Creative Headlines in Dailies: A Comparative Review

Kavitha Vamanan

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Abstract

With the Advent of modernization, there is a vast change in the display of headlines in dailies. Newspaper headlines deliver the relative significance of a news story to create attention amongst readers and aid to portray the frame of mind of the story. The objective of this study is to examine how the front-page headlines visually determine the news value and grasp readers' attention. Five newspaper headlines from the Front page of five English dailies - Hindustan Times, The Asian Age, The Telegraph, The Free Press Journal and The Tribune was analyzed for a period of January 02nd to January 06th, 2018 by means of Qualitative content analysis. The analysis shows that each newspaper acclimatizes creative ingredients akin to colored headlines, text against colored backgrounds, navigations, bold typefaces and headline width to clutch attention and visual appeal amongst readers. These firm changes in displaying creative headlines visually establish the news value.

Keywords: dailies, creative headlines, modernization, news value, visual appeal

Introduction

Newspapers play a decisive role in our routine life. The most eye-catchy nuts and bolts present in a newspaper are Imageries and Headlines. Headlines direct readers to stories and embark the significance of news. Nir (1993) says headline has ''incite the reader to read the entire story and to draw the attention''. "Newspaper headlines are designed by headline writers as they exemplify the spirit of the news story" according to (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; Scheufele, 2000). "Readers can influence by the size of the Newspaper headlines" (Carol & McCombs, 2003, p. 37). (Pfau, 1995; Tannenbaum, 1953) confirms that "Reader insight of a news report can depend on its headline". Paul LaRocque (2003) claims that Good headline has to "capture the essence of the story and interest of the readers. Headline writers have their own obstacles such as space, type size, time and limits on their own abilities - vocabulary, imagination, creativity and knowledge of the language". (Stovall, 2002) remarks that Headlines "have unique visual nature for capturing readers interest, which distinguish itself from the remaining text". Creativity made changes in displaying headlines in newspapers. Now days, there is no certain rules for the headlines. Years back, Newspaper displays the headlines in small points, single deck and bold caps now the trend gets transformed by adding creative ingredients to the headlines to make more tempting.

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Objective of the Study

To examine how the front page headlines visually determine the news value and grasp readers' attention.

Methodology

Five headlines from Front page of five English dailies - Hindustan Times, The Asian Age, The Telegraph, The Free Press Journal and The Tribune are observed for a period of January 02nd to January 06th, 2018. Overall 25 samples culled from the front page of these English dailies for the study. Qualitative content analysis is found as an effectual method for analyzing the headlines. Each headline is examined in five frames - Typeface style, Headline Width, Headline Weight, Headline Props and Creative Props.

Findings and Analysis

TYPEFACE STYLE

Typeface Style	Hindustan Times	The Asian Age	The Telegraph	The Free Press Journal	The Tribune
Serif	-	5	-	-	5
Sans Serif	5	5	5	5	-
Upper Case	1	-	-	5	-
Lower Case	4	5	5	-	5

TABLE-1: Hindustan Times, The Telegraph, The Free Press Journal use Sans Serif fonts for the headlines. The Asian Age use both Serif and San Serif and The Tribune use Serif typeface. Lower case is preferred by most of the newspapers than upper case. **San serif with lowercase typeface style is more appealing to the readers compared to serif.**

HEADLINE WIDTH

TABLE-2: Among the five English dailies two newspapers use both 6- 4 columns and other three highlight the importance of the news report for its readers using four columns. Single, Two and three deck headlines are used by these dailies. Multiple and four decks not often used. The newspaper which displayed in **four or more columns has more importance than stories of one or two columns.**

No.of Columns	Hindustan Times	The Asian Age	The Telegraph	The Free Press Journal	The Tribune
8 - 7	-	-	-	-	-
6 - 5	-	3	-	3	-
4 - 3	5	2	5	2	5
2 - 1	-	-	-	-	-

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Decks	Hindustan Times	The Asian Age	The Telegraph	The Free Press Journal	The Tribune
1	-	1	-	2	-
2	1	1	5	3	3
3	3	1	-	-	1
4	1	1	-	-	1
Multiple	-	1	-	-	-

HEADLINE WEIGHT

Headline Weight	Hindustan Times	The Asian Age	The Telegraph	The Free Press Journal	The Tribune
Light	-	-	-	-	-
Normal	-	-	-	-	-
Bold	-	4	-	1	1
Ultra Bold	5	1	5	4	4

TABLE-3: Headline Weight is how blacker (heavier) the headline is. Out of five dailies except The Asian Age other dailies highlights the headline in Ultra Bold. The Asian Age daily prefers Bold but use Ultra Bold for most important stories. The Free Press Journal and The Tribune prefer Ultra Bold but rarely use Bold. An **ultra bold typeface brings out the importance of news story than bold typeface.**

HEADLINE PROPS

Headline Props	Hindustan Times	The Asian Age	The Telegraph	The Free Press Journal	The Tribune
Kicker	-	3	-	2	-
Strapline	5	2	-	1	4
Navigation	-	-	-	1	-

TABLE-4: Strapline is used by most of the newspapers underneath the headline to **spotlight the significance of the headline**. The Asian Age and The Free Press Journal use Kicker - above the headline as **supporting headline** with the point size smaller than the main headline. To emphasize the subject of the news story navigator is hardly ever used by these dailies.

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CREATIVE PROPS

Newspapers	Creative Props
Hindustan Times	Both the word of a Headline and strapline in color
The Asian Age	Kicker against colored background
The Telegraph	-
The Free Press Journal	Word of a Headline in color and Kicker against colored background.
The Tribune	-

TABLE-5: To **make headlines more creative and visually alluring** kicker, Strap line and navigator are set against colored background and few headlines are set in colors – either a word of a headline in color or the strapline / Kicker in color.

Conclusion

Innovation brings changes in the appeal of headlines in dailies. Headline itself is a combination of key words from a news story yet now days instead of single color headline either a particular keyword is highlighted in color or supporting headlines displays in color in an imaginative way. In conclusion, the study indicates that there were firm changes in displaying headlines. Each newspaper acclimatizes different styles in terms of Typeface, Headline Width and weight and in the usage of Headline and Creative Props. To clutch attention and visual appeal amid readers most of the dailies exploit creative elements akin to colored headlines, text against colored backgrounds, bold typefaces and navigations. These creative headlines visually limelight the value of a news story.

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