
Newspaper Headline as a Tool in the Formation OF Public Opinion (Based On Spanish and Russian)

Liliya Gumarovna Gazizova¹, Anna Ilinichna Noskova¹, Liliya Amiryanovna Nefedova²

¹ Kazan Federal University, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, liliksu@mail.ru, id Scopus 56499323500, ORCID 0000-0002-9961-1922

² Kazan Federal University, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, anastrella@mail.ru, 89274241000, id Scopus 57188996835, ORCID 0000-0003-3001-7551

³ Doctor of Philology, Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Languages and Intercultural Communication, Faculty of Linguistics and Translation, lan2@mail.ru, id Scopus 56998751200, ORCID 0000-0003-3105-766X

¹Kazan Federal University

²Chelyabinsk State University

e-mail: anastrella@mail.ru

Tel.: 89274241000

Abstract

This work was carried out within the framework of mediallynguistics (the term of T.G. Dobroklonskaya) – an actively developing area of linguistics that studies the functioning of the language in mass communication [1]. Media text belongs to the newspaper-journalistic style, which carries out a two-pronged task: informative and influential. At the same time, according to the universal recognition of sociologists and linguists, the impact on the consciousness of the public through semantic and evaluation information prevails, gradually displacing the function of information.

The newspaper and magazine variety has become the most widespread within the framework of the journalistic style, since the main goals of the information text are clearly traced here: to inform the addressee about any fact that is socially significant; explicitly express its attitude towards it and arouse a certain attitude of the addressee [2], [3].

It is these facts that dictate the choice of the object of study in this work – a newspaper headline, as a special variety of media texts, which contains information about the most popular and current situation related to the Covid-19 virus today. In this perspective, the extent of the influence of newspaper headlines on the formation of public opinion in Spain and Russia is analyzed. The article considers the headlines of Spanish (“El País” and “El Mundo”) and Russian (“Izvestia” and “Kommersant”) newspapers devoted to the topic of Covid-19, in terms of their functional workload, namely, the explicit or hidden introduction into the consciousness of readers of subjective interpretation of information instead of objective presentation of facts. The results of the study show that communicative tactics of prevention, intimidation and attraction are recruited in the headlines of the Spanish and Russian press through lexical means of language. Research material and theoretical conclusions can be used in the preparation of Spanish language courses [4].

Keywords: public opinion, media text, headline, Spanish, Russian, lexical component, communicative tactics.

1 Introduction

The problem of the influence of the media on the formation of public opinion has become very urgent in the modern world. This is due to the fact that the information sphere is a systemically important factor that has a tremendous impact on all the lives of society. The significant role of the media in the process of forming public opinion is achieved by the

speed of providing information, accessibility, and wide coverage of the audience, multidimensional, social orientation and the use of various linguistic means. The use of specific means of expressiveness, tropes helps to concentrate and maintain the attention of the reader, while giving rise to certain emotions and feelings in relation to the described story.

One of the first to define “public opinion” was Hegel. In his work “Philosophy of Law” (1820), he writes: “Public opinion is an objective freedom, consisting in the fact that individuals have and express their own opinion and judgment regarding general affairs. Public opinion is the expression of all that people desire” [5:354]. Many researchers agree that public opinion is a state of mass consciousness. According to Russian philosopher and sociologist B.A. Grushin, “public opinion is a summary expression of the level or state of social consciousness of a particular era, taken as a whole, passed through prisms with various angles of refraction: class, in depth of reflection of reality, in scope of action” [6:30].

Various tools help to manage public opinion, the leading role of which is assigned to the media. According to sociologists, the media influence mass behavior and consciousness through various mechanisms, namely through persuasion, inspiration, fear, rumors.

In the general mass media, the newspaper has a leading role: it is the most readable source of information worldwide. The newspaper touches on almost all questions, quickly responds to events taking place in the world and submits processed information for the reader. The newspaper, as a media outlet, appeals to the individual “in the totality of her or his social roles – as a citizen, a family man, a representative of society as a whole and a resident of a particular area. Its content covers all aspects of human relations with society and its subsystems, all areas of social relations in which personality is included” [7]. These factors contributed to the fact that the language of the newspaper (newspaper style) became the object of numerous scientific studies.

