

Journalistic style / journalese

Function – to **inform** and **instruct**, provide information, facts.

No commentary or persuasion, no emotive colouring or personal bias. **Objectivity**.

Clear, unambiguous, condensed expression.

Shared authorship, lack of stylistic idiosyncrasy.

→ **Newspaper Reporting** (cf. Crystal & Davy) – a genuine journalistic style. Short hard news, announcements, classified advertisements, headlines.

Characteristic features (→ Galperin):

- **specific vocabulary**

Mostly unmarked and **standard** lexis, but also specialised political and economic terms, professional expressions; in headlines, quotations and interviews: colloquial and slang expressions.

Standardised expressions – **clichés**. Functioning as terms, they produce required associations, prevent misunderstanding, speed up writing and make it easier because they are used as prefabricated pieces of language.

Overused clichés: e.g. *bitter end*, *calm before the storm*, *long arm of the law*, ...

Redundancy of expression: e.g. *in view of the fact that* (= *since*), *at present time* (= *now*), *a large proportion of* (= *many*), *for a period of*, *short space of time*, *dates back from*, *it is interesting to note that*, ...

Substitution by synonyms to **avoid redundancy**: *indicate*, *observe*, *state*, *explain*, *report*, *continue*, *add*, *declare*, *point out that*, *express the view/opinion* – all used instead of *say*.

Tendency to use **internationalisms**, **long words**: more abstract, vaguer. E.g. *assumption*, *conclusion*, *assertion*, *expectation*, *requirement*, *implementation*, *argument*, *principle*, *controversy*, etc.

Acronyms (*EU*, *NATO*, *USAF*, *UNHCR*, *PPP*, *GDP*, *PLO*, *AFL*, *WTO*, ...).

Neologisms (*Irangate*, *reaganomics*, *missile*, *highjacker*, ...)

Semantic condensation:

reported a better-than-expected 9.7 % increase, *jobless claims*, *poverty-stricken areas*, *Japan's current-account surplus*, *anti-globalization protesters*, ...

Complex **premodification** and **postmodification** (*a hoped-for deal*).

Premodifying Saxon genitive (*The University of New York's Patrick Dulfer*, *Germany's Chancellor*).

Polysemy in English.

- **specific syntactic constructions**

Preference of **non-finite (participial) constructions** to dependent clauses, **paratactic sentences** to hypotactic. Frequent **epenthetic clauses**.

Simple sentences more common than complex and even compound ones (at least in reporting journalism).

- **headlines**

Headlines:

Need to be short, concise and to some extent grammatically and lexically predictable.

Some words or names are put into **initial form**.

Present simple form of verbs for past events, **infinitive** for the future. **Auxiliary verbs dropped.**

Abbreviations, hyphenation, colons, figures, word-play, ...

Role of graphology:

- various print (letter) sizes are used, the large ones to focus the reader's attention on the main items of interest; headlines, sub-headlines, first word in capitals, ...
- shorter paragraphs (frequent indentation), short and narrow column lines.

The purpose of grading type-size, short paragraphs and narrow columns: to enhance readability.

- punctuation: omission of commas where possible.

Features of journalese:

headline, the first ('lead') paragraph (to summarise and begin to tell the story), **byline** (sometimes includes the original source), **categorisation of participants** (name preceded by a general adjunct noun or adjective), **explicit time and place locators, facts and figures, direct or indirect quotations, impersonal style, frequent passives, ...**

Quotations – to demonstrate objectivity, to make the text more expressive and interesting by getting closer to the medium of speech.

→ **Style of Publicism** – **subjectivity, opinion, evaluation, comment.**

Feature articles, leaders, editorials, reviews.

Complex and compound sentences.

Language of advertising

The **brand name** is presented in -

- the *body copy* (= the main text)
- the *signature line* (= the bottom-line summary)
- the *illustration* of the product.

Similar varieties (the functions of offering, selling, announcing):

political speeches, sermons, announcements, warnings, legal notices etc.

Commercial advertising employs other varieties.

Lexicon:

- vivid words (*new, fresh, bright*)
- concrete (*soft*)
- positive (*safe, cheap, extra*)
- unreserved (*best, leading, perfect, excellent*).

Grammar:

- conversational style
- ellipsis
- often vagueness (*She 's a fan.*)

Figurative expressions, deviant graphology, strong sound effects (e.g. rhythm, alliteration, rhymes in slogans), word-play, idioms, jargon.

Genres of advertising:

Commercial advertising (TV, radio), classified ads (newspaper), ...

Different devices and locations (billboards, leaflets, handbills, catalogues, posters, placards, sandwich boards, signs, tickets, wrapping papers, ...).

Newspaper Headlines

Associated Press, April/May 2004:

Ex-nurse pleads guilty in 13 patient deaths
Last Oldsmobile Rolls Off Assembly Line
9/11 Commission Questions Bush, Cheney
Soldier Sisters Decline Iraq Return
U.S. Forces Renew Strikes in Falluja
CBS airs alleged U.S. abuse of Iraqis
Release of Military Coffin Photos Causes Stir
Iraq prisoner images anger Arabs, Bush
Bush defends declaring end to Iraq combat
Williams Could Still Face Retrial, Prison
Former Mafia Kingpin Badalamenti Dies
Prince CD Sparks Debate
Buffett Say Berkshire Feels Inflation
Escaped Iraqi Captive Hamill in Germany
Fast-spreading 'Sasser' worm strikes PCs
Militiamen Attack U.S. Troops in Najaf
Red Cross sought action on prisoner abuse
Aides: Bush Upset With Rumsfeld on Prison
Rumsfeld Pressed Over Jail Abuse
Car bombing kills six in Central Baghdad
Productivity grows, jobless claims drop
Yankees Balk at 'Spider-Man' Ads on Bases
Californian Man Recovers After Nail Gun Mishap

Lidové noviny, 6 May 2004:

Nepokoje v Thajsku škodí turistice
Propouštění na dráze si vyžádá víc peněz
Stát: Smír s Nomurou není možný
Ministr: Případ Jukos teprve začal
Firmám hrozí milionové pokuty
Škromach chystá „bič“ na firmy
Bush: Mučení vězňů je odporné
Riceová: Litujeme toho, co se stalo
K boji proti překupníkům s lístky se přidal magistrát
Ostravští Romové míří do Británie