
Linguistic Divergences in Newspaper's Headlines

Prakash, Dr. Aditya *, Dhawan, Amita **

* Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar, India.

** Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar, India

Abstract

The present research paper investigated the Linguistic divergences existed in the Headlines of the Newspaper. A journalist while scripting Headlines take into consideration the mindset of the readers. In order to put influence on the readers to create a trust for the newspaper they use linguistic deviations to make the headlines unique and different. As a matter of fact, none other factor is as influential as the Language as a medium to convey the message in newspaper be that Hindi, Punjabi or English. Language is the only mode to communicate, interact, share or transfer message. Journalists, in fact, use distinctive writing skills viz figurative language, rhetorical devices to prepare Headlines to make them more concise and concrete for the audience to comprehend. In the present research paper content analyses of Headlines of Three English Newspaper Viz 'The Tribune', 'The Times of India' and 'Hindustan Times' has been done to know the types of diversities existed in the Headlines. Therefore, the present study attempted to analyse the Headlines from linguistic point of view for which a corpus consisted of 450 headlines of English newspaper was taken. The framework developed by Geoffrey N. Leech's and Yu Xueyong, Mardha as cited in Bazza (2012) and Grammatical features suggested by Saxena (2006) was applied for content analyses. The result shows the presence of deviated elements in the headlines.

Key Words: Newspaper Headlines, Deviations, Linguistic levels, English language

Introduction: Rationale of the study

In the era of acute competition, newspapers play a decisive role to introduce or inform people about the products, happenings, general and upcoming events pertaining to different areas. It enlightens everyone via information from which anyone can sap the "cognitive maps" of reality (McNair 2001:21). With its expansion as a source of communication newspaper, be that digital or printed, get full-fledged attention of everyone. Journalist, in order to entice the people, takes up different artifices to produce advertisements as well as news of all kinds in a concise manner. They make use of Linguistic devices viz phonological, semantic, syntactic, morphological and lexical, Rhetorical devices, adequate figurative Language in Slogans, Taglines, and Headlines and so on. Language has a dominant role to play in arousing readers' interest in the news and newspaper advertising. Samuel Johnson, an English poet, essayist, and [lexicographer](#) wrote in his 'Lives of the Poets' (1779-1781)

Language is a dress of thought

William Shakespeare in the second act of his play 'Hamlet' said

'Brevity is the soul of wit.

Phrases, short sentences and clauses leave an eternal impact. Journalists, therefore, prefer to make short catchphrases in the form of headlines, sub-headlines or sentences to convey the information lucidly which gives life to news and which becomes the hallmark of newspaper be that Hindi, Punjabi and English.

Newspaper shapes opinion. It, therefore, must meet the requirements of the readers and Journalists should use the transparent and uncomplicated language (Pape 2005: 50). Customarily, there are many ways to captivate readers' attention but only "Language can play part in structuring and controlling the world" (Greer 2008:97). Thus, along with the linguistic devices Journalist sometimes use deviations to persuade the reader and people get deeply impacted by these deviations. "The focus is on textual transformations-pivots, shifts, deletions insertions" (Jacobs, Daniel 59). "We find new words and phrases ('oatgoodness', 'fairy liquid', 'cookability') and also grammatical deviation such as "A Kwit-Fit Fitter or 'B&Q it' (cook 2001:140).

