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THE IMPACT OF STYLISTIC DEVICES ON JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The article examines the evolution of media writing, focusing on how contemporary journalistic styles balance brevity with the need for comprehensive, accurate reporting. With the rise of digital media, the appearance of clickbait, and the diminishing attention spans of modern readers, news writing has become shorter, emphasizing the need to capture attention quickly while conveying essential information. This shift has raised concerns about oversimplifying complex issues, the potential loss of depth, and the increase in sensationalism in media coverage. The authors emphasize that despite these challenges, forms of journalism, such as editorials and feature articles, continue to offer more in-depth analysis, underscoring the tension between brevity and depth. The study highlights the linguistic and structural characteristics of contemporary news writing, examining how stylistic devices and media consumption habits shape public understanding. Key features of journalistic language, such as headlines, objectivity, and quotations, are discussed in detail. Headlines are identified as critical tools for engaging readers, often condensed to deliver information in an attention-grabbing manner. The article explores the evolving role of media language, noting that traditional journalistic structures, such as the "Five Wh" rule, have become less rigid, reflecting a shift toward more narrative-driven reporting. The increasing use of evaluative language in news discourse is also discussed, as media outlets blend informational content with subtle judgments, influencing public perception. Stylistic devices such as idiomatic expressions, metaphors, euphemisms, and rhetorical techniques are analyzed for their role in shaping the tone of news articles. The article concludes by exploring how idiomatic expressions and metaphors contribute to the persuasive power of journalism, providing readers with vivid imagery and implicit evaluations. Overall, the study underscores the dynamic nature of journalistic writing, where language techniques not only inform but also influence public opinion.

Key words: stylistic devices, rhetoric, journalistic style, headlines, media language.

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ВПЛИВ СТИЛІСТИЧНИХ ЗАСОБІВ НА ЖУРНАЛІСТИКУ ТА ГРОМАДСЬКЕ СПРИЙНЯТТЯ

У статті розглядається еволюція мовного стилю сучасних медіа. Автори зосереджують увагу на тому, як сучасні журналістські тексти балансують між лаконічністю та необхідністю надання всебічної та точної інформації. Із розвитком цифрових медіа, появою клікбейту та зменшенням уваги сучасних читачів, тексти

новин стали коротшими, прагнуть швидко привертати увагу, але й одночасно передавати основну інформацію. Ці зміни викликають занепокоєння щодо спрощення складних тем, втрати глибини аналізу та зростання сенсаційності в медіа. Автори підкреслюють, що незважаючи на ці виклики, певні форми журналістики, такі як редакційні статті та аналітичні матеріали, продовжують надавати більш глибокий аналіз, підкреслюючи напруження між стислістю та глибиною висловлювання. У статті аналізуються структурні та лінгвістичні характеристики сучасних новинних текстів, а також досліджується, як стилістичні засоби та особливості сприйняття медіа впливають на формування громадського розуміння. Детально розглядаються основні особливості журналістської мови, зокрема структура заголовків, принципи об'єктивності та використання цитат. Заголовки вважаються важливими інструментами для залучення уваги читачів, часто вони скорочуються, щоб подати інформацію більш привабливо. Стаття досліджує зміну ролі медійної мови, зауважуючи, що традиційні журналістські структури стають менш жорсткими, що відображає перехід до більш наративного стилю репортажів. Також розглядається зростання використання оцінювальної мови в новинах, оскільки медіа поєднують факти з оцінками, що формує громадське сприйняття. Стаття аналізує роль стилістичних засобів, таких як ідіоматичні вирази, метафори, евфемізми та риторичні техніки, у формуванні тону новинних статей. Автори також аналізують, як ідіоми та метафори підвищують переконливість журналістики, створюючи яскраві образи і неявні оцінки для читачів. Загалом, дослідження підкреслює, що мова публіцистичного стилю є динамічним процесом, де мовні техніки не лише інформують, а й формують громадську думку.

Ключові слова: стилістичні засоби, риторика, публіцистичний стиль, заголовки, медійна мова.

Problem statement. Media writing stands apart from other forms of writing – such as poetry, fiction, or academic prose – because its primary goal is to attract attention and deliver information quickly and effectively. Unlike literary works that emphasize storytelling or artistic expression, journalistic writing is primarily concerned with informing the public about political, social, and economic issues. Traditionally, news articles have been structured to present facts clearly and concisely, using straightforward language to ensure accessibility.

