

HEADLINE WRITING TECHNIQUES IN GENERAL NEWS ARTICLES

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

NITA PRATEEPCHAIKUL

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in English

at Srinakharinwirot University

October 2010

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Nita Prateepchaikul. (2010). *Headline Writing Techniques in General News Articles*.

Master's Project, M.A. (English). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University. Project Advisor: Dr. Saengchan Hemchua.

This study addressed two objectives concerning headline writing techniques in newspapers: to analyze the headline writing techniques of general news articles and to explore the frequency of those techniques in general news articles. The primary framework of the headline writing techniques was adopted from Reah's (1998) language of newspaper taxonomy: homophones, homonyms, polysemes, inter-textualities, alliterations, assonances and loaded words. Fredrickson and Wedel's (1991) analysis of idioms in English newspapers, The Bangkok Post (1995) on the use of abbreviations, and the researcher's pilot study on the use of synonyms were also fundamental aspects of the methodological approach of this research. A total of 288 general news headlines were randomly selected and analyzed. The results revealed that the use of synonyms was the major technique in headline writing, accounted for 44.22% of the data, followed by loaded words (21.48%), abbreviations (15.55%), alliteration, (8.64%), and assonance (4.44%). The use of inter-textualities, idioms, polysemes and homonyms were scarcely found in the research sample. They accounted for 2.22%, 1.73%, 1.23%, and 0.49%, respectively. Homophones did not appear in any of the headlines in the sample. The results implied that synonyms were a helpful way to avoid repetition in news headlines. Headlines used loaded words were found to be more striking than plain language, and the use of abbreviations were employed to save space. Overall, the main purpose of synonyms, loaded words and other techniques is to draw readers' attention.

เทคนิคการเขียนพาดหัวข่าว ประเภทข่าวทั่วไป

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

นิตา ประทีปชัยกุล

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

ตุลาคม 2553

นิตา ประทีปชัยกุล (2553). *เทคนิคการเขียนพาดหัวข่าว ประเภทข่าวทั่วไป*. สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม.

(ภาษาอังกฤษ). กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. อาจารย์ที่
ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: ดร.แสงจันทร์ เหมเชื้อ.

การศึกษารั้วนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์เทคนิคที่ใช้ในการเขียนพาดหัวข่าวใน
หนังสือพิมพ์ ประเภทข่าวทั่วไป และ หาค่าความถี่ของการใช้เทคนิคการเขียนพาดหัวข่าวนั้น กรอบ
การศึกษาหลักที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์เทคนิคการเขียนพาดหัวข่าวคือ (ก) เทคนิคทางด้านภาษาที่ใช้ใน
หนังสือพิมพ์ของรีอา (Reah, 1998) อันได้แก่การใช้คำที่อ่านออกเสียงเหมือนกันแต่ความหมาย
ต่างกัน (homophones), การใช้คำที่เขียนเหมือนกันแต่ความหมายแตกต่างกันอย่างสิ้นเชิง
(homonyms), การใช้คำที่เขียนเหมือนกันแต่ความหมายต่างกันโดยแฝงความหมายหลักร่วมกัน
(polysemes), คำพูดที่เป็นที่นิยม (inter-textualities), การเล่นเสียงพยัญชนะ (alliterations), การ
เล่นเสียงสระ (assonances), และ การใช้คำที่ใช้อารมณ์และความรู้สึกในการสื่อความหมาย (loaded
words), (ข) การใช้สำนวน (idioms) ของ เฟรดริคสันและวีเดล (Fredrickson and Wedel, 1991),
(ค) การใช้คำย่อ (abbreviations) จากหนังสือการสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้หนังสือพิมพ์บางกอก
โพสต์ (The Bangkok Post, 1995) และ (ง) การใช้คำที่มีความหมายเหมือนกัน (synonyms) ซึ่งได้
จากผลการวิเคราะห์เบื้องต้นของผู้วิจัย ผลการศึกษาพบว่า 288 พาดหัวข่าวที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์
ทั้งหมด เทคนิคการเขียนพาดหัวข่าวที่พบมากที่สุดคือ เทคนิคการใช้คำที่มีความหมายเหมือนกัน
44.22 เปอร์เซ็นต์, คำที่ใช้อารมณ์และความรู้สึกในการสื่อความหมาย 21.48 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การใช้คำ
ย่อ 15.55 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การเล่นเสียงพยัญชนะ 8.64 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การเล่นเสียงสระ 4.44 เปอร์เซ็นต์
การใช้คำที่ได้รับความนิยม 2.22 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การใช้สำนวน 1.73 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การใช้คำที่เขียน
เหมือนกันและความหมายสัมพันธ์กัน 1.23 เปอร์เซ็นต์ การใช้คำที่เขียนเหมือนกันแต่ความหมายไม่
สัมพันธ์กัน 0.49 เปอร์เซ็นต์ ตามลำดับ การใช้คำที่อ่านออกเสียงเหมือนกันแต่ความหมายต่างกัน

ไม่ปรากฏในการเขียนพาดหัวข่าว จากผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่า การใช้เทคนิคการใช้คำที่มีความหมายเหมือนกัน เป็นการหลีกเลี่ยงการใช้คำซ้ำ ส่วนการใช้คำที่ใช้อารมณ์และความรู้สึกในการเขียนพาดหัวข่าว เป็นการเพิ่มอรรถรสในการอ่านข่าวมากกว่าการใช้ภาษาเรียบ ๆ และการใช้คำย่อทำให้ประหยัดพื้นที่ในการเขียนพาดหัวข่าว อย่างไรก็ตาม จุดประสงค์หลักของเทคนิคที่ใช้ในการเขียนพาดหัวข่าวทั้งหมดก็เพื่อดึงดูดความสนใจของผู้อ่านข่าว

The Master's Project Advisor and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project *Headline Writing Techniques in General News Articles* by Nita Prateepchaikul as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University.

Master's Project Advisor

.....

(Dr. Saengchan Hemchua)

Chair of the Master of Arts Program in English

.....

(Assistant Professor Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai)

Oral Defense Committee

..... Chair

(Dr. Saengchan Hemchua)

..... Reader

(Assistant Professor Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai)

..... Reader

(Dr. Somsak Keawnuch)

The Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University.

..... Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Associate Professor Akkara Buntip)

October, 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been successful without Dr. Saengchan Hemchua, my Master's Project Advisor. I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation for her guidance and assistance which constantly encouraged me to complete this study. Without her patience and encouragement, this research could never have been written.

I am very much indebted to Assistant Professor Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai, Assistant Professor Sirinna Boonyasaquan, and Dr. Somsak Keawnuch, my committee, for their constant feedback and support.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my father, who as a professional journalist gave his time, valuable suggestions and in-depth discussions. Thank you with all my heart.

Nita Prateepchaikul

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

A significant purpose of news writers is to persuade readers to buy news. News stories are generally written to enable readers to get information quickly and engage readers in a story so that they will continue reading (Kelly, 1997). To catch the attention of readers, a news story must contain clear, specific information, and must be easy to follow and understandable. Techniques include the creation of curiosity, promising answers to questions, solutions to problems and giving key benefits. According to Jongyingjaroenwong (2004), news readers prefer news written in simple language rather than complicated and technical terms because it communicates more quickly and effectively.

