

# PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES

## MASS MEDIA TITLE AS COMPRESSED TEXT

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### Abstract

The article regards the notion of compressed texts and their specific features. The compressed character of a Ukrainian mass media title is achieved by means of ellipsis, semantic compression, abbreviation. All these are typical for the English title as well but the last one also has such additional possibilities of some auxiliary words omission (Verb in a multi-word predicate), functional parts of speech (article or prepositions) which make the English title brighter and shorter.

**Keywords:** text, compressed text, mass media, article title.

The article deals with an aspect of a much wider problem – contemporary Ukrainian language compressed genres of mass media style in comparison with English ones. This problem can be considered a topical one because linguistic resources are becoming increasingly important due to technical problems, due to extra-need to transfer larger amounts of data in the same parameters. So economical language is important in terms of technical conditions of communication and psychologists also point out that a brief text is seen faster and is more memorable.

Compressed texts (CT) are studied by a lot of linguists; among them we should mention the papers by E. Alyanskaya, P. Dyundik, E. Panchenko and others. As the basic definition we use the one suggested by E. Panchenko which is as follows: «Compressed text is a message, objectivized as any other text in written form constructed by shortening a full text or originally created as a short one due to the need for further unfolding in a lengthy text" [4, p. 306]. Following this definition we view as CT a deliberately reduced text volume that can be widened or enlarged under certain conditions. The existence of the abovementioned papers still leaves important aspects to be discussed, Ukrainian mass media titles among them.

The aim of the article is to compare the ways of mass-media title compression in Ukrainian and English. To achieve this aim it is necessary to solve the following tasks: to analyze the theoretical background of the issue under discussion; to accumulate the necessary linguistic facts for the analysis; to describe the ways of compression from the point of view of text linguistics and theory of translation.

The material of investigation has been taken from such source as the newspaper "Kyiv Post". Titles are considered to be sentences full of meaning, displaying the tendency to economical means usage, the choice of specific syntactic structures, skipping words which meaning can be restored or known to the reader etc. Unlike other compressed texts the titles characteristics rely on the subsequent text. The title, according to some linguists, plays the role of mediator between the reader and the author of the text and in this function it should express the essence of conceptual content-text information, and meet such requirements as advertising ability and the greater ability to influence the reader.

The main specific linguistic and functional features of compressed texts in Ukrainian mass media discourse are high volume compression of text and condensed information which is achieved by using semantic (short message information structure, implicit information, presupposition, implicature discourse initial predictions issues) and stylistic compression (stylistic figures and tropes). To reduce the amount of text is also possible due to lexical (univerbs, abbreviations, blendings, foreign words, phraseologisms), grammar (use of certain parts of speech, substitutions), graphics (image reduction, various fonts) and syntax (elliptic, incomplete, composite, partialized sentences) compression types. In CT mass media discourse uses diverse means of compression, unlike other discourses (scientific, official, professional) where the emergence of such condensation of ellipsis and shortenings is unacceptable in terms of style.

In certain aspects compressed title texts are identical to fiction, especially when their functions are concerned: informative, evaluative, emotional impact on the consciousness of readers. The leading features of CT include combination of various types of compression in one product and the repeated use of the same means of condensation, providing the highest level of compactness in terms of information and volume. Increased saturation of information helps to minimize the plan of expression and causes the appearance of a smaller text.

The title of newspaper articles as a text representative conveys certain information about the events occurring in the world, that in some ways are related to the content of objective reality. This provision is essential to establish semantic features of the title.

Newspaper articles headlines semantics is structured around support members *who, what, where, when*, as a result of collapse of all components of the text. The choice of these elements in the title, which are related to the content of the text, determines the semantic type headings:

- 1) title-summary (informative-neutral and informative evaluation);
- 2) title-indicator;
- 3) title-localizer.

The title-summary is characterized by maximum availability of basic text elements *who, what, where*,

when, which form compressed meaning. These titles vary depending on the degree of objectivity transfer content and coexist as a) informative-neutral or b) informative evaluative. Informative-neutral title fulfills a purely informative function. For example, the title

*Нові штрафи ДАІ покращать екологію Києва* – *New traffic fines to improve Kyiv environment*

informs the reader about the new higher fines of road patrol. This group may include the following titles

*Безпечний секс влетить у копійчку* – *Safe sex costs a pretty penny*;

*Земфіра скаже Києву «спасибі»* – *Zemfira to thank Kyiv*;

*Кожне чоловіче серце починає вмирати в 40 років* – *Every man's heart starts dying at 40*;

*Рейтинг надійності банків* – *Reliability rating of the largest banks*.