However, the rise of digital media has significantly altered the landscape of journalism. With the increasing availability of information online and the decreasing attention spans of readers, journalistic writing has become even shorter and more direct. While this shift allows for faster information dissemination, it also raises concerns about the oversimplification of complex issues, the loss of depth in reporting, and the potential for misleading or sensationalist coverage. At the same time, some forms of journalism – such as editorials, news analyses, and feature articles – continue to provide in-depth coverage, highlighting the tension between brevity and depth in modern news writing.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The study of newspaper language has attracted the attention of many scholars from various linguistic and journalistic traditions. Researchers such as Kuiken and Weizman have examined the stylistic conventions of news writing, emphasizing the role of headlines and the necessity of objectivity in journalism and the use of direct quotations as a credibility-enhancing strategy, while Fowler has investigated shifts in traditional journalistic structures, such as the decline of the “Five Wh” rule. The impact of evaluative language in news discourse has been analyzed

by Mathur, Busa, and others who highlight its role in shaping public perception. Further contributions to the study of media language include analyses of idiomatic expressions (Hojati), euphemisms (Orlova, Gómez), and phrasal verbs, all of which contribute to the distinctive linguistic characteristics of journalistic discourse. Additionally, Lakoff, Ishchuk, Kennedy, Prose, and others have examined the role of metaphor in news reporting, underscoring its function in shaping narratives and conveying complex ideas to a broad readership.

The objective of the article. This study investigates how stylistic devices influence reader engagement in journalistic writing. By analyzing various types of news articles and their adaptation to evolving media consumption habits, we aim to explore the changing nature of media writing and its impact on public understanding.

Main material. The language of the media, particularly in newspaper articles, is unique in many ways. While each writer brings their own individual touch, journalistic language follows well-established stylistic rules. One of the most recognizable features of news writing is the use of headlines. A headline serves as a concise summary placed above an article, in print or online, and is carefully crafted to capture attention. Newspaper headlines are often composed of noun phrases, full sentences, or even fragmented syntactic constructions. Certain word classes, such as articles, possessive adjectives, and auxiliary verbs, are frequently omitted to save space. Regardless of the format, headlines must convey only the most essential information in a striking way to immediately engage the reader (Kuiken, 2017; Ішук, 2021).

Another fundamental characteristic of news articles is the expectation of objectivity. This can be particularly challenging for journalists, as they must engage

ingly present information without allowing personal bias to influence the narrative. Objective reporting relies strictly on verified facts and evidence rather than personal opinions or emotional appeals. Many journalists perceive their profession as a form of public service, and journalistic ethics impose a high standard of impartiality. Their primary responsibility is to provide readers with accurate accounts of events, often incorporating multiple (sometimes conflicting) perspectives. A well-structured article may also include supporting materials such as charts, graphs, or statistical data to enhance clarity and ensure a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Weizman & Fetzer, 2021).

Despite the focus on objectivity in traditional journalism, many news outlets feature opinion-based content in designated formats, such as editorial columns. These sections focus on contentious social issues, such as gun control or the climate crisis, allowing journalists to present their arguments and perspectives to the public.

A strong emphasis on verifiable evidence is a defining feature of high-quality journalism. One essential tool in achieving credibility is the strategic use of quotations. Journalists frequently incorporate direct quotes to lend authority to their reporting and to ensure the accuracy of their claims. Furthermore, in their commitment to neutrality, most journalists strive to include statements from all relevant parties involved in a given story. This practice is particularly crucial in cases involving controversial or high-stakes events. For instance, when covering a public safety crisis, an article gains significant credibility through direct quotes from public safety officials, as readers are more likely to trust expert sources over an anonymous journalist's interpretation.

Despite ongoing debates, many linguists highlight recurring features of newspaper language. The frequent use of proper names, particularly place names, numerical data, and precise dates reflects journalism's commitment to factual accuracy. However, the press is also highly receptive to abstract language, allowing journalists to construct narratives that resonate on a conceptual level. The prevalence of impersonal constructions and complex attributive structures further contributes to the detached, authoritative tone of news reporting. Additionally, journalists favor intricate sentence structures, a fixed word order, and established clichés and idiomatic expressions, all of which enhance the clarity and recognizability of news texts. The use of technical terms, euphemisms, abbreviations, and specific verb tenses (such as the Present Continuous and Present Perfect) is also common, reinforcing the immediacy and relevance of news events. Furthermore, many scholars note a distinct

socio-political orientation in newspaper discourse, underscoring its role not only in informing but also in shaping public perception.

For many years, journalists adhered to a specific word order, particularly in short news reports and the opening lines of articles. The rigid syntactic structure of English sentences, combined with nearly four centuries of journalistic tradition, led to the development of the so-called "Five Wh" rule: who, what, why, where, and when. This formula was once considered an essential framework for structuring news stories. However, as Fowler (2013) observes, its prominence has diminished in recent years, even in short news reports, where it originally emerged and gained widespread use. Statistical analysis suggests that the rule is now violated as often as it is followed, indicating a shift toward more flexible and narrative-driven reporting.