To attract readers' attention, writing techniques such as word choice, sentence style and organizational patterns are essential for writers. Good writing not only helps readers understand events or information that writers are conveying, but also increases the credibility of writers which enhances the newspaper's image and reputation. The use of complex sentences or vague, incomprehensible and overly plain words can make news unreliable and boring. Therefore, news writers should be careful with word selection and avoid jargon, obscurity and academic complexity. It is more effective when writers employ word-play to catch readers' attention, create well-written patterns and make sentences more readable using simple and declarative sentences without choppiness (Ferguson & Patton, 1993).

Apart from using straightforward and creative words, readable sentences and well-organized patterns in news stories, news writers must cope with headline writing, which is the most important part of news stories (Reah, 1998). A simple rule is that headlines must be concise and capable of summarizing the whole story. In addition, with limited space in newspapers, headlines need to stand alone without any explanation and excite readers so they continue reading. News writers exercise many different approaches to make headlines attractive. According to Reah (1998), techniques include the use of homophones, homonyms, polysemes, sounds, inter-textualities and words with emotional charge to enhance the attractiveness of headlines. For example, headlines become more interesting and memorable with the use of repeating consonant or vowel sounds within phrases or sentences. The use of idioms is also interesting for readers (Fredrickson & Wedel, 1991). For example, using phrases such as being *in hot water* adds more color and depth to the literal meaning of being in trouble.

In conclusion, headlines play an important role in the news. They do not only present summarized information, but also attract readers by giving a sense of excitement and entertainment while reading. To write a headline, news writers need to think creatively and enlist many different techniques to draw the interest of readers. Previous research on writing news headlines, such as Charuchinda (2003), Kamlangharn (2003), and Kittikool (2004) focused on grammatical structures and language styles in headlines in the business and sport sections. There have been very few studies focusing on headline writing techniques in the general news section concerning politics, security, terrorism, environment and other global issues. This study aims to analyze the headline writing techniques in general news articles to determine the most important skills employed by news writers.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the headline writing techniques of general news articles.
2. To explore the frequency of occurrence of headline writing techniques in general news articles.

Significance of the Study

This study intends to provide useful information concerning headline writing techniques. The results will be useful for developing effective news writing courses and constructing relevant teaching materials for students of journalism. The result of this study will be beneficial to news writers in developing headlines. It can be also used as a guideline for news writers to create effective headlines that can enhance effective communication. Additionally, it will help readers to better understand headlines through familiarity with the writing techniques. Finally, the results can serve as a useful basis for further research related to headline writing techniques in various fields.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the following way:

1. General news headlines from the *Bangkok Post* website in February 2009 were analyzed, including headlines only from the odd days of the month.
2. Functional words such as articles, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions used in headlines were excluded from the study.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

General news refers to the news section on the *Bangkok Post* website which covers information concerning politics, security, transport, terrorism, security and environmental issues, etc.

A *homophone* is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but has a different meaning. The two words pronounced the same way. For example, *see* and *sea* are pronounced in the same way /si/, but their meanings are obviously different.

A *homonym* is a word that shares the same spelling and pronunciation but has a completely unrelated meaning. For example, *skip* means to jump, but it also means to fail to attend.

Polysemy is when a word has two or more closely related meanings. For example, *charge* means a price asked for goods or services and also refers to a formal claim that a person has done wrong, such as committing a crime.

A *synonym* is a word or phrase with the same meaning as another. For example, the meaning of *ask for* is very similar to *request*.

Inter-textuality is a technique in which a writer uses a familiar phrase or expression from popular songs, films or book titles. For example, The King's philosophy of *sufficient economy* is often referred to in the context of Thai culture.

Alliteration is the repeated occurrence of a consonant sound at the beginning of several words in the same phrase. For example, the children's song, *Sing a song of sixpence* repeats the /s/ sound in each of the main words.

Assonance refers to the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences. For example, note the vowel sounds in *price /praɪs/* and *rise /raɪs/*.

A *loaded word* or emotive language is verbiage that attempts to influence listeners or readers by appealing to emotion. In the headline, *dealing with an unwanted profit* (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009), *profit* means a benefit gained from something. It is connotative word referring to something radically different. It means the scale down of operations, lay-offs, poverty, hunger and overwhelming debts as the result of the global economic crisis.

An *idiom* is a style of writing associated with a particular period or group. It is a phrase whose meaning is not intended literally. Idioms can only be understood as complete units, and the meaning cannot be deduced from its individual words. For example, "I had a *cat nap* during the afternoon." *Cat nap* refers to a short sleep taken during the day and has nothing at all to do with cats.

An *abbreviation* is a shortened form of a word or phrase. It usually consists of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase. For example, *govt* refers to government and *UN* is the most common way to refer to the United Nations.

This chapter has outlined the background of this research project. The following chapter explores research literature that relates to the various dimensions of this topic.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter describes five topics related to the study: definitions of headlines, news headline presentation strategies, characteristics of news headlines, news headline writing techniques and previous studies. This literature review provides the academic setting in which the present research has been conducted.

Definitions of News Headlines

A headline tells the whole news story in just a few words and helps readers understand the main idea. It is “a unique type of text that consists of a range of functions that specifically dictate its shape, content, and structure, and it operates within a range of restrictions that limit the freedom of the writer” (Reah, 1998, p.13). Similarly, Bowles and Borden (2000) concluded that the headline is the main point of the whole story. They claimed that the placement of a headline can make news stories interesting and attractive. Likewise, a headline draws readers’ attention to news stories (Hodgson, 1998). Headlines must present facts; therefore, writers must read and understand the stories completely and clearly. They must select key headline words carefully because of the space constraints in newspapers.

In conclusion, the headline is the most important part of the news story because it summarizes the main idea. It is placed above a news story to attract readers’ interest. Boonsiripand and Payakwichian (1990) wrote that the difficulty of headline writing is summarizing the main point of the entire story in just a few words that fit the limited space of the page.

News Headline Presentation Strategies

News writers employ many different headline styles to capture readers' interest quickly. Leiter, Harris and Johnson (2000) said that the most popular headline style was *downstyle*, in which only the first letter of the first words and proper names are capitalized. For example, *Students get uniform cash injection* (The Bangkok Post: Feb 17, 2009). Conversely, in *upstyle*, all major words are capitalized. For example, *Sakai Lose Land to Dark Forces* (The Bangkok Post: Feb 17, 2009). Bowles and Borden (2008) argued in support of *upstyle*. They said that leading newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* used this style. However, *upstyle* was later found to make people read more slowly, causing the style to lose popularity.

Presenting quite a different model, Levin (2000) described four other styles used in headline writing: a *kicker*, a *hammer*, a *banner* and a *tripod*. A *kicker* is a word or brief phrase set over a longer main headline, while a *hammer* or a *reverse kicker* is set in large and bold type over a longer and lighter main headline. Both *kicker* and *hammer* are used in main headlines to attract attention although the ideas in the *kicker* and the *hammer* are not essential. Levin also said that *banners*, bold headlines that extend across the entire width of a page, are often used. These can also be referred to as *screamers* or *streamers*. Additionally, a *tripod* headline uses a single line of large type at the left and two lines of smaller type at the right.

Furthermore, the size and position of news headlines are also vital to draw attention (Leiter, Harris and Johnson, 2000). The importance of the story determines the size of the headline of the story. Headlines with larger letters are more attractive, interesting and meaningful than those with smaller letters. Longer stories frequently

demand larger headlines to make it more attractive. Conversely, a shorter story with a large headline prominently displayed on the page must be highly significant.

