

**«ҰЛЫ ОТАН СОҒЫСЫ
ЖЫЛДАРЫНДАҒЫ
ҚАЗАҚ ӘДЕБИЕТІ
ЖӘНЕ ЖАУЫНГЕР АҚЫН
ТӘШІБАЙ ӘЛМҰХАМБЕТОВ
ШЫҒАРМАШЫЛЫҒЫ»**

**республикалық ғылыми-
практикалық конференция
материалдары**



«Ұлы Отан соғысы жылдарындағы қазақ әдебиеті және жауынгер ақын Тәшібай Әлмұхамбетов шығармашылығы» Республикалық ғылыми-практикалық конференция материалдары. – Алматы: «Экономика», 2010. 184 бет.

Жауапты шығарушы: Ж.Бекболатұлы – э.ғ.к., доцент

Редакциялық алқа: Ә.Тәкішев
Т.Сүлейменов
Ғ.Ештапаев
К.Бекболатұлы
С.Кенжеахметов
Н.Мұқатов
М.Оспанов
А.Төлеуханқызы
Б.Ахметқанұлы
С.Кәрімжанұлы
Ш.Жолженов

Республикалық ғылыми-практикалық конференция материалдарында қазақ әдебиетінің көрнекті өкілдерінің бірі, Ұлы Отан соғысында ерлікпен қаза тапқан ақын, жазушы әрі көсемсөзші Тәшібай Әлмұхамбетовтің, өзге де майдангер қаламгерлердің шығармашылығы зерттеледі. Жинақта сондай-ақ қазіргі заманғы әдеби процесс пен журналистика мәселелері де қарастырылады.

© Бекболатұлы Ж., 2010.

© «Экономика» баспасы» ЖШС, 2010.

UNDERSTANDING NEWSPAPER HEADLINES IN ENGLISH

An excellent way for the more advanced learner to increase his or her English proficiency is to read an English-language newspaper on a regular basis. Most people who read a newspaper do it selectively and skim through the pages looking for the most interesting-looking articles to read first. They usually make their choice on the basis of the headlines of the articles. And this is where the difficulty for the non-native speaker of English arises, since newspaper headlines are often extremely difficult to understand. There are two main reasons for this and on no account should they be ignored.

The first reason is its specific vocabulary and grammar. The vocabulary used in the newspaper headlines are very short and are rarely used in everyday speech or indeed in the rest of the article itself. (*ban for prohibition, to prohibit; bid for attempt, to attempt* etc.) Moreover, many newspaper editors try to reach their aim in an economical way, without waste. As a result, headlines often look like telegrams containing only key words and abbreviations. For example, an article telling the reader about a dramatic event concerning the hostile attempt to take over a company will be given a headline such as: **TAKEOVER BID DRAMA** (*About dramatic events when attempting to take over the company*)

All the words that aren't really necessary to understand the message have been left out. Here three nouns carry the meaning of the sentence.

As far as grammar is concerned here, almost all the newspaper headlines are often incomplete sentences, headlines omit certain words and different verb tenses which make it too difficult to understand, e.g. **STAR TO WED** (*A film star is going to get married*).

And the second reason is that headline writers look for every opportunity to include a pun in their headlines. Puns are plays on words,

and they form the basis of most jokes. A pun is a humorous use of a word or phrase which has two meanings or two words or phrases which look or sound similar, e.g. **HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT BUYING OUR NEW BED? SLEEP ON IT!** (Advertisement for a new bed) Here *sleep on it* can mean 'lie on it' or 'think about it'. In order to understand puns students need to have a perfect command of English.

The aim of this article is to update our students with the main characteristics of newspaper headlines.

One of the typical features of newspaper headlines is leaving out irrelevant words in which some parts of speech are omitted.

1. Noun Phrase

Headlines often contain incomplete sentences with a *noun phrase* with no verb, e.g. **UNDER PRESSURE FROM BOSS**

The full form of the headline may look like this: (The employees are) *under pressure from (their) boss.*

2. Noun Strings

e.g. **TAKEOVER BID DRAMA**

Note: **TAKEOVER** stands for *takeover of a company*; **BID** stands for *attempt*; **DRAMA** stands for *dramatic event*.

Strings of four or more nouns without any verbs or adjectives are often used in newspaper headlines. These can be difficult because the words are not related by verbs or adjectives, e.g.

They should be read in the reverse order; if you want to make them out. By reading these *noun strings* backward you can connect the idea this way: dramatic event concerning the attempts of taking over (of a company). Of course, you need to use your imagination for this! Just take first steps!

Obviously journalists also use simplified grammar. They adjust the rules for the use of the tenses in English, when they invent headlines. There are a number of verb changes made to headlines. The most common are:

1. Simple tenses used instead of continuous or perfect forms.

e.g. **CHINA RESPONDS TO GOOGLE THREAT**=China *is responding to Goggle's threat*

CEOS CUT STAFF PAY=CEOs (*Chief Executive Officers*) *have cut the staff's pay.*

2. *The infinitive form refers to the future.*

e.g. **MAYOR TO OPEN SPORTS COMPLEX**

= The mayor is going to open a new sports complex.