Connotation plays a crucial role in newspaper language, with evaluative expressions being more prevalent than overtly emotional ones. Researchers have noted an increasing use of emotionally charged evaluative language in publications, even in articles intended to serve a purely informational function (Mathur, 2012). This trend reflects the broader transformation of the press, which no longer merely informs but also influences public opinion (Ishchuk, 2023). Even concise news reports, with their seemingly neutral and factual tone, often contain implicit assessments that subtly guide readers' perceptions. Headlines, in particular, exemplify this dual function. They not only provide information but also convey judgment through stylistic choices, as we can see in the examples taken from *The Economist*, *BBC*, *The Independent*, *The Newsweek*, and other major media outlets, as well as the *LinkedIn* platform. Idiomatic expressions (*The very long arm of its law*), allusions (*The importance of being Bill*), slang (*to wow*), jargon (*a magic bullet*), and proverbs (*East, West, home's best*) captivate readers with their vivid imagery and rhetorical impact while embedding cultural references that resonate with native speakers. Such expressions function as mental constructs, triggering immediate associations and reinforcing widely accepted stereotypes.

Beyond headlines, stylistic devices are widely employed in news articles to engage readers, add expressiveness, and shape the overall tone of a piece. Oxymorons (*Minor majors; deafening silence*), alliteration (*Corruption, Construction, Conservation; Boom, Bust, and Back Again*), rhythm (*More metal for Mittal; No pain, no gain*), epithets (*Murky politics; Ruthless competition*), hyperbole (*Enough food to feed the entire world; The deal of the century*), and litotes (*Success doesn't come for free; Not the worst*

outcome) all contribute to the rhetorical richness of journalistic discourse. These stylistic strategies are not merely decorative; they serve deeper communicative functions, reinforcing key messages, reflecting the author's stance, and subtly guiding public opinion.

Thus, the evolving role of newspapers and magazines has allowed for a vast array of linguistic techniques that go beyond mere reporting. By embedding expressively charged meanings, journalists do not simply convey events but also frame narratives, shape perspectives, and ultimately influence the worldview of a broad readership.

A special place in the English newspaper style is occupied by idiomatic expressions. Phraseological units are widely used not only in spoken language and works of fiction but also in media texts, making the style of presentation more vivid and expressive. The use of phraseological units in newspaper texts demonstrates that their functioning often extends beyond the traditional concept of their stability. Modern journalism focuses on creating engaging content that captures attention. In the era of globalization and information technology, with the development of advertising and the expansion of informational fields, the parameter of stability has turned into its opposite, thereby unlocking the potential for the unconventional use of idioms.

By extensively employing wordplay and non-standard usage of phraseological units, newspaper article authors tend to transform the component structure of idioms or alter their arrangement relative to one another. This not only preserves the phraseological unit but, on the contrary, enhances its meaning. Specific cases of idiom usage in newspaper and advertising texts illustrate a growing interest in phraseology, driven by linguists' attempts to identify patterns in idiom transformations. For instance, the well-known idiom *"All roads lead to Rome"* frequently appears in articles and headlines in slightly modified interpretations, such as *"All roads lead to Silicon Valley"* or *"All roads lead to Beijing"*, adapting the phrase to contemporary geopolitical, economic, or cultural contexts. These examples, along with many others, are commonly found in contemporary media texts.

Idiomatic expressions, proverbs, sayings, metaphors, and set phrases constitute an essential stylistic component of newspaper language, serving as a crucial source of expressive-emotional intensity and an indispensable means of realizing the structural-stylistic features of journalistic discourse. They provide newspaper texts with a certain persuasive power and contribute to the creation of distinctive imagery. In addition to concisely conveying an idea, they also express attitudes and evaluations. For example, the

proverb *"a storm in a teacup"* conveys more expressiveness and judgment than the neutral phrase *"an overreaction to a minor issue"*. Likewise, *to move the goalposts* carries a stronger connotation of unfairness and manipulation compared to the more neutral phrase *"to change the rules or criteria"*.

Idiomatic expressions most frequently appear in newspaper and magazine headlines. This technique allows even the most unremarkable material to be presented as something highly compelling. However, an idiomatic unit in its standard form may sometimes seem too simple or uninteresting, which is why media texts frequently feature transformed versions of these lexical units, adding an element of novelty to headlines. Moreover, even minor deviations from the conventional form of an idiomatic expression attract public attention and make an article more relevant.

English-language mass media, including a wide range of newspapers, magazines, television, and radio channels, regularly employ a considerable number of euphemisms. The scope of euphemism usage is quite broad, with variations in their application, classification, and models of use differing from language to language. As for the classification of euphemisms, scholars present differing views; however, they converge on one point: the primary reason for using euphemisms in speech is the desire to avoid conflict in communication. In English-language mass media, euphemisms are most commonly found in political articles and those addressing the social position of individuals in society (Hojati, 2012).