The press has various streams such as Editorials, Feature articles, sports, Business, Entertainment, regional news, advertisements and so on (Parhi 2008:35) but Headlines of a Newspaper have a climatic role in the language of newspaper (Eldridge 1995: 173). Framing a Headline is a tricky job. It acts like an inscription placed above the storyline and is meant to “summarize the whole story” which can consist of “four to five words in a one –line headline” or it may accommodate “twenty words in three-line headlines”,(Shams 2013:17). “Headlines have persuasive function”(Rhea: 2003: 28),therefore, they must provide a glimpse of a story and should be gimmick enough to let the readers prefer to know the scams by a quick glance at the storyline (Ungerer 2000:48).Hence, while making headlines Journalist “ apply a number of artistic devices to prepare precise attention –seeking , indelible texts having a scope to envelop the unified story in petty words(Reah 2003:32).But in the process of making effective headlines journalist sometimes adopt unusual practices like use of “non- standard structures ,Omission of words”(Reah 2003 :32).They often “omit prepositions and auxiliaries”(Goodman,Graddol 2001 :151) which directly challenge the structure of English Language. Extensive usage of such kinds of variations and the use of informal language is the subject of this research study .As a matter of facts recent variations in English language are happening because of technology. Gorney (2012) in her research paper aforesaid that Texting, E mail and Facebook have given rise to new words, contemporary grammatical changes and some other modern adaptations. These changes are affecting the student’s writing skills in general and in academics in particular. They opt for abbreviated forms, often omit punctuations and ignore capitalization (Aziz and et al 2013) or they sometimes unnecessarily capitalize the word. A massive but novel observation unfolds that after enormous social networking sites well established and illustrious newspapers have also instituted the marvelous usage of deviations in the headlines and sub headlines. Newspaper headlines patterns discourse in sway to summon readers to decipher the way it impersonate the world (Carter 1996:6 (cited in Field 2000)).

Survey of Existing Literature

Headlines of newspaper, Magazine or advertisements aim for efficiency of communication (Tawa: 493).

Apart from well trimmed images they are the most striking element (Holmes and et al: 164)

Journalists in order to immerse the readers make headlines diverse linguistically which leaves an interminable impact on everyone chiefly on student readers. Morphological deviations for instance are shown through “three means of word formation viz: Inflection. Derivation and compounding (Matthews 1991 and Carstairs-McCarthy1992 (cited in Jeffries, McIntyre: 46)).

Language is an accessible, erratic, “conventional system of sounds meant for communication” within a linguistic circle; It is a multiplex system which is reign over by the canons of rules (Tamasi and Antieau 2014). But Journalists in order to empower the value of newspaper have started using linguistic diversities in the forms of features, Deviations and errors which are completely against the norms of a language and which has left an adverse and unfavourable impact on the writing skills of the students generally as well as academically.

Plenteous efforts have been made by scholars to delve deep into the vast panorama of diversities used in analytical studies of literature and language. Li, Xin and Mengchen Shi (2015) analysed the presence of Linguistic deviations in E.E. Cumming’s poetry and found distinctive style of diversities such as peculiar capitalization, decapitalization and “Manipulating Punctuations” are found in Graphological deviation, Neologism through affixation, compounding and conversion in lexical deviations, orthodox words and phrases in morphological rules and transference of meaning is found in semantic deviation.

Karazoun, Ghada Abdelmajid Al (2016) attempted to catalog the linguistic errors committed by EFL students of Jordan while translating the newspaper from Arabic to English. The analyses showed the presence of Lexical and grammatical error which further proved that EFL students have limited knowledge of rules of English newspaper headlines.

Akbari, Elham and Reza Kheirabadi (2015) investigated the linguistic errors in News agencies and Websites of Iran at syntactic, morphological and typographic-orthographic level.

Sadoon, Majid Muhammed (2010) analyzed grammatical errors in O'Neill's Hairy Ape. He found the mistaken use of verbs, Pronouns and Multiple negations. He found verb deletions, lack of punctuations, displacement of one letter with another, deletion of one or two letters with each other were the major cause of ambiguity.

Inspecting the impact of lexical deviations in Pakistani Newspaper on the language of readers Uzair, Muhammad, Arshad Mahmood, Ubaidullah Khan (2012) explored that formations of words due to the impact of society and its culture is intentional rather than accidental. The writers modify words as per the suitability. The study reveals lexical deviations such as the presence of borrowed words, "pluralizations of borrowed words", class change, use of modified suffix, hybridization and some "obsolete words". Praskova, Eva (2009) evaluated the frequently occurring grammatical deviations in 200 Headlines of Tabloids and broadsheets of newspaper and found that most of the headlines lacks articles, determiners, auxiliary verbs. There are words which are not grammatically correct and many headlines are abbreviated in form.