MADONNA TO VISIT RUSSIA = (Famous singer) Madonna is going to visit Russia soon.

3. *Auxiliary verbs are dropped in the passive form.*

e.g. **MAN KILLED IN ACCIDENT** = A Man has been killed in an accident.

HAITI QUAKE SURVIVORS SOUGHT AMID 'UNIMAGINABLE' DESTRUCTION = Haiti earthquake survivors are sought amid 'unimaginable' destruction

4. *Drop Articles*

Both definite and indefinite articles are also dropped in newspaper headlines.

e.g. **___MAYOR TO OPEN ___SPORTS COMPLEX**=

The mayor is going to open a new sports complex.

___PRESIDENT DECLARES ___CELEBRATION = The president has declared a celebration.

As I have mentioned above, in order to lure readers to read the content of the newspaper, a lot of word plays like puns are used in newspaper headlines. Puns are widely used because they catch the eye and amuse. Here are a few examples with puns given below.

SAFETY EXPERTS SAY SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS SHOULD BE BELTED

Belted has two interpretations: 'hit with a belt' or 'secured with a (seat) belt'.

FARMER BILL DIES IN HOUSE

Bill could be a proper name instead of 'legislative proposal'; *die* could be taken literally or figuratively. To complete the interpretation, we must understand *house* to mean 'House of Commons'.

IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS

Amusing juxtaposition of two polysemic words, *head* 'chief' and *arms* 'weapons'.

PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE

Ambiguity of the verb *appeal*: 'entreaty' vs. 'attract'.

EYE DROPS OFF SHELF

Another verbless headline where the wrong reading comes from misinterpreting a noun-verb ambiguity.

Last but not least, our students should take into account the fact that all newspaper headlines contain numerous *colloquial* expressions, verbs and nouns instead of ordinary vocabulary. They need to be learned by memory. It is rather difficult to do. It's impossible to know all of them. However, it's worth taking steps. Don't forget the old saying: *Practice makes perfect*. In order to help our students, here is given a table of colloquial vocabulary used in newspaper headlines, which can be useful when doing practical exercises given below.

<i>Colloquial vocabulary used in headlines</i>	<i>Ordinary Vocabulary</i>
RESHUFFLE	to rearrange
FLEE	to run away, escape
BAFFLED	at a loss to explain, mystified
QUIZ	to question, investigate
FOIL	to prevent
ENVOY	diplomat, ambassador
SWOOP	to raid, raid
GAG	to silence, sensor
HAUL	goods stolen in robbery or taken by police or customs
POLL	election, voting, public opinion
STORM	angry argument
QUIT	to resign
BACK	support, to support
CURB	to restrict, restriction
RIG	to falsify

LEAK	escape (of secret information)
PROBE	investigation, to investigate
CALL	to demand, to appeal
RAP	to criticize, to reprimand
SPLIT	to divide, division
LIFT	to remove (restrictions, prohibitions)
AXE	to close, to dismiss,
SEEK	to look for
BAN	prohibition, to prohibit
PLEA	strong request, call for help
DRAMA	exciting, dramatic event
BID	attempt, to attempt
CLASH	fighting, conflict, to fight, to argue

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1) Express the following headlines in ordinary English.

E.g. **SERVICE CHIEFS GAGGED: TWO QUIT**

SERVICE - Military Service

CHIEFS - officers

GAGGED - were silenced (were instructed not to talk to the media)

TWO - Two of the officers

QUIT - resigned

SERVICE CHIEFS GAGGED: TWO QUIT = Military Service officers were silenced (were instructed not to talk to the media). Two of the officers resigned.

1. DEAD ENVOY RIDDLE: YARD BAFFLED
2. PEER DIES IN FLATS BLAZE DRAMA
3. COMMONS STORM OVER DEFENCE CUTS
4. EDITORS URGE END TO PRESS GAG
5. BANK CHIEFS SEIZED RED-HANDED: 3 FLEE
6. GEM SMUGGLERS CAUGHT IN PORT SWOOP

7. BANK RAID CASH HAUL FOUND: 3 CHARGED
8. KIDNAP BID FOILED: 3 QUIZZED, 2 FLEE
9. RAIL CHIEFS RESHUFFLED AFTER BIG LOSSES
10. GOVT DEFEATED IN POLL DRAMA

2) Make brief headlines from the following news stories.

1. Eighteen people were killed when the army tried to overthrow the government.
2. A leading diplomat has been mysteriously murdered.
3. The Prime Minister is trying to win the support of the coal miners' trade unions.
4. The director of British Petroleum has been forced to resign.
5. A Member of Parliament was questioned by the police in an investigation into the use of illegal drugs.
6. Strong appeals have been made to the Prime Minister to make changes in his ministers.

References

1. *Steven Ward, Real Strange Newspaper Headlines (1997-2003)*
2. *English exercise "Newspaper Headlines" created by anonym (23-03-2006) with The test builder*
3. *Top Breaking News Headlines*
4. *Humorous (but real) newspaper headlines*
5. *Katrin Saks, Puns in newspaper headlines- reading and discussion*