In the 21st century, media has emerged as the most intensively developed sector of linguistic activity in society. The key characteristics of media language include informational density, genre diversity, socio-political vocabulary, and a significant number of clichés and stereotypes, with political correctness described as a powerful cultural-behavioral and linguistic trend that manifests in attempts to find new forms of expression instead of those that may affect an individual's feelings or violate their rights regarding age, race, gender, appearance, etc. In contemporary English-language media, euphemisms are categorized based on the topics they address, such as disease, death, age, gender, race, ethnicity, intimate relationships, physical and mental disabilities, physiological processes and conditions of the human body, armed conflict, economic instability, professions, financial status, crimes, and punishments (Orlova, 2012; Gómez, 2009).

The use of euphemisms in mass media reflects broader societal shifts towards sensitivity and the avoidance of language that could be perceived as offensive or exclusionary. This trend is particularly

notable in politically charged or socially sensitive topics such as race, gender, and health. In such contexts, euphemisms help to manage delicate issues by softening potentially harmful or divisive language, aligning with broader cultural movements toward inclusivity and respect. Furthermore, the widespread use of euphemisms across various media platforms indicates their importance not only in maintaining societal harmony but also in shaping public discourse on sensitive matters. These linguistic strategies allow media outlets to address potentially controversial topics while minimizing the risk of alienating or offending their audience.

Another significant lexical unit in contemporary English-language journalism is the phrasal verb. Phrasal verbs are highly productive and occupy a central position in the lexical and idiomatic system of the English language. This prevalence may be attributed to the fact that many phrasal verbs have shifted from one stylistic register to another, expanding their domains of usage. In the process, they have acquired new meanings while sometimes losing older ones. Some phrasal verbs have even become more common than their synonymous single-word verbs (*break out* instead of *erupt*, *step down* instead of *resign*, *call for* instead of *demand*, etc.).

Given that news discourse plays a crucial role in shaping and adapting knowledge and beliefs, and that metaphor is an essential part of how readers deal with new and ongoing events (Kennedy, 2000), journalistic texts naturally serve as a particularly rich source of figurative language. Moreover, reading newspaper articles does not require specialized expertise to grasp the general meaning of the text – general world knowledge is often sufficient. In most cases, contextual meanings of words can be inferred successfully. The primary exceptions include highly specialized news reports, such as financial statements, which may necessitate domain-specific knowledge of financial terminology.

Unlike conversational discourse, news texts are composed of coherent, fully structured sentences, ensuring that adequate context is almost always provided for determining the contextual meaning of each word. In cases where words are used metaphorically, there exists a clear contrast between their contextual and core meanings, making it possible to infer their intended sense through comparison. While metaphor

is traditionally associated with literature and rhetorical language, it is an integral part of everyday communication. For these reasons, metaphor remains a crucial feature of news discourse today. So, the use of metaphors is a necessary and inevitable feature in conveying a message (Prose, 2018).

We have noticed that metaphor and metonymy are often examined together, although Lakoff and Johnson (2008) classify metonymy as a distinct cognitive mechanism. The combination of metonymy and metaphor can create an engaging and witty effect for the reader. Such linguistic creativity is frequently used to introduce irony – an increasingly prominent rhetorical device in media discourse. Consequently, various tropes can be combined strategically to enhance their impact on audiences. Furthermore, journalistic texts frequently employ metonymy, making them a valuable source of examples for this phenomenon. Given that newspaper headlines are designed to capture readers' attention and entice them to continue reading, journalists utilize metonymic structures to precisely frame their subject matter. National metonymy, for instance, can reinforce cultural distinctions while also serving as a means to challenge them. Notably, national metonymy is often deployed with metaphorical wit, exploiting the inherent ambiguity of both metaphorical and metonymic expressions to create specific rhetorical effects in media discourse (e.g., *Brussels dictates policies* – the European Union; *Uncle Sam* – United States).

Conclusions. In an era of rapid information dissemination, the balance between brevity and depth in news writing is becoming increasingly critical. The analysis of linguistic techniques, such as headlines, quotations, expressive and evaluative language, illustrates how journalists maintain objectivity while still capturing the attention of readers and shaping public opinion. As media continues to adapt to changing consumption patterns, the role of stylistic devices in framing narratives and enhancing reader engagement remains pivotal.

However, the shift toward increasingly concise and sometimes oversimplified reporting raises important questions about the quality of public discourse and the potential loss of nuanced, in-depth analysis. Further research is needed to explore how these shifts impact public understanding of complex issues and to investigate the long-term effects of brevity on media credibility and trust.

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