Evaluative informative title is a generalized evaluative content of the text: *When good actors go bad*. By the adjective *good* the title gives a positive assessment of the actors who received Oscars for the roles performed, and *go bad* points to others. So, thanks to evaluative adjectives *good* and *bad* the title also expresses the author's assessment of the events referred to in the text. There is the attitude of the author in the following examples:

*Український метал виявився крихким* – *Ukrainian metal seems too fragile* the adjective with emphasizing particle *too fragile* witnesses a very low metal quality;

*У Новий рік за розумною ціною* – *Affordable New Year. Affordable* – a sort of an average Joe can afford.

Title-indicator indicates the subject of the message, but does not contain information that allows predicting the content of the article. The said type of the title may indicate a subject:

*Патріоти за сумісництвом* – *Part-time patriots* ;  
or a certain situation

*Кому я винен – усім вибачаю* – *Of Wealth and Death*.

*Фізкульт-інсульт* – *Physical insult*.

*Залізна система* – *Smiles of steel*.

*Нагороди переможцям* – *Awards for the winners*.

To find out what exactly the title informs, the reader should refer to the text. Title-indicator can also be called space-time coordinates or other situations:

*Пак Ро-Бюк: На Сході є не тільки Росія* – *Park Ro-Buyug: There is more than Russia in the East*.

*Український виверт 22 для агента 007* – *Ukraine's Catch 22 for Agent 007*.

Title-localizer has a complex form and often ends with three dots. This form of the title draws the reader's attention and encourages them to get acquainted with all the text because the title makes it impossible to predict the content of the message. Example:

*Художньо-світлові ілюзії столічної влади* – *Come on, business, light my fire...*

*Мій подарунок для тебе – це... Gifts better than ourselves*.

*Токіо на зв'язку...* – *Tokyo is talking*.

*Голландці говорять...* – *The Dutch are talking ....*

The examples show that these titles contain place name or element that defines the spatial coordinate's situation [2]. The composition of the support elements of the titles of newspaper articles differ. This difference can be explained by the functions they perform, and the means used to create the title data functions. We can say that the title structure is characterized by most compressed extent and can be positioned as a classic example of it. In addition to external means to attract attention of the reader (large print, graphic selection) the title of English publications present a number of lexical and grammatical techniques:

1) to draw the reader's attention to the main subject of thought the article is usually omitted:

*Russian Athlete Winning Prize*;

2) to use the elliptical shape of the passive omission of the auxiliary verb to be to describe the events both in the past and in the present tense; performance is usually expressed by Indefinite or Continuous forms:

*Houses Smashed by Hurricane*;

*Paris Protest March Staged by Students*;

3) *Verbs prevailing*:

*Floods Hit Scotland*;

*Exports to Russia Rising*.

3) nicknames or shortened personal names are used instead of names of certain politicians, actors etc.:

*Arnie's Uphill Climb* (Arnold Schwarzenegger);

*Winnie's Life* (Winston Churchill);

4) commonly used abbreviations and various shortenings:

*UNESCO and TripAdvisor Are Working Together*;

*WHO Statement To the Council of Europe*;

*NASA Finds Warmer Ocean Speeding Greenland Glacier Melt*.

Typically, these reductions have long come into use and are not explained in the text [3, p. 3].

Title as an elliptical sentence is used in order to make it more descriptive and emotional; journalists use the elliptical design, the structure close to conversational.

Elliptic headlines are formed by the omission of elements that are irrelevant. The idea of an unnamed member of the sentence is established with their own meaning and grammatical structure.

The informative message may have irrelevant components: 1) an auxiliary verb; 2) a link verb; 3) one of the main parts of the sentence [3, p. 40]. One of the kinds of headlines, expressed by elliptical structure is the use of unfinished construction, original and main feature of which is, incompleteness of their semantic and syntactic structure. Such sentences arising from certain elements omission always have communicative reason and necessity. Incomplete title is indicated by dots that draw the reader's attention:

*When Calamity Strikes....*

Widespread use of elliptical sentences in the headlines of newspaper articles explains their ability to express an opinion in the most concise form and create intrigue. Elliptic headlines, first, correspond to the basic requirements which are put forward to the headlines – namely brevity. Second, it allows focusing on the most important in the message, freeing it from all

secondary that enhances the efficiency of the notification and facilitates its perception. Segmented sentence are allowed in the title. In search of linguistic tools to enhance efficiency journalists are increasingly turning to segmentation when the whole statement is divided into pieces that quickly and easily perceived "separate pieces", not entirely. This process of the division is carried out in various ways:

*Jamie Oliver Is Taking On The Biggest Food Challenge. Has He Bitten Off More Than He Can Chew?*

- question mark:

*Depressed? Try Gardening as Therapy;*

*Shameless or Brilliant? We Really Can't Tell;*

- exclamation mark:

*Unthinkable! Steve Davis as World Champion Again;*

- three dots:

*Good To Meet You ... Wendy Swan*

- dash:

*Nomura – Markets Would Be Relaxed About Lab Victory So Long As There's a Clear Result;*

- column:

*Ala Bashir: Being Saddam's Doctor.*

Segmented structures are characterized by extreme brevity and substantial capacity, so they do not accidentally have been actively used in the titles of the press. A variety of cuttings, which is very common in titles, may impede their understanding. Most of these reductions are subsequently decrypted. However, there are times when the most common cuttings, familiar to readers of American and British newspapers, are not even explained in the text. Abbreviations common in English and American press can be divided into several main groups. The first and largest group comprises reduced names of parties, various organizations and offices. Example:

*The Nam's Next Anti-Union Goal* (NAM = National Association of Manufacturers – *Національна асоціація промисловців* = НАП) – *Наступний антиоб'єднуючий хід Національної асоціації промисловців*.

American typical shortenings Gov = Governor – *Губернатор*; D.A = District Attorney – *Прокурор*; Sen = Senator – *Сенатор*; Rep = Representative – *Член палати представників*.

Shortened name of various organizations: U.N. = United Nations – *Організація Об'єднаних Націй* – ООН. NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization – *НАТО*; WFTU = World Federation of Trade Unions – *Світова профспілкова спільнота*.

The second group abbreviations often met in the titles of British and American newspapers is reduced names or nicknames of familiarly known political or public figures. Such reductions greatly complicate understanding of headings and with rare exceptions (*FDR* = *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*; *GBS* = *George Bernard*

*Shaw*; *RLS* = *Robert Louis Stevenson*) are mainly not registered in dictionaries. For example:

*No Sign Of "Flexible" Mac* (Mac = *Макміллан*) – *Ніяких ознак гнучкості у Макміллана*;

*Dief Lends JFK A Helping Hand* (Dief = *Diefenbaker*, JFK = *John F. Kennedy*) – *Дифенбейкер простягає руку допомоги Джону Кеннеді*;

*Rocky And The Cuban Crisis* (Rocky = *Nelson Rockefeller*) – *Нельсон Рокфеллер та економічна криза на Кубі*.

The phenomenon is completely uncharacteristic for our mass media and in each case instead of reduction one has to translate the name completely, and replace the names of nicknames [1, c. 134]. The third group of omission is reduced geographical names. Most often they are found in American newspapers. As Ukrainian headlines these reductions are translated completely. One should only remember the rules of transcription of foreign geographic names in Ukrainian.

*20, 000 Pennsy Workers Set Strike Sunday* (Pennsy = *Pennsylvania* – *Пенсільванія*) – *20 000 робітників Пенсільванії вийшли на страйк у неділю*.

It is natural that the above considered main groups do not exhaust the whole variety of reductions in British and American newspapers. In fact, one can find reductions of any words or phrases, sometimes quite unexpected. Such reduction can greatly complicate the understanding and translation of the title, because the decoding of virtually nothing is guided entirely by relying on containing the transcript or context, or that which makes it possible to guess what word could be reduced.

Conclusions. The compressed character of a Ukrainian mass-media title is achieved by means of ellipsis, semantic compression, abbreviation. All these are typical for the English title as well but the last one also has such additional possibilities of some auxiliary words omission (verb in a multi-word predicate), functional parts of speech (article or prepositions) which makes the English title brighter and shorter.

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