Sharma, Ruchika in her thesis "Linguistic Deviations in Advertising Messages of Chocolates and Beverages: It's Impact Measurement on the Psychology of Children in India" conducted a research to study the impact of linguistic deviations in the slogans of advertising on children consumer. The results exhibit the semantic and grammatical deviations primarily used in the slogans, and gender and age have an impact on kid's recall of brand. The findings of the study substantiate with the chosen model i.e. cognitive development model by Piaget. Stimulation results reinforce the findings. The study was concluded with the view that linguistic deviations actually have an impact on children's identification as well as brand recall. A novel usage of language no doubt give rise to better recall, retention and lure the customer or reader because headlines provide an "outline" on which meanings of news story is gathered (Nodoudhan: 28) but at the same time they get prone to unconventional English.

Petronien, Saul and Žvirblytė Indr studied the Headlines of Online News articles found that in a tendency to simplify headlines journalist often omit information, modify the style and structure of writing and use numerous deviations such as stylistic, semantic and so on. Tan, Ludwin analyses the English language news media and found the divergences appear in the form of errors and features involving Tenses, Nouns, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure and lexis in the text where formal English is expected. Bucaria, Chiara investigated the lexical and syntactic ambiguity in the headlines of newspaper found on websites that results in humour.

Budiarto, Cisillia explored the omission of sentence components in the newspaper headlines under the phrase structure category such as in most of the headlines Verb Phrases, noun phrases, Auxiliary and AUX+VP were missing. Such kinds of omissions make the headlines difficult to understand. The analyses showed that 'Be' form is frequently omitted in the headlines.

Research Methodology

Corpus

The material of this research paper consisted of corpus of 450 headlines which was collected from the three well-established Newspaper, namely, 'The Tribune', 'The Times of India' and 'Hindustan Times' from November 2016 to April 2017. The Headlines were fetched from different sections of the Newspaper such as Educations, Sports, Nation News, Business, Culture. The rationale of selecting of newspaper was easy availability and access to them.

Procedure

In order to analyse the headlines of the Newspaper with respect to the changes in the English language and to bring into practice the research design for investigation purpose Geoffrey N. Leech's linguistic deviation theory and Yu Xueyong's three-dimensional, Grammatical features of Newspaper headlines given by Mardha as cited in Bazza (2012) and Grammatical features suggested by Saxena (2006) were applied. The researcher has gone through many research papers so far as the framework is concerned. After reading Karazoun's A Linguistic Analysis on Errors Committed by Jordanian EFL Undergraduate Students: A Case of News

Headlines in Jordanian Newspapers and Li and Shi's 'A Stylistic study on the Linguistic Deviations in E.E.Cumming's poetry' the researcher decided to analyze the Headlines according to the dimensions given in the models used in these research papers.

According to Leech and Yu Xueyong's three dimensional model, realization, form and semantics are the three dimensions in which realization includes phonology and graphology, form includes grammar and lexicon and semantics denotative and connotative meaning with which analyses of varieties of language can be conducted (Li, Shi 2015). Thus, the headlines of newspaper will be analysed at two levels: realization and form. Martha's features viz The omission of articles, The omission of verbs and auxiliaries, nominalizations, The frequent use of complex noun phrases in subject positions, The omission of both verbs and subjects, The use of short words, The importance of word order, with the most important items placed first and Saxena's (2006) Grammatical features of news headlines viz: numbers should be written as numerals in order to save space and punctuation should be avoided were put to use for analyses of headlines of Newspaper.

