specific characteristics of writing newspapers in the British newspapers’ traditions and culture.