Page location is also an important factor to consider in the analysis of headlines. Headlines which are on the front page and in the middle or top of the page are considered more important than news headlines on other pages, on the border or bottom of the page. Chaisuk (2003) supported such findings, stating that the size and position of news headlines impact readability. Too small of a font size and placement at the edge or bottom of a page draw less attention.

Headline punctuation is also essential to headline presentation strategy (Bowles & Borden, 2008). Punctuation is employed to use space economically.

- Periods are used for some abbreviations but never to end a single sentence headline.
- Semicolons are used to separate two sentences in a headline.
- Commas may be used to replace the word *and*.
- Single quotation marks should be used rather than double quotation marks.
- Colons and dashes may be used to indicate attribution, such as *says*. A colon should be used after the name of a person. If the opinion comes first, use a dash.

To summarize headline presentation strategies, they are written to attract interest and save page space. Newspapers prefer *downstyle* to *upstyle* because it enables easier reading. The headline styles of kicker, hammer, banner and tripod are designed to capture readers' attention although the ideas themselves are not significant. The size and position of headlines also indicate the importance of stories. Finally, writers utilize punctuation to maximize the efficient use of page space.

Characteristics of News Headlines

Many authors present differing characteristics of effective headlines. According to Bowles and Borden (2008), good news headlines must be written with facts, accuracy, avoid ambiguity, emphasize the main theme of the story, be up-to-date, avoid libel and summarize information to optimize reading time. Reporters should use strong verbs and avoid using forms of the verb *to be* when a strong verb better expresses the meaning. Articles are often omitted because they are not considered strong (Mardh, 1980). In addition, the active voice rather is preferred to the passive voice because it is more attractive. Nevertheless, the passive voice is still used when the writers want to emphasize the action. Bowles and Borden (2008) showed that headlines and leads may convey the same information. To avoid repetition, writers should use different wordings in each location.

The ideas of Bowles and Borden (2008) are similar to the suggestions of Leiter, Harris and Johnson (2000). They concluded that good headline writing should tell the story accurately, utilize complete sentence and omit unnecessary words. Headline news should not be confusing or ambiguous by using dual meaning words or repeating words in the headline. Leiter et al. (2000) also discussed the unacceptable use of simplified spelling, unless it was the style of the newspapers. For example, *thru* being used instead of *through*.

Leiter et al. (2000) argued that news headlines should be written in the historical present tense or the future tense to create the feeling that the news events have recently happened. Kamkong (2008) also clarified the tense of future events in headlines by using the structure *to+verb*. For example, *Sides fail to agree on troop cut (The Bangkok Post: Feb 5, 2009)*.

Laumsupanimit (1986) and Newsom et al. (1981) suggested that if some long and important news stories on the front page are continued on another page, the headline writer has to create other news headlines for the inside pages. They also recommended that good news headlines should answer the five Ws and one H (who, what, when, where, why, and how) to summarize the key ideas in the story.

The structure of sentences must be also considered when writing headlines (Luamsupanitmit, 1986). The complete sentence style is similar to general writing but omits articles. The incomplete sentence style omits the verb *to be*. Sentences are normally in the passive voice, continuous tense with adjective and prepositional phrases, but the verb *to be* is often dropped such as *Bangkok sinking further* (Laumsupanimit, 1986, p.55). Noun phrases are also used to emphasize the importance of a particular noun. For example, *Tragedy of the cocaine trade* (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 11, 2009).

Attribution in headlines needs to be considered in order to avoid editorializing. For example, *Budget unfair* (Bowles & Borden, 2008, p.183) is an opinion, unless it is attributed as *Budget unfair, senator says*.

To summarize all the above ideas, the characteristics of news headline writing should be written as follows:

- Write with accuracy
- Must be clear and avoid ambiguity or libel
- Emphasize on the main theme of the story
- Must be up-to-date
- Use strong verbs
- Omit the articles
- Do not repeat words

- Write in the historical present tense
- Use the form of *to+verb* in the future event
- Should not use simplified spelling
- Create other news headlines for the continued stories
- Should have the five Ws and one Hs
- Use active voice rather than the passive voice
- Drop the verb *to be* if news headlines are in the type of the passive voice and continuous tense
- Use attribution that convey opinions and for direct quotations

News Headline Writing Techniques

Reah (1998), an experienced educator in linguistics and creative writing, wrote that “the language of newspapers is a textbook exploring ways in which the press portrays current events” (p.14). She pointed out that in composing effective and striking news headlines, headline writers needed to approach the ways in which newspapers related to their audience. There are four devices in headline writing techniques related to linguistic and cultural features to attract readers. Headline writing techniques as classified by Reah are as follows:

1. Words and meanings

A. Homophones

A homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but has a different meaning. The word may be spelled similarly or differently. In wordplay, it is often used to create puns and suggest multiple meanings. For example, in the headline, “Milan *Czechs* out the semis” (*The Sun*, June 28, 2004). This headline relies on two homophones: *Czechs* and *checks*. They

replace the word *checks* with *Czechs* because Milan is from the Czech Republic.

B. Homonyms

Homonyms are words that share the same spelling and pronunciation but have unrelated meanings. They can sometimes cause lexical ambiguity, for example in the headline, “World War II *shell* found on beach” (“*BBC News*,” May, 4 2007). *Shell* has several different meanings. It can be the hard outer covering of organisms such as mollusks, insects and turtles. Alternatively, it can mean metal cases containing shot and fired from a shotgun. In this case *shell* means metal cases.

C. Polysemes

Polysemy is when words have the same spelling and closely related meaning. Sometimes, these cause lexical ambiguity. For example, “Ex-minister *slams* govt priorities” (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009). In this headline, *slams* has two closely related meanings: One means *to criticize* and the second means *to shut something forcefully*. In this case, the first meaning implies that the government priorities were criticized by the ex-minister.

2. *Inter-textualities*

Inter-textuality is the use familiar phrases from popular songs, films or books. According to Griffig (2006), inter-textuality is the shaping of the meaning of a text by the influence of other, culturally relevant texts. It refers to the borrowing and transformation of a prior text or referencing one text while reading another.

For example, “*Brulee Madly Deeply*” (Reah, 1998, p.17) refers to the well-known film *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1990) and also a hit song by Savage Garden (1997).

3. Phonologies

Phonology is a writing technique that makes news headlines memorable by playing with sounds. It includes alliteration and assonance. Alliteration is the repeated occurrence of a consonant sound at the beginning of several words such as in the headline, “Two rangers shot, *beheaded, burned* (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009). *Beheaded* and *burned* repeat and emphasize the consonant sound /b/ in the headline. Similarly, assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming. For example, the headline, *Tony’s phoney- war cabinet* (Reah, 1998, p.17) employs assonance of the vowel sounds of /o/ and /ɪ/ to create a memorable headline.

4. Loaded words

Loaded words attempt to influence readers by appealing to emotion. They have strong emotional overtones or connotations, which evoke strong positive or negative reactions beyond their literal meaning. In the headline, “Genius rev *butchered* at church” (Reah, 1998, p.17), *butchered* means *to slaughter and cut up an animal*. When it is applied to a human being, it carries both the meaning of cruel violence and also implies that the killer must have seen the victim as having the same status as an animal.

In addition to Reah’s (1998) classification, two more techniques are used by writers used in headline writing, idioms and abbreviations.

The Use of Idioms

According to Fredrickson and Wedel of the Bangkok Post (1991), the use of idioms in news headlines is a common technique but can causes problems for non-native speakers of English. Idioms are not intended to be taken literally, nor can they be understood through the meaning of individual words. They can only be understood as whole units as in, “Sides fail to *agree on* troop cut” (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 5, 2009). To *Agree on* means to have reached the same opinion. This headline means the Thai and Cambodian troops could not reach agreement on the partial withdrawal of troops from their borders.

