Media Translation Lectures

Features of the News Headlines

- News headlines have some unique features that characterize them from other forms.

- These techniques are intended to make such an impact on readers, so they will be interested in reading the body of the news articles.

- The headline can reveal much about the ideology and aims of an individual paper

- There are some distinguishing features that can be outlined in newspapers headlines, and they are closely related to their purpose.

- With a minimum of words, they aim at getting the courtesy of readers.

- Their shape, structure, and choice of words play a central role in attracting the readers and thus manipulating their choice of articles because their aim is to win potential customers.

- The idea that a writer wants to express is governed by the words and expressions he/she uses for the headline and by the audience, he/she is targeting.

 - The most prominent features of news headlines are going to be reviewed with examples taken from newspapers agencies online.

1.Ellipsss الحذف

As started previously, headlines have a distinct type of register that incorporates several features on the top of which is ellipsis.

_this features is intended to raise the curiosity of the reader in identifying what is missing and finalizing his interest to the very and of the article.

_usually, the words omitted from headlines include function words (grammatical words that don't carry internet meaning and their purpose is to add to the syntax rather than the sense of a sentence) determiners (some, this, that, the, a, more, much, either, neither), pronouns (he, they, it), auxiliary verbs (be, is, am, are), pronunciations marks and titles(Mrs., sir, lord).

An example from the BBS news, to June 2016:

Bangladesh arrests 900 crackdown on Islamic militants.

If this headlines converted into a proper sentence, then the sentence would read: Bangladesh police say they have arrested 900 people as part of a crackdown on militants following a series of deadly attacks.

2.Word Play(play on words) Pun/Punning ألتلاعب بالكلام .

A substantial part of newspaper language is word play or pun .Words that refer to different meanings in English can be used in a comical and entertaining way.

An example would be:

Police found drunk in street.

This headline plays with the word "drunk".

This headline can hear two different meanings:

One is that

     The Police were found drunk in the street.

The other is that

     The police found a drunk man in the street.

For example:

Mom watches as cruise sail away with kids on broad.

This headline appeared on the BBC 7NY, 28April 2016.

-When reading it, one would have the impression that:

The ship takes the children away on purpose.

-But when the reader reads the rest of the article, he will know that:

It was the mother's fault because she didn't get on board before the deadline the cruise ship has made clear for every passenger on board.

3. Noun Strings:سلاسل ألاسم

The use of a row of nouns is also common in headline

-Noun Phrase can be stand as a noun on their own, but frequently include other words such as determiners numbers(a*det. Thousand*no .dollars*n.)

-Adjectives used as modifiers (these fast cars)2modifiers and a noun.

-Noun Phrase can also be pronouns.

Example from Al Monitor 1May2016:

Egypt's next national security threat: All the single ladies?

Not only does this example consists of nouns but also carries a great deal of ambiguity making the readers interested to know more about this threat and how it can be linked to single ladies.

4.Alliteration:ألجناس

-alliteration happens when preliminary consonants sound in two or more adjacent words or syllables are repeated.

-this type of gimmicks it often used in poetry as well as newspapers.

-newspapers use it do draw reader's attention and make it more outstanding.

For example,:(Al monitor, 26may2016)

Saudi Arabia's past-oil plan enters slippery stop.

Both the "S" are "P" are repeated.

5. Vagueness:ألغموض

May be the most prominent feature in headlines in being ambiguous, thus, making the reader wondering if these is more information to reveal.

For example:

In the Arabic version of the CNN (بالعربي) on the 11 April 2016 we read:

" مواقف ورموز متشابهه ..."بالصور..بغداد وطهران في يوم القدس العالمي

Any reader would wonder what those"مواقف" are. Future, still, when we read the article it refers to

 are. Future, still, when we read the article it refers to

الرموز التي رفعت أو احترقت أو أهينت من قبل المحتقلين

6.Verb Changes and Lexical Density:تغييرات الفعل والكثافة المعجمية

-Verbs are often changed in headlines.

For example, the simple tense is used instead of the continuous or perfect tense and the infinitive id used for the future.

-Loaded words are often used in headlines, they are words that carry specific strong implication.

-That is to say, they carry am emotional load beyond their literal meaning-Example from Al monitor (2nd May 2016)

*Congress rolls out red carpet in Washington for jilted GCC.

*Saudi IS members killing their own relative.

-What is stated above represent the important features of news headline that are adopted for mostly marking aspects or creating some ideological influence on the readership.

-the features stated above do not make a headline pretty recognizable but also urge the reader to simulate his/her analytical and investigating skills to deduce the meaning and comprehend the news text.

-Having listed the most recognizable characteristics of the headlines, it becomes clear that the language of the news discourse is not innocent; because it violates a great deal of the linguistic standard rules in order to achieve a special effect, that is to say, it is after manipulated, reconstructed and loaded with several ideological concepts and stances. This control is achieved by power-holders, editors or translator

Example(1):

الرمادي.. مدينه مفخخة بالموت وتحذيرات من عودة النازحين

-In this headline, the original headline appears to be a very strong warning sign giving the impression that(AL Ramadi is a death trap for anyone who wants to enter it)

-this is one of the important characters used by news writes, lexical density, to draw the reader's attention.

-on the other hand, we notice that the translation is more moderate in tone and gives a direct hint to main topic of the article. We can say the translator followed the substitution strategy to express the difference in the expression.

Example(2):

ST :   ألعلويون بين التقية والعرفان الفلسفي

TT: who are syria's Alawites?

-It is clear that the translator modifies the entire headline; this can be attributed to culture differences.

-In the ST headline, the writer assumes that the reader has a background knowledge about the Alawites.

-The translator used an interrogative structure as an introduction to the main topic of the article.