Having collected the data consisted of Headlines of three leading newspaper contents analyses of all the headlines was done as per the selected variables and percentage of diversities in the headlines was calculated .The data was tabulated and graphed.

Data Analyses

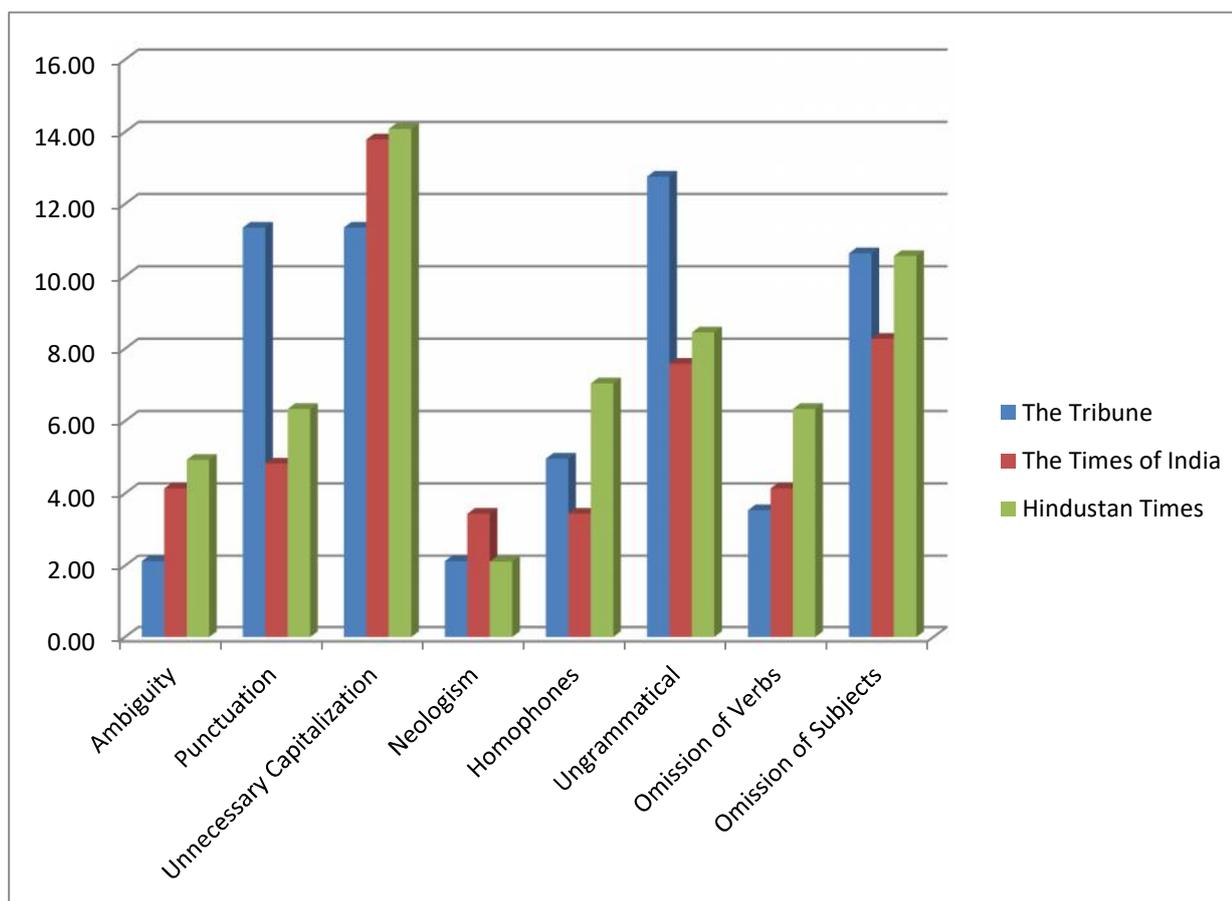
The present research paper analyzes the linguistic diversities in the headlines of newspaper in the form of features, errors and deviations. In the first stage content analyses of headlines of three English Newspaper viz 'The Tribune', 'The Times of India' and 'Hindustan Times' was done from linguistic point of view. Table 1 & 2 presents the result of the analysis.