The Use of Abbreviations

According to the Bangkok Post (1995), headline news writers should use abbreviations wherever possible due to limited space. Abbreviations usually consists of a letter or group of letters. In newspaper headlines, abbreviations are non-conversational language used to keep headlines short. Abbreviations are usually explained in the lead, although abbreviations unfamiliar to readers should not be used in news headlines. If it needs to be used, news writers should spell it out in the lead or rephrase the headline in the lead as in the headline, “Arrest warrants for 21 *PAD* leaders expected” followed by the lead, “Police expect warrants will be out next week for the arrest of 21 leaders of *the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD)* on charges of leading protesters to seize Government House last year (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 21, 2009). In this example, *PAD* is the abbreviation for *the People’s Alliance for Democracy* as revealed in the lead paragraph.

Previous Studies

Related studies focusing on the analysis of headline writing help put the present research in context. The syntactic structure of headline news was studied by Mardh (1980) who focused on English front-page headlines in two different types of newspapers: a broad sheet newspaper, *The Times* and a tabloid newspaper, *Dairy Mirror*. The researcher found several interesting linguistic feature in the typical news headlines in those newspapers such as the use of verbal and nominal headlines and the omission of articles, verbs and auxiliaries. The research showed that verbal headlines appeared more frequently than nominal headlines on the front pages of both newspapers, indicating that verbs are the most important element in writing news headlines. It also showed that the verb *to be*, articles, and auxiliaries are mostly omitted in composing news headlines due to space limitations.

The syntactic structure of news headlines was also studied by Kamlangharn (2003) who analyzed sports news in *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* from January to June 2002. The study examined functional headline types and compared the types of clause complexity of sports news headlines between the two newspapers. Interestingly, the results revealed that the most frequent syntactic structure used in both of the newspapers was verbal headlines. The results are supported by Mardh's (1980) study concerning syntactic structure of front-page headlines of foreign newspapers which implied that the most essential part of headlines is verbs. In addition, pre-modifying and post-modifying words were also found in great quantity. Functional headline types of statement were frequently used in both newspapers. Analysis of the complexity of news headlines based on types of clauses showed that sports news headlines used in *The Bangkok Post* were

more complex than those in *The Nation* and both newspapers often used news headlines with two clauses.

The structural types of noun phrases of news headlines has also been studied by various researchers. Charuchinda (2003) analyzed 292 front-page headlines of *The Bangkok Post* from March 1 to May 31, 2003. The researcher focused on eight characteristics of noun phrases based on Banpho's theory (2000): a single noun, determiner+noun, pre-modifier+noun, noun+post-modifier, determiner+pre-modifier+noun, determiner+noun+post-modifier, pre-modifier+noun+post-modifier, and determiner+pre-modifier+noun+post-modifier. The results revealed that noun+post-modifier structural type was used most often to maximize the amount of information. However, space limitation was the most important factor to be considered in headline writing. Therefore, headline news writers frequently used pre-modification as the second choice in headlines. Moreover, the research indicated that front-page headlines of *The Bangkok Post* had their own style of grammar that differed from standard English such as the omission of articles, the use of historical present tenses and the use of nouns as adjectives.

The structure of news headlines and the lead paragraphs in *the Bangkok Post* have been also studied to generate high school students' pre-reading questions (Boonchockhirunmetha, 1999). The research found that news headlines and lead paragraphs helped students develop their reading skills because they summarized the whole news stories, providing clues to understand the news. The study implied further that the historical present tense form was always used to describe past events, whereas the form *to+verb* was used to indicate future events in headlines. In addition, the past participle was used instead of the passive voice to simplify the news.

Another research was conducted by Phanphanich (1999) on the English usage and the writing style of 40 political news items in *The Bangkok Post*. The analysis showed the frequencies of occurrence of news headline writing styles. The research revealed that the active voice structure was used more frequently than the passive because simplicity was an important factor to make headlines more easily understood. The study also indicated that the omission of the verb *to be* in the present and past participle were due to conciseness and limited space of news headlines.

Furthermore, the study of headline advertisements has been studied. Research concerning Thai advertising in daily newspapers by Wichatrong (1981) revealed 43 characteristics of words used in advertising such as omitting, classifiers and deleting parts of words. The results were consistent with studies by several researchers, namely Charuchinda (2003), Mardh (1980) and Phanphanich (1999). It also showed that noun phrases were used more frequently than verb phrases and prepositional phrases. Additionally, rhythmic sounds were also used in advertising to attract readers.

The idiomatic and literal meanings of phrasal verbs used in *The Bangkok Post* front-page headlines from January 1 to June 30, 2003 was conducted by Kittikool (2004) using a sample of 94 news headlines. The study included classification of phrasal verbs according to meaning, frequency of occurrence of categorized phrasal verbs and sense of meanings of phrasal verbs that posed comprehension difficulties for non-native readers. The results showed that front-page headlines used idiomatic phrasal verbs more often than literal phrasal verbs because they were catchy and concise. Idiomatic phrasal verbs were said to make headlines more vivid, colorful and expressive. Similar findings were revealed by Chaikampan (2000) in *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* newspapers.

In brief, these studies have discussed analysis of structures and word meaning in English and Thai newspaper headlines. The results have concluded that attracting readers and optimum use of front page space were the most important elements in news writing. The verbal headline structure is mostly applied in news writing because the *verb* is the most essential part in writing news headlines. Headlines are kept simple, employing active voice and past participles because these are easily understandable. Word usage found in news headlines has been shown to be more idiomatic than literal it is more catchy and concise. To save space, news writers omit the verb *to be* and articles that are not considered important. The structure of news headlines was not commonly found in general written texts such as using the historical present tense to describe past events.

This review of related literature has presented concepts and examples that represent the discourse on headline analysis. The ideas presented here are used to inform the methodology that is explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research method employed in this study. It is divided into five main parts: data collection, framework, procedure, and data analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected from the archives of *The Bangkok Post* website (<http://www.bangkokpost.com>) in the general news category which covers topics including politics, security, terrorism, environment and other global issues. To determine the sample size, all headlines were selected from articles published in February 2009. This included approximately 20 news headlines in a day, amounting to nearly 600 in a month. Headlines were then selected from the odd days of the month, accounting for 288 general news headlines for use in this study.

Framework of Headline Writing Techniques

The primary instrument applied in this study was Reah's framework (1998) concerning techniques of headline writing, including words and meanings, inter-textualities, phonologies and loaded words. Additional instruments employed in this study were Fredrickson and Wedel's (1991) work on the use of idioms, and the Bangkok Post (1995) concerning the use of abbreviations. To analyze the techniques of headline writing, a pilot study was conducted on 39 general news articles from February 1 and 3, 2009 (see Appendix). The pilot study revealed an additional writing technique, synonyms, which was widely used and was therefore included in the analytical framework of this study as described in the following section.

The Pilot Study: The use of synonyms

The use of synonyms in headline writing involves using a word in the headline with a synonymous word in the lead paragraph. For example, the headline, “Minister wants *probe* into student gang stabbing” is followed in the lead paragraph by the sentence, “Education Minister Jurin Laksanavisit has demanded *an inquiry* into the stabbing of a 17-year-old in Wat Phra Mongkol Bophit during a student brawl in Ayutthaya on Friday (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009). The word *probe* has a similar meaning to *an inquiry* in the lead paragraph.

