

Discursive strategies in headlines and leads of online articles: intention vs. realization

Digesting Crises in Europe (DICE):
Deconstructing and Constructing Media Texts in Dialogue -
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Introduction

The intention of articles in modern media:

- ✓ To comply with the message.
- ✓ To fit the target audience.
- ✓ To predetermine the perception of news.

Realization by answering:

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

The headline of an article

What?

Text indicating the nature of the article below it.

How?

Attention-getting headlines

Source:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/headline-writing-tips>

Good headlines



Effective words

Adjectives and nouns:

amazing, disturbing, fearless, irresistible, stunning, etc.

ingredients, lessons, principles, strategies, techniques, etc.

Call-to-action words

beautify, eliminate, generate, increase, move, overcome, shape, use, etc.

Guide definitions

A 100 ways to, beginner's level, user-friendly, etc.

Positive vs. Negative words

easiest, ever, hottest, most, etc.
avoid, never, no one, worst, etc.

6 easy-to-use headline formulas that grab attention in secs

1. **Number + Adjective + Keyword + Promise**
2. **How to + Action + Keyword + Promise**
3. **Definition + Guide to + Action + Keyword + Promise**
4. **Positive Word + Number and/or Noun + Keyword + Promise or Details**
5. **Negative Word + Action + Keyword**
6. **Call-to-Action + Keyword + Promise**

Example:

Subject:

“shaving cows”

Either:

“How to Shave a Cow”

Or:

**“10 Simple Ways You Can Shave a Cow
Wherever You Are”**

The lead of an article

Who? Journalist to audience

What? The most important part of a news story.

Where? Online media, social networks, blogs, etc.

When? Preferably on a daily basis!

Why? Audiences not willing to read beyond the first paragraph (and even sentence)

How? Grab the audience's interest!

Source:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/05/>

Example:

A journalist writing to an audience claims that the most important part of a news story in online media should be written on a daily basis because audiences are not willing to read beyond the first sentence if their interest is not grabbed in a few words!

Though ridiculous – the lead is effective!

Basic strategies (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44-45)

1. **Reference or nomination:** How are social actors, objects, phenomena and events named and referred to linguistically?
2. **Predication:** Which characteristics and features are attributed to the actors, objects and phenomena?
3. **Argumentation:** How are claims of truth justified?
4. **Perspectivization:** How is the point of view of the producer of a text positioned?
5. **Intensifying and mitigating:** To what extent are the force and status of utterances modified?

Practice



Microsoft Word
7 - 2003 Document

Additional reading

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