TABLE-1

Sr.No.	Variables	In % Age		
		The Tribune	The Times of India	Hindustan Times
1	Ambiguity	2.13	4.14	4.93
2	Omission of Punctuation	11.35	4.83	6.34
3	Unnecessary Capitalization	11.35	13.79	14.08
4	Neologism	2.13	3.45	2.11
5	Homophones	4.96	3.45	7.04
6	Ungrammatical Sentences/Phrases	12.77	7.59	8.45
7	Omission of Verbs	3.55	4.14	6.34
8	Omission of Subjects	10.64	8.28	10.56

Table 1 & 2 shows the comparative analyses of diverse linguistic elements in the headlines of newspaper. The linguistic analyses in Table 1 shows that the headlines which were ambiguous were found to be 2% in The Tribune 4% in The Times of Indian and 6% in Hindustan time and omission of punctuation was 11%, 4% and 6% respectively. In the headlines maximum unnecessary capitalization has been used viz 11% in The Tribune, 13% in The Times if India and 14 % in Hindustan Times and ungrammatical sentences occurred 12%, 7% and 8% in respective newspaper. The overall percentage of Neologistic words i.e. 2%, 3% and 2% used in the newspaper showed the deliberative use of changed forms of English words. It is also proved from the analyses that journalist often omit verbs and subjects to make the headlines short and to save space which is against the norms of grammar. The study demonstrate the percentage of omitted verbs which were found to be 3% ,4% and 6% and omitted subjects were 10% ,8% and 10% respectively in The Tribune, The Times of India and Hindustan Times. Apart from the linguistics elements from Phonological, Graphological and Syntactical point

of view, Semantic element i.e. Homophone is also used by the journalist and the percentage of homophones in the headlines is 4%, 3% and 7% accordingly.



