

News and advertising angles

Allan Bell's list of qualities that make a story newsworthy: negativity, recency, frequency, proximity, consonance, unambiguity, unexpectedness, novelty, superlativeness, relevance, personalization, eliteness, attribution, factuality

Greg Myers looks at how the language of advertising is designed to maximize its persuasive potential.

Advertising slogans draw our attention to the form of the language.

The following two slogans try to get us think of chocolate products as healthy foods rather than as indulgences.

A coca you can enjoy, supplies the energy for work and study.

A mars a day helps you work, rest and play.

The second example is more memorable because of the rhyme and rhythm.

Common kinds of patterning in ads at level of sounds and letters :

Catchy sounds

Alliteration: the repetition of consonant sounds

Example

For a moment , Morecambe became Madrid.

Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds

Example

Gillete.. The best man can get

Rhyme : the repetition of ending sounds

Example

If men are wise they socialize with Appletise.

- Rhyme
- Tunes and intonation
- Catchy print
- Frequency of letters
- Unpredictable spelling
- Homophone

Norman Fairclough : Fairclough is concerned with specific questions about the process of discourse construction in order to throw light on priorities, strategies and values circulating in media communication.

- An objective of media and language education is to ensure that students can answer four questions about any media text. These questions are guidelines for media language analysis.

Q. 1 metalanguage : intertextuality, language, image and text

Q.2 transparent representation of the world : this is the outcome of professional practices and technology, the entire production process

Q.3 media order: system

Q.4 relation of the text to wider sociocultural process

Narrative strategies

Michael Toolan

Here we are concerned with the transformation in media discourse-by means of particular discourse choices and organization – from information, ideas, events, or situations into public textual presentation. Michael Toolan investigates political orientation of a narrative. Lexicogrammatical systems can contribute to the discoursal variations, transformations or alternations.

Transitivity: which individuals or groups tend to be cast as agent (sayer, thinker), and which tend to be cast as affected medium, in the text? What kinds of process are particular protagonists reported as initiating? And which relevant parties are scarcely mentioned at all? It is also crucial to examine whether the content is foregrounded or backgrounded.

Example

The Times headline

Rioting blacks shot dead by police as ANC
leaders meet

Look at the conjunction 'as'

Passivization: passive voice sentences are a significant representational variant

Examples

Police shoot Africans

Youths stab boy

Police shoot Africans dead

Youths stab boy to death

Africans (are)shoot dead (by the police)

Boy stabbed to death (by youths)

Suppletion of agentless passives by intransitive clauses

Examples

Africans shoot dead (in Salisbury riot)

Africans die (in Salisbury riot)

Boy stabbed to death on crime-ridden estate

Boy dies on crime-ridden estate.

Nominalization: clause into noun phrase

Example

Damilola Taylor died of stab wounds

The death of Damilola Taylor from stab wounds

Modality and evaluation: speakers can encode their interpersonal evaluations of the subject matter by means of complex networks of vocabulary.

Naming and description: some sets of variant description are familiar and often contain positive or negative evaluation.

Example

Terrorist versus freedom fighter

Collocational incongruity:

Example

defying a plea

Presupposition:

Example

Thankfully the battery is not flat again

Windows on the world

David Graddol

Different sign systems combine to create meanings that are presented as to different degrees true or convincing depictions of reality.

Television offers window on the world. Events and places are made available to the viewers in the home.

Yet everything which is seen on TV screen arrives there only after a complex process involving people and technology.

Understanding the semiotics of factuality is one of the most important literacy skills required by readers and viewers in the modern industrial world.

Information and entertainment have become inextricably linked and the tasks of identifying and evaluating claim to factuality has become more complex.

Modality systems

Factuality is not merely a question of truth or lies, but a more complex semiotic system which provides for varying authority, certainty and appropriateness allocated to particular representations of the world. This semiotic system is called the modality system.

That which has definiteness, certainty, lack of ambiguity is said to have high modality. That which is less definite, possible rather than certain, is said to have low modality.

Verbal Modality: verbal language uses a number of devices to express modality. In the English modality is an integral part of the verb. Things can happen, could happen, will happen, have happened or happened .

Visual Modality: Hodge and Kress (1988) use the term modality cues in relation to visual texts.

A dense, detailed image can stand for realism or proximity, which can stand for present time, which can stand for factuality. An image lacking in detail and denseness can stand for uncertainty or distance, which can stand for past time, which can stand for fictionality.

The realist tradition: TV news tells stories about the world and the dominant narrative technique for such story telling is called realism.

At first in use in novels then in films and then in TV news. The realist technique allows news to encompass a variety of voices and accounts. It provides the viewer with a privileged account of this objective world.

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen

In western culture, there has been a distinct preference for monomodality in literature, art, music and other cultural productions.

Recently almost all performances have begun to use an increasing variety of materials and to cross the boundaries between the various art, design and performances disciplines.