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## ASSESSING CRIMINAL INCIDENTS THROUGH HEADLINES OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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**Annotation.** Media has overwhelmed the life of modern people and become not so much a means of information transmission but more a powerful tool of manipulation. Internet or online media is the youngest type of media so far which has become rapidly widespread and gained recognition among users. It can also be said to have changed entire understanding of journalism as well as ways and forms of information transmission. Moreover, it has got users accustomed to fast presentation of information by using minimum means – a brief text, a photo or video and a catchy headline. The headline becomes sort of a brand in online media – if it is attractive the product will be chosen.

The collected headlines of crime articles are discussed depending on their functions and structure, Analysis of headlines of crime stories showed that depending on their functions, they can be