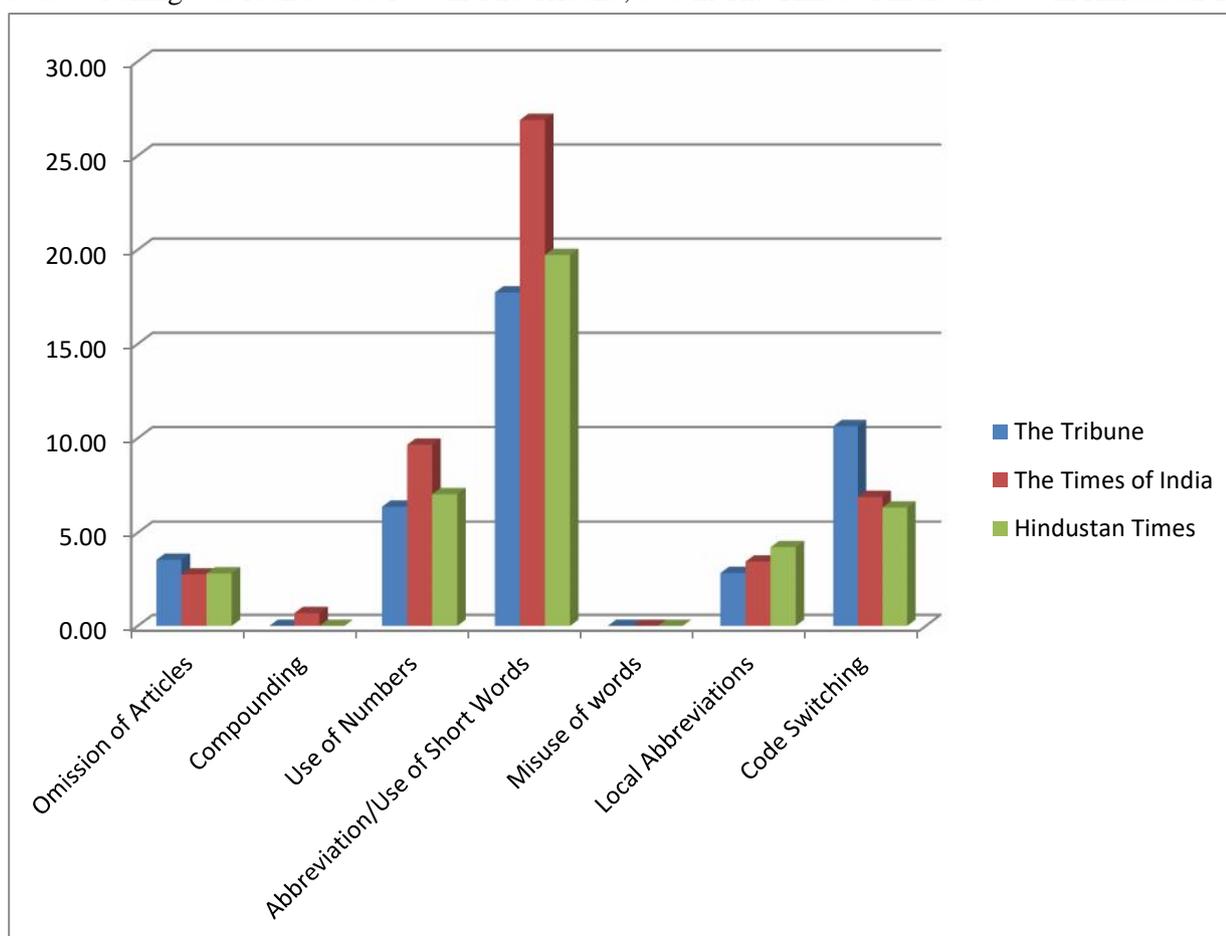
Furthermore Table 2 also showed the percentage of diverse linguistic elements

The TABLE-2

Sr.No.	Variables	The Tribune	The Times of India	Hindustan Times
9	Omission of Articles	3.55	2.76	2.82
10	Compounding	0.00	0.69	0.00
11	Use of Numbers	6.38	9.66	7.04
12	Abbreviation/Use of Short Words	17.73	26.90	19.72
13	Misuse of words	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	Local Abbreviations	2.84	3.45	4.23
15	Code Switching	10.64	6.90	6.34

Table 2 showed the occurrence of local abbreviation at the highest level i.e. 17% in The Tribune, 26% in The Times of India and 19% in Hindustan Times and use of short words were found to be 17% , 26% and 19% respectively.0.69% Compounding was used in The times of India only. However the articles which were

omitted in the headlines of newspaper were found to be 3%, 2% and 2% in the newspaper. Lastly, apart from the linguistic elements present in the models, one discrete element was also observed in the headlines i.e. Code switching. Hymnes defines code Switching as an ordinary term used for “two or more language or variety of language or even speech style” (Liu 4) while Bokamba (1989) defines Code switching as the blend of two or more “words, phrases and sentences” from different syntactic “(sub) systems”. The percentage of code switching was found to be 10% in The Tribune, 6 % in The Times of India and 6% in Hindustan Times.



Conclusion

Headline is an important part of newspaper. It summarizes the story, help readers to evaluate the news and make newspaper more attractive to readers (Fourie 2006:360) and help in “thrusting” readers’ viewpoint towards the message. The headlines with diverse linguistic elements are no doubt are noticeable and increase the likelihood of buying the newspaper but at the same time while framing headlines standard norms should definitely be taken care of to get right knowledge. In words of Baddock (1988) newspapers are the derivative of new language study which acquaint us with discrete “communication skills” and which is not available in “conventional language learning material”. Thus in order to learn different skills learning should be accurate. It is the prime duty of journalists not to compromise with language norms for petty space issues.

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