The summary of the framework is as follows:

1. Homophones
2. Homonyms
3. Polysemes
4. Synonyms
5. Inter-textualities
6. Alliterations
7. Assonances
8. Loaded words
9. Idioms
10. Abbreviations

Procedure

The summary of the procedure of this study is as follows:

1. The data was collected from the archives of *the Bangkok Post* website in the general news category published in February, 2009.
2. To determine the sample size, all headlines were selected from articles published in February 2009. This included approximately 20 news headlines in a day, amounting to nearly 600 in a month.
3. Headlines were then selected from the odd days of the month, accounting for 288 general news headlines for use in this study.
4. To adapt the headline writing techniques, a pilot study was conducted on 39 general news articles from February 1 and 3, 2009. The pilot study revealed that a use of synonyms was an additional writing technique; therefore, it was included in the analytical framework of this study.
5. The 288 general news headlines were qualitatively analyzed using the methods described in the framework section.
6. The analysis was validated for accurate classification by a professional journalist who has been working at the Bangkok Post Publishing Company for over a decade.
7. The occurrence of each category was counted, calculated in terms of frequency and percentage, and presented in tabular form.

Headline Writing Technique Frequency Count

For the analysis of headline writing techniques, the occurrence of each technique was tabulated in terms of frequency as follows:

1. The occurrence of a word in the homophone, homonym, polysemy and abbreviation categories was counted once in each category.

For example:

World War II *shell* found on beach (*BBC News*: May, 4 2007)

Shell is a homonym and counts once in the homonym category.

EC preparing charges against Suthep (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

EC is an abbreviation and counts once in the abbreviation category.

2. Words or phrases that occurred in the synonym, inter-textuality, loaded word and idiom categories count once in each category.

For example:

Going *red* over numbers (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Red is inter-textual and counts once in the inter-textuality category.

A man and his *split personality* (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Split personality is a case of loaded words and counts once in the loaded word category.

Thaksin to *fight to the very end* (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

Fight to the very end is an idiom and counts once in the idiom category.

3. Repetition of consonant or vowel sounds in the phonology categories were counted once in each category.

For example:

Cabinet quashes proposal to buy back farmers' debts (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 11, 2009)

Cabinet and *quashes* contains repetition of the consonant sound /k/. This counts once in the alliteration category.

Data Analysis

Statistical Treatment

The frequency of occurrence in each category was calculated in terms of percentages and presented in tables. The following formula is the percentage calculation of each category.

$$\frac{\text{The frequency of each headline writing technique}}{\text{Total number of headline writing techniques}} \times 100$$

The methodology described in this chapter effectively encompasses the primary techniques used in writing headlines by looking more closely at the use, play and context of words and meanings, homophones and homonyms, polysemes and synonyms. By studying and categorizing these language events, a greater understanding of headlines will be produced. The results yielded by application of this methodology are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings corresponding to the objectives of the study raised in Chapter 1.

The first objective is to analyze the headline writing techniques of general news articles. The results showed that there were homonyms, polysemes, synonyms, intertextualities, alliterations, assonances, loaded words, idioms, and abbreviations, found in the study. The findings are described below.

1. Synonyms

The use of synonyms found in the analysis can be classified into two groups as follows:

A. Synonymous words that occur in the news headline and in the lead paragraph. The shorter word usually appeared in the headline.

For example:

In the headline	Puea Thai wants subsidy for the lowly- <i>paid</i> halved
In the lead	A proposed budget to subsidize the cost of living of low- <i>income</i> earners and state officials should be halved, Opposition MPs say.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline Cabinet *quashes* proposal to buy back farmers' debts

In the lead Cabinet *has rejected* out of hand a budget proposal of almost 10 billion baht aimed at buying back farmers' debts.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 11, 2009)

In the headline Love is in the airwaves as millions *text*

In the lead Mobile phone users sent more than 22 million short *messages* and multi-media messages to their loved ones on St Valentine's Day.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 17, 2009)

B. A synonym which is to use a word in the news headline with a similar meaning to a phrase in the lead paragraph. It could be an explanation of the word in the news headline.

For example:

In the headline Registration of *migrants* postponed

In the lead The Labour Ministry is delaying the registration of 700,000 *foreign workers* in a bid to keep jobs open for Thai workers during the economic slowdown.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 5, 2009)

In the headline Migratory bird capital in *peril*

In the lead Wieng Nong Lom wetlands, a fertile home for migratory birds and many rare bird species, is *under*

severe threat from human activity and land encroachment, says the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

In the headline Stressed mother shoots children, commits *suicide*

In the lead A stressed mother shot her two children who were arguing over a toy before *killing herself* in a tragic Valentine's Day incident.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 15, 2009)

2. Loaded Words

Loaded words or emotive language refer to verbiage that attempts to influence readers by appealing to emotion. It has strong emotional overtones or connotations, which evoke strongly positive or negative reactions beyond their literal meaning. The use of loaded words found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline Fuel price rise *sparks* shortages

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Spark (v) has a strong emotional overtone. It means to emit sparks of fire or electricity. This headline gives readers the sense of cause of shortages at petrol stations throughout the country.

In the headline *A heartless* response

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 11, 2009)

Heartless means unfeeling or pitiless. This headline shows connotation of writer commenting on the problem of Rohingya refugees who were neglected by Thai government. The word can evoke sympathy of readers appealing to their emotions.

In the headline *Tragedy* of the cocaine trade

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 11, 2009)

Tragedy is a connotative word that actually means a terrible event that causes great sadness. This headline shows the arrest of international drug smugglers was expected to be the end of cocaine trade. The sensation of the word inflects to readers' admiration to police.

3. Abbreviations

Abbreviations are non-conversational language used to keep headlines short. An explanation of what the abbreviation stands for is usually explained in the lead. The use of abbreviations found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline Generic heart drug gets *FDA* certification.

In the lead *Food and Drug Administration (FDA)* experts yesterday certified the quality of the generic heart drug Clopidogrel being imported from India, saying it was safe for use.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

In the headline Panel rules out pub fire as special case for *DSI*

In the lead The Special Investigation Commission has rejected the Santika pub fire as a special case for examination by *the Department of Special Investigation*.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 19, 2009)

In the headline Firm wins damages from Highway *Dept*

In the lead The Highway *Department* has been ordered by the court to pay a company it hired to build a highway about 30 million baht in damages plus interest at 7.5% a year.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 27, 2009)

4. Alliteration

Alliteration is a repeated occurrence of a consonant sound at the beginning of several words. It is usually used as a form of figurative language. The use of alliterations found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline *Seminar seeks* to understand the insurgent mindset

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 5, 2009)

Seminar and *seeks* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /s/ at the initial consonant in the same headline.

In the headline Teacher seriously hurt in *bomb blast*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 17, 2009)

Bomb and *blast* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /b/ at the initial consonant in the same headline.

In the headline The mouse that roared in the *pursuit of pirates*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 23, 2009)

Pursuit and *pirates* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /p/ at the initial consonant in the same headline.

5. Assonances

Assonance is repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences. The use of assonances found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline Thailand is now *back* on *track*, says Abhisit

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

Back /bæk/ and *track* /træk/ have the same vowel sound /æ/ within a sentence.

In the headline A *catastrophe* for the *apostrophe*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 15, 2009)

Catastrophe /kə'tæstrəfi/ and *apostrophe* /ə'pɒstrəfi/ have the same vowel sound /trəfi/ within a sentence.