Print media researchers pay special attention to the newspaper headline, since the first thing the reader encounters is the headline of the article. The headline is the first signal, a kind of compass, prompting to read the text of the article; it has its own emotional color, arousing readership and attracting attention. According to T.G. Dobroklonskaya, the headline is the first, and possibly the only chance to attract the attention of the reader [1]. A headline is defined as a text component that occupies a stylistically strong position, calls the text and gives initial information about it.

2 Methods

The material of the study was the headlines of the online versions of the Russian newspapers Izvestia [8] and Kommersant [9] and the Spanish broadband newspapers El País [10] and El Mundo [11], devoted to the situation with the virus Covid-19 and published in the period of January-October 2021 (including the vaccination process and the third wave of coronavirus), selected by a continuous sampling method. These newspapers are authoritative nationwide publications designed for an educated reader.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the work of domestic and foreign authors on the theory of headline and linguistics of the text (V.G. Kostomarov, E.A. Lazarev, A.P. Bessonov, N.P. Peshkova, S.I. Kostygina, I.A. Syrov, G.A. Weikhman and others). The actual material analysis uses a descriptive method, component, context, and quantity analysis.

3 Results and Discussion

The headline in the context of a journalistic text is a structural-semantic component and, according to E.A. Lazareva, is “a language structure preceded by text standing” above and before it, “and at the same time, it acts as” a full component of the text included in it and associated with other components of a holistic work” [12:6].

The role of the headline in attracting of reader’s attention is undeniable. The main ways to attract attention, as well as form an opinion about the headline, are emotional evaluation and expressive vocabulary, precedent texts and names, abbreviations, quotes, metaphors, comparisons, rhetorical questions, etc. During our study, we analyzed 140 Russian-language and 140 Spanish-language headlines.

One of the most effective means of attracting attention in the headline is the use of numerals. Taking into account the specifics of the topic under consideration, we assumed the presence of a large number of headlines that contain statistics on the detected cases of infection, the number of deaths and recovery. Nevertheless, we established 4% of Russian and 9% of Spanish headlines with numerals. Here are some examples: *Конец и края ковидно: РФ грозит рост суточной заболеваемости в 30 тыс. человек* [Izvestia, 5.10.2021], *Ожидается шторм: порог заболеваемости ОРВИ превышен в 62 регионах* [Izvestia, 29.09], *На испытание «Спутника V» среди подростков выделяют 100 млн рублей* [Izvestia, 28.09], *Sanidad comunica 2.248 nuevos casos y 57 muertes; la incidencia se mantiene en 40* [El Mundo,

16/10/2021], *240,2 millones de contagios y 4,8 millones de muertes en el mundo por la pandemia* [El País, 16/10/2021] and others. Numerals in headlines are used as part of the linguistic implementation of intimidation tactics and allow you to form psychological tension among the reader.

The covid era contributed to the emergence of a huge number of neologisms that are actively used in headlines. On the one hand, the authors of the article want to pay tribute to fashion, on the other hand, they are well aware that something new and unusual will attract the attention of the reader and encourage him to read the article. So, scientists from the Institute of Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences compiled a dictionary “Russian Language of the Coronavirus Era”, which includes 3,500 new words [13], and Spanish linguists published a new supplemented edition of “Diccionario Histórico de la Lengua Española” [14], which included neologisms that appeared in the pandemic era. This could not but be reflected in the headlines of the newspapers. Here are some examples from Spanish newspapers: *De la eliminación a la endemia: así es el camino anti-Covid que deben seguir países como Nueva Zelanda o Singapur* [El Mundo, 11.10.2021], *Coronaplauso, covidiota... El virus también se extiende por el idioma* [El País, 14.04.2021].

Russian headlines contain new lexical units, mainly borrowed from English: «Пандемия вдохновила меня на написание **«Коронавирусных» дневников»** [Izvestia, 10.10.2021], *Без кода не ходить: в регионах ужесточают антиковидные меры* [Izvestia, 09.10.2021], *Этот дивный **постковидный** мир* [Kommersant, 30.09.2021]) and others.

There is no doubt that the authors of the headlines of Russian newspapers are more creative, as evidenced by the number of examples of word-making: *Ковид-рок* [Kommersant, 24.09.2021], *Очевидно, что ковидно* [Kommersant, 05.10.2021], *После апоковидуса* [Kommersant, 17.08.2021].

One of the common linguistic means of influence is a transformed precedent text: the author initially tunes the reader to the wave he needs and invests his subjective assessment. Transformation can concern proverbs and fixed phrases (*От А до В: в вакцину от гриппа добавлены новые штаммы* [Izvestia, 24.08.2021], *Код в мешке* [Kommersant, 29.09.2021], *Перчатки осенью снимают* [Kommersant, 02.09.2021], *Кто в тест, кто по локдаун* [Kommersant, 07.07.2021], *Через тесты к звездам* [Коммерсантъ, 06.07.2021], *Ковида бояться – в ТРЦ не ходить* [Kommersant, 20.05.2021]), songs (*Уколы мои печали: в какие рестораны пускают только привитых клиентов* [Izvestia, 22.06.2021], *Остаемся грипповать: в России начался сезон простуд и ОРВИ клиентов* [Izvestia, 25.09.2021]), cliché (*Штаммом марии: премьер призвал регионы нарастить коечный фонд для больных COVID* [Izvestia, 9.07.2021], *Ни пациента больше: рост заболеваемости COVID зафиксирован в 82 регионах* [Izvestia, 7.07.2021], *С новым кодом: 28 июня посещаемость московских ресторанов упала на 90%* [Izvestia, 28.06.2021]). In the Spanish sample, the headlines of precedent texts were not identified. For comparison, in the Russian sample, the percentage of headlines with transformed precedent texts was 15%.

Quotes have always functioned as a tool in formation of public opinion. The concise form of the headline leads to the fact that often journalists give only an excerpt from the quote or even individual words. The main goal is to create information uncertainty when we read the headline on the topic that is significant for us, and in the article we find information that is not objective enough and with different degrees of truth. All this leads to the generation of rumors, which is a fairly fast source of public opinion formation [15]. Let's give examples: «*Мы имеем дело с изменением психики на много лет вперед*» [Izvestia, 10.10.2021], *Собянин заявил о «взрывном характере» ситуации с COVID-19 в Москве* [Izvestia, 23.07.2021], *Elías Bendodo pide al Gobierno poder confinar y adelantar toque de queda: “Peleamos con un brazo atado a la espalda”* [El Mundo, 31.01.2021], *Madrid entra en “riesgo bajo” por transmisión de covid* [El País, 11.10.2021] и др.

In a special group we assign headlines in which there are words highlighted in quotation marks in order to draw the reader's attention to them, or they are used in an ironic meaning: *La Falla Don Bosco consigue el máximo galardón en unas fiestas 'casi' normales* [El Mundo, 09.10.2021]. Interestingly, in a Russian-language sample this kind of headlines was not found.

Metaphor also occupies a special place in the formation of public opinion: *Спутник жизни: Минздрав обновил прививочные рекомендации* [Izvestia, 24.08.2021], *Привить к искусству: пускают ли без вакцины на фильмы и спектакли* [Izvestia, 01.07.2021] and synecdoche: *Pintalabios y covid-19* [El País, 27.07.2021]).

A comparative analysis of the linguistic means used in the headlines to form public opinion showed that in Russian headlines the predominant means is the transformed precedent text, stylistic techniques (metaphor, etc.) and word-making. Spanish journalists mainly resort to quotes, emphasis in the headline itself by highlighting the necessary words in quotation marks, as well as neologisms.

4 Summary

We have identified some mechanisms, features and goals of linguistic influence on recipients, used by journalists in the headlines of Spanish and Russian newspapers. It seems interesting that the Spanish and Russian media resort to excellent mechanisms that allow them to impose a certain opinion on public consciousness. The results reveal the prospects of a study on the relationship of linguistic means and conceptual pictures of the world of the two countries.

5 Conclusions

The headline is only a small part of the media text, but it is on it that the number of its readers depends. There are many works devoted to the structural-substantive and linguistic features of the headlines, according to which the ideal headline is concise, emotionally loaded, creative and economical in terms of language means. Nevertheless, in a state of emergency in the country, when people experience both information hunger and overpowering with news, creating a headline becomes a difficult task.

The results of the study clearly demonstrate that the newspaper headline, being a special type of media text, serves a certain political and ideological social activity.

6 Acknowledgements

This paper is performed as part of the implementation of the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program

Bibliography

1. T.G. Dobroklonskaya, *Medialingvistika. Sistemnyj podhod k izucheniyu yazyka SMI (Sovremennaya anglijskaya mediarech')*. – M.: Flinta: Nauka, 2008. – 264 s.
 2. A. Noskova, L. Gazizova, L. Nefedova, Media discourse syntactical features of the Venezuelan and Iberian variants of Spanish, *Revista Dilemas Contemporáneos: Educación, Política y Valores*. Año VI. Número: Edición Especial. Artículo no.: 27. Marzo 2019. – P. 1830-1834.
 3. N. Andrianova, O. Ostroumova, M. Zakamulina, E. Vanchikova, *Anglo-American Linguistic Borrowings in the Political Media Discourse (a Case of Study of Modern French Press)*, *Género &Direito*, V.8 N. 5 (2019). – P. 79-82.
 4. T. Kolabinova, O. Palutina, *Classes of Spanish as a foreign language in a university for Russian speakers familiar with English*, *EDULEARN14: 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND NEW LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES*. – 2014. – P. 514–520.
 5. G.V.F. Gegel', *Filosofiya prava*. – M.: Mysl', 1990. – 524 s.
 6. B.A. Grushin, *Mneniya o mire i mir mnenij*. – M.: Praxis, 2011. – 544 s.
 7. E.N. Remchukova, O.A. Shevchenko, *Lingvokreativnye sostavlyayushchie pechatnyh SMI Ispanii v aspekte otnoshenij «Adresant - adresat»*. – URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/lingvokreativnye-sostavlyayushchie-pechatnyh-smi-ispanii-v-aspekte-otnosheniy-adresant-adresat> (data obrashcheniya: 26.05.2020).
 8. *Izvestiya*. – URL: <https://iz.ru>
 9. *Kommersant*. – URL: <https://kommersant.ru>
 10. *El País*. – URL: <https://elpais.com>
 11. *El Mundo*. – URL: <https://www.elmundo.es/>
 12. E.L. Lazareva, *Zagolovok v gazete*. – Sverdlovsk: Izd- vo Ural. gos. un-ta, 1989. – 96 s.
 13. *Fontanka.ru*. – URL: <https://www.fontanka.ru/2021/08/26/70100597/>
 14. *Russkij yazyk koronavirusnoj epohi. Kollektivnaya monografiya*. Institutu lingvisticheskikh issledovanij RAN, 2021. – 610 s. – URL: <https://iling.spb.ru/dictionaries/neology/coronavirus/book.pdf>
 15. E.P. Sel'kova, *Sociologiya obshchestvennogo mneniya: uchebnoe posobie*. – Blagoveshchensk: Amurskij gos. un-t, 2011. – 84 s.
-
1. Liliia Gumarovna Gazizova, born in 1987, PhD in Philology. In 2009 she graduated from Kazan State University, faculty of Philology. In 2016 she defended the dissertation on the subject of «Linguistic implementation of psychological techniques of the impact of television advertising (based on Spanish and Russian)». Associate Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology of the Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of KFU. Research interests: media linguistics, psycholinguistics, intercultural communication, translation.

2. Anna Ilinichna Noskova, born in 1989, PhD in Philology. In 2011 she graduated from Kazan Federal University, faculty of Philology. In 2015 she defended the dissertation on the subject of «Linguoculturological features of the Venezuelan national version of the Spanish language in comparison with the Pyrenean». Доцент кафедры романо-германской филологии ИФМК КФУ. Associate Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology of the Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of KFU. Research interests: interviant dialectology, linguoculturology, intercultural communication, translation.
3. Liliya Amiryanovna Nefedova, born in 1956 , Doctor of Philology. In 1977 she graduated from the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the Kustanay Pedagogical Institute named after the 50th anniversary of USSR. In 1983 she defended the dissertation on the subject of «Ellipsis in Communication Act». In 2001 she defended the doctoral dissertation on the subject of «Cognitive-typological aspect of implicative communication (based on French texts and their translations into Russian)». Professor of the Department of Romance and Germanic Languages and Intercultural Communication, Dean of the Faculty of Linguistics and Translation of Chelyabinsk State University. Research interests: cognitive studies, novelism, intercultural communication, translation.