In the headline Two rangers shot *dead, beheaded* in brutal attack

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 21, 2009)

Dead /ded/ and *beheaded* /br'hed/ have a repetition of vowel sounds /e/ within a sentence.

6. Inter-textuality

Inter-textuality is the use of familiar phrase extracted from popular songs, films or book titles. The use of intertextualities found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline *Brass* submit their wish list

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 5, 2009)

Brass is a bright yellow metal made by mixing copper and zinc. This headline symbolizes the top brass or senior officers that frequently used in military.

In the headline *Yellow shirts* to 'invade' red bastions

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 15, 2009)

Yellow shirts is a familiar saying from the People's Alliance for Democracy who had worn yellow shirts as a symbol of their group.

In the headline Paging *Uncle Sam*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 15, 2009)

Uncle Sam is a fictional character to personify the United States. It first appeared in the editorial of a newspaper published in New York. It was

popularly used by the American government since 1812 and it later became famous.

7. Idioms

An idiom is a style of writing technique associated with a particular period or group. It is also a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not literal. The use of idioms found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline Rapid bus service *stays on course*

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

Stay on course means to continue going to the end of something difficult.

This headline means the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration continued to launch the Rapid service despite alleged irregularities involving bus procurement.

In the headline Security *beefed up* for rallies

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 13, 2009)

Beefed up means to add force or weight to something. This headline refers to security authorities are on full alert to control rallies by the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship.

In the headline UDD *is playing a game* that could embarrass the govt

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 23, 2009)

Is playing a game means to behave in a fair or honorable way. In this case, it refers to the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship planning rally to confront the government.

8. Polysemes

Polysemy refers to words that have the same spelling and their meanings are closely related. The use of polysemes found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline State firms seek *lifeline*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Lifeline (n) has two closely related meanings. It can refer to the concrete meaning of a line or rope thrown to rescue somebody in difficulty in water and to the abstract meaning of a thing on which something depends for its continued existence. This headline refers to the second meaning that the Finance Minister asked the cabinet to let it approach major banks to set up a 200-billion-baht short-term loan fund for cash-starved state firms.

In the headline Northeast is getting preferential *treatment*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 9, 2009)

Treatment has closely related meanings. It can be a thing done to relieve or cure an illness and a process or manner of behaving towards or dealing with a person, thing, or situation. This headline refers to the second meaning. It is the process of election to the ministerial seat at

the Social Development and Human Security Ministry and it was locked up for the northeastern representative.

In the headline Let there be no *abomination*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 13, 2009)

Abomination has closely related meanings. It may be a thing that causes disgust or hatred and a strong feeling of disgust or hatred.

This headline refers to the first meaning. It was regarding to unmoral and eccentric sexual activities among people.

9. Homonyms

A homonym is when words share the same spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings which are not obviously related. The use of homonyms found in the analysis is as follows:

For example:

In the headline Nice bit of *footwork*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 9, 2009)

Footwork has two unrelated meanings. It could be one's manner of moving or using the feet in sports and the ability to react quickly to sudden danger. This headline refers to the second meaning. The writer gives an admiration to Prime Minister Abhisit for securing a loan from Japan after assured the Japanese that Thailand is back on track, that his party has regained popularity.

In the headline Security beefed up for *rallies*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 13, 2009)

Rallies has two unrelated meanings. It can be a large, usually political, public meeting and a race for motor vehicles over public roads. This headline refers to the first meaning which is the political rallies by the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship.

The second objective is to explore the frequency of occurrence of headline writing techniques in general news articles. The findings obtained from the data analysis are presented in table, followed by description.

Table Headline Writing Techniques and their Frequency of Occurrence in General News Articles in *The Bangkok Post*

Headline Writing Techniques	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
1. Synonyms	179	44.22%
2. Loaded words	87	21.48%
3. Abbreviations	63	15.55%
4. Alliterations	35	8.64%
5. Assonances	18	4.44%
6. Inter-textualities	9	2.22%
7. Idioms	7	1.73%
8. Polysemes	5	1.23%
9. Homonyms	2	0.49%
10. Homophones	0	0%
Total	405	100%

Note: Some news headlines employed more than one writing technique

The table presents headline writing techniques and their frequency of occurrence of general news articles in *the Bangkok Post*. Synonyms were the most frequently used technique, accounted for 44.22% of all data. The next two most common techniques were the use of loaded words (21.48%) and abbreviations (15.55%). Surprisingly, no homophones were found during the study while homonyms (0.49%), polysemes (1.23%) and idioms (1.73%) were rarely used. The use of inter-textualities accounted for 2.22% of techniques, followed by assonances (4.44%) and alliterations (8.64%).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes, discusses the results of the analysis and suggests applications and topics for further research.

Conclusion

This study was designed to explore the headline writing techniques of general news articles in *The Bangkok Post*. A total of 288 news headlines were randomly selected and analyzed in order to determine what headline writing techniques were used and to explore the frequency of those techniques.

The first objective of this study was to analyze headline writing techniques, namely, homonyms, polysemes, synonyms, inter-textualities, alliterations, assonances, loaded words, idioms and abbreviations.

The second objective was to determine the frequency of each writing technique in 288 news headlines. Some headlines employed multiple writing techniques, yielding a total sample of 405 techniques. The results showed that the highest frequency of occurrence of the headline writing techniques of general news articles was the use of synonyms (44.22%), followed by loaded words (21.48%) and abbreviations (15.55%). Alliteration was used in 8.64% of techniques, followed by assonance at 4.44%. The use of inter-textualities, idioms, polysemes and homonyms were scarcely found in the research sample. They accounted for 2.22%, 1.73%, 1.23%, and 0.49%, respectively. Homophones did not appear in any of the headlines in the sample.

Discussion

This section discusses the results of the study regarding the headline writing techniques found in the general news articles of *The Bangkok Post*.

Synonyms

The results showed that the technique of synonyms is a helpful and simple technique to attract readers' attention more than other techniques. The results support the studies of Bowles and Borden (2008) who stated that the news headline and the lead paragraph will often convey the same information. To avoid repetition, news headlines should use different wording so that readers will not read the same word twice. In addition, wordings used in the news headline were frequently short or used less number of alphabets than wordings used in the lead paragraph. It can be assumed that to attract the interest of readers and to use space economically, news writers need to use concise words. This also supports Mardh's (1980) study that it is necessary to make news headlines as brief and as meaningful as possible because news headlines written with concise words are understandable to read and readers can get information quicker than the longer ones.

Loaded Words

The use of loaded words was the second most frequent technique used in writing the news articles. The studies showed that the loaded words were mainly written with sensational, ironic, and satirical styles to stimulate readers' attention. Those words used in news headlines can be striking and persuade readers to buy newspapers rather than those written with boring and plain words. It appeals to readers with a sense of a strong emotional overtone while reading. This further

substantiates Reah's (1998) findings concerning how loaded words evoke strong reactions. The results could be assumed that the interesting headlines can make news stories more interesting. The loaded words used in news headlines can divert the attention of readers from other interest to focus on what are reported in the news story in order to explore further in depth. Additionally, some headline which used loaded words was written with large letters or capital letters. The results could be implied to make the headlines more interesting as Levin (2000) mentioned that the headlines written with large letters are more attractive and meaningful than those written with small letters.

Abbreviations

The technique of abbreviations was the third most frequently used. Headlines using abbreviations were usually spelt in the lead paragraph. The results showed that the general use of abbreviations was not only written with capital letters which stands for the very long specific name of institution or organization, but it is also written with lowercase letters which are shortened from some longer words, such as *govt* referring to the government. It is noted that the lowercase abbreviation was not found in every long word, but in some words that were mostly used, such as *dept* and *govt*. It could be assumed that news writers are likely to use abbreviation wherever possible due to space limitation; therefore, it can save the news headline space. It was also a particular style of writing news headlines that were not found in general written texts.

Alliterations and Assonances

Moreover, the use of alliteration and assonance were found to make news headlines memorable by using reader's awareness of sound or sound

familiarity. The result could be assumed that the use of alliterations and assonances can make news headlines attractive to readers, but the alliteration was found to be used more often than assonance. It may be more difficult to compose a news headline with a repetition of vowel sounds than a repetition of consonant sounds. The results also revealed that some news headline used words which were not colloquial, but news writers still used them in order to make news headlines colorful. The findings indicated that news writers sometimes may not only focus on the meaning of news headline, but do playing with the rhythmic sounds.

Inter-textuality and Idioms

Inter-textuality and idioms in news headlines were rarely found in the samples. It could be implied that news writers still preferred using cultural knowledge to appreciate and ridicule readers because it was concise and expressive. Although these can catch readers' attention by using a style of familiar phrase and saying of a particular culture as Reah (1998) and Fredrickson and Wedel (1991) stated, but they can sometimes cause comprehension difficulties for non-native speakers of English. However, readers need to be familiar with the original texts, have background knowledge, or read the whole news stories to understand the headlines.

Polysemes and Homonyms

Polysemes and homonyms were very rare in the sample of this research, indicating that they may cause lexical ambiguity and may be too complicated for non-native readers to understand profoundly. News writers may focus on writing understandable news headlines in order to attract readers to buy news; therefore, if news headlines contained various meanings, readers would be confused and paid

less interest to the news stories. In addition, ambiguous news headlines could reduce the creditability of news writers and the image of the newspapers itself.

Homophones

Homophones were not found in the sample at all. Although this technique can be effective in wordplay to create puns or multiple meanings, it may not be effective in news headlines because, as Reah (1998) stated, news headlines writers prefer helping readers understand the main idea of the story, not focus to amuse readers.

Applications

The findings of the study can be applied as follows:

1. In writing courses, the findings can guide students to have more creative writing techniques. For example, the use of synonyms, *benefit*, *gain*, and *profit* helps students to have greater variety of word choices in their writing and the use of idioms, *tell a white lie*, can help their writing more vivid, colorful and expressive (Kittikool, 2004). Additionally, the use of polysemes and homonyms are also used to ridicule and satire the people in the society.
2. The findings of loaded words can be used in novel and story writing. It can create stronger emotional reactions from readers by giving a positive feeling or a negative impact; for example, “those ribbons that you devoted to are the badge of slavery” (George Orwell, 1945, p.2).
3. The findings of alliteration and assonance techniques can be used in marketing and advertising to attract attention to products. They can make slogans more memorable by repeating the consonant and vowel sounds, such as *AIS Anytime*

Anywhere Everyone. The abbreviation is also used because it is an attentive grabber; for example, *CK* and *DKNY* brands are abbreviated from Calvin Klein and *Donna Karan New York*.

4. The findings of assonance can also be used in composing poetry and songs to be more colorful. It helps composers establish rhyming patterns; for example, *you took my heart away, when my whole world was grey*.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to 288 news headlines from the general news section of *The Bangkok Post* from February 2009. With the number of the data used in the study, the results could be not generalized for news headline writing.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

1. This study was limited to only one English newspaper published in Thailand, *The Bangkok Post*. Further studies on other English newspapers published in Thailand or foreign newspapers could be studied to compare the findings.
2. This study was limited to the general news section. Other sections such as business and sports should also be studied to compare the variety and frequency of techniques.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The pilot study of the analysis of headline writing techniques of 39 general news articles

1. Polysemes

In the headline Ex-minister *slams* govt priorities

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Slam has various meanings and are not obviously related: (1) to criticize and (2) to shut something forcefully.

In this case, the first meaning is used to refer that ex-minister criticized government priorities.

In the headline State firms seek *lifeline*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Lifeline (n) has two closely related meanings: (1) a line or rope thrown to rescue somebody in difficulty in water and (2) a thing on which something depends for its continued existence.

This headline refers to the second meaning.

2. Synonyms

In the headline PM *lauds* sufficiency economy at Geneva summit

In the lead Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva *raised* His Majesty the King's sufficiency economy philosophy in his address on

food security at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos yesterday.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline

Puea Thai wants subsidy for the lowly-*paid* halved

In the lead

A proposed budget to subsidise the cost of living of low-*income* earners and state officials should be halved, Opposition MPs say.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline

Groups *urge* calm during Asean *meet*

In the lead

Grassroots groups *have called on* Thaksin supporters not to let their planned protest turn violent as that would ruin the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) *summit*.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline

Minister *wants probe* into student gang stabbing

In the lead

Education Minister Jurin Laksanavisit *has demanded an inquiry* into the stabbing of a 17-year-old in Wat Phra Mongkol Bophit during a student brawl in Ayutthaya on Friday.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline Ruangkrai *calls for* NACC *probe* into three ministers

In the lead Senator Ruangkrai Leekitwattana is *to petition* the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) to *look into* alleged misconduct of the three cabinet ministers who voted for the budget bill.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline Rohingya *get out of* prison

In the lead The provincial prison *released* 62 illegal Rohingya migrants yesterday and handed them over to immigration authorities for deportation.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

In the headline Korn *sets* THAI agenda

In the lead The Transport Ministry *has launched* its own investigation into the embattled Thai Airways International and how to rescue it.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline State *firms* seek lifeline

In the lead The Finance Ministry will today ask the cabinet to let it approach major local banks to set up a 200-billion-baht short-term loan fund for cash-starved state *enterprises*.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline UN unfazed by slight *upturn* in opium *output*

In the lead The United Nations drug agency is confident illegal opium *production* in Thailand can be reduced despite a slight *increase* in cultivation last year.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline Senator brings case against 3 ministers

In the lead Senator Ruangkrai Leekitwattana has petitioned the national anti-graft agency to bring a case against *three* ministers he accuses of impropriety for having voted on the budget bill.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline *Wetlands* are recognised as an important resource

In the lead A year-long effort by residents of Bang Saphan to preserve the Mae Ramphueng *swampland* is about to bear fruit.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline White *slavers* behind Rohingya, finds panel Local groups oppose allowing sanctuary

In the lead International human *traffickers*, possibly operating from Thailand, are behind the influx of Rohingya boat people, the House committee on security says.

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

- In the headline BMA told it can't revoke *agreement*
- In the lead The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has been told it can neither revoke the scandal-marred fire trucks and boats procurement *contract* nor suspend payment to the contractor, a City Hall source says.
- (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)
-
- In the headline Two rangers shot, beheaded, *burned*
- In the lead Two rangers were killed and beheaded by suspected rebels who then *set fire* to their bodies yesterday.
- (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)
-
- In the headline Event organizers *eye* positive growth
- In the lead Three event organizers *expect* their businesses will still grow this year despite mounting concerns about the economy.
- (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)
-
- In the headline Union *asks* Kurusapa board to *stand down*
- In the lead About 1,000 members of Kurusapa Business Organisation's labour union yesterday *demand*ed Education Minister Jurin Laksanavisit *dismiss* its executive board for alleged corruption and huge debts.
- (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline Thaksin *talks of* a comeback

In the lead Thaksin Shinawatra is in a fighting mood. The former prime minister *says* he is ready to fight for justice and make a comeback as the country's political leader.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

In the headline *Ex*-minister slams govt priorities

In the lead The government has set "wrong priorities" in its economic stimulus package, which could magnify the country's economic problems, *former* finance minister Thanong Bidaya says.

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

3. *Inter-textualities*

In the headline *Reds* give govt three demands

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Reds is a familiar saying from the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship who had worn red shirts as a symbol of their group.

In the headline PM lauds *sufficiency economy* at Geneva summit

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Sufficiency economy is a familiar saying from His majesty the King's philosophy.

In the headline When home is *Pratt's Bottom*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Pratt's Bottom is a Kent village which is one of the familiar-strange place names in Britain (*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009).

In the headline Going *red* over numbers

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Red is a familiar saying from the red shirt people or the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship.

4. Alliterations

In the headline Reds *give* *govt* three demands

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Give and *govt* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /g/ at the initial words in the same headline.

In the headline Of *lost* *love*, teeth and phones

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Lost and *love* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /l/ at the initial words in the same headline.

In the headline Stoking the *fear* *factor* in India

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Fear and *factor* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /f/ at the initial words in the same headline.

In the headline Two rangers shot, *beheaded*, *burned*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Beheaded and *burned* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /b/ at the initial words in the same headline.

In the headline Rapid bus *service stays* on course

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Service and *stays* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /s/ at the initial words in the same headline.

In the headline *Thaksin talks* of a comeback

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Thaksin and *talks* repeat occurrence of a consonant sound /t/ at the initial words in the same headline.

5. Assonances

In the headline Fuel *price rise* sparks shortages

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Price /praɪs/ and *rise* /raɪz/ have a repetition of vowel sounds /aɪ/ within a sentence.

6. Loaded words

In the headline Fuel price rise *sparks* shortages

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Spark (v) has a strong emotional overtone. It means emit sparks of fire or electricity. This headline gives readers the sense of cause of shortages at petrol stations throughout the country.

In the headline Thailand ‘can *learn* from Aceh peace

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Learn means to gain knowledge or skill by study, experience, or being taught. This headline uses emotive word showing a practical way for Thailand to solve the violence in the three southernmost provinces like peace agreement reached between the Indonesian government and East Timor in Aceh in 2005.

In the headline National security *versus* democracy

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Versus (prep.) has a strong emotional connotation. It means against. This headline means the disagreement of the practice of censorship (as a matter of national security) and freedom of speech (as a component of democracy).

In the headline Taya *adjusting* well to life at city hall

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Adjusting (v) means to become or make someone or something suited to new conditions. It has an emotional connotation. This headline means Taya, as the

youngest deputy governor at City Hall, always paid respect to subordinates and asked them to act more casually.

In the headline A man and his *split personality*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Split personality (n) is a phrase which have strong emotional connotation. It means the alteration of personality occurring in some mental illnesses. This headline means the very two different perspectives of people in the country.

In the headline Dealing with an unwanted *profit*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Profit is advantage or benefit gained from something. It is connotative word referring differently. This headline means the scale down of operations, workers lay-off, poverty, hunger, and overwhelming debts as the result of global economic crisis.

In the headline Elections signal hope and *irony* in Iraq

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Irony is a situation or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects, and is often amusing as a result. This headline uses connotative meaning. It describes the election in Iraq that it was not plain sailing but filled with violence.

In the headline Women aren't *dogs*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Dogs (n) has an emotional connotation that means contrastively to the actual meaning. This headline means *bitch* which actual meaning is a female dog, but used for public discourse in order to describe women.

In the headline *Stoking* the fear factor in India

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Stoking means to encourage or increase an emotion or a tendency. It is overtone word showing the horrific acts that attacked in Mumbai, India.

In the headline State firms seek *lifeline*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Lifeline means a line or rope thrown to rescue somebody in difficulty in water. This headline has a connotative meaning that refers to loan fund for cash-starvation.

In the headline *A bizarre twist* of the Thai justice system

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Bizarre twist refers to very strange change. This headline has a connotative meaning. Instead of paying attention to the investigation and arresting the murderer of Phra Supoj for trial, the police chose to be serious in prosecuting the Shan woman on arson charge.

In the headline UN *unfazed* by slight upturn in opium output

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Unfazed is opposite to upset or shock somebody. This headline gives readers different emotive word which refers to the United Nations drug agency's confidence to reduce the illegal opium production.

In the headline Two rangers *shot, beheaded, burned*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

This headline describes the incident with touched emotion. It shows that two rangers were killed, have their heads cut off, and their bodies set on fire.

In the headline Abhisit *faces* trials on several fronts

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Faces refers to force somebody or be forced to deal with a difficult or unpleasant situation. It has overtone meaning in the headline which exactly means trying hard to run the country.

In the headline The *shame* of school fights

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Shame is a feeling of distress and regret as a result of one's own wrong doing and failure behavior. It has emotional meaning which shows the sad truth of student violence.

In the headline Event organizers *eye* positive growth

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Eye means to look at or watch something curiously, suspicion, or desire. This headline has emotional meaning which means event organizers kept a close watching on their business growing.

7. Idioms

In the headline *Dealing with* an unwanted profit

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

This headline uses an idiom of *have dealings with somebody* which means to have relations with someone especially in business.

In the headline Rapid bus service *stays on course*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Stay on course means to continue going to the end of something difficult. This headline means the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration continued to launch the Rapid service despite alleged irregularities involving bus procurement.

In the headline Thaksin *talks of* a comeback

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 3, 2009)

Talks of is an idiom. It means while on the main subject of something. This headline refers to Thaksin's saying that he was ready to return to the political arena again.

In the headline Sides fail to *agree on* troop cut

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 5, 2009)

Agree on means to have reached the same opinion. This headline means the negotiation of the area near the boundary of Thai and Cambodian could not be successful to reach the same opinion.

In the headline Thailand is now back *on track*, says Abhisit

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

On track is thinking or acting in some way. This headline means the political situation in Thailand was getting back stability.

In the headline Thaksin to *fight to the very end*

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 7, 2009)

Fight to the very end means struggle until one side has clearly won. This headline refers to Thaksin who banned outside the country trying hard to win the political dictatorship.

8. Abbreviations

In the headline Reds give *govt* three demands

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

Govt refers to government.

In the headline *PM* lauds sufficiency economy at Geneva summit

(*The Bangkok Post*: Feb 1, 2009)

PM stands for Prime Minister.

In the headline Ruangkrai calls for *NACC* probe into three ministers

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

NACC stands for the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

In the headline *EC* preparing charges against Suthep

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 1, 2009)

EC is the abbreviation of the Election Commission.

In the headline *DSI* poised to take over Santika pub investigation

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

DSI refers to Department of Special Investigaiton.

In the headline *UN* unfazed by slight upturn in opium output

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

UN is the abbreviation of United Nations.

In the headline *BMA* told it can't revoke agreement

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

BMA stands for Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

In the headline Ex-minister slams *govt* priorities

(The Bangkok Post: Feb 3, 2009)

Govt refers to government.

VITAE

VITAE

Name: Miss Nita Prateepchaikul
Date of Birth: December 23, 1984
Place of Birth: Bangkok, Thailand
Address: 4/1385 Sahakorn Village, Saereethai Road, Bangkok 10240

Education Background

2010 Master of Arts in English
Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok
2007 Bachelor of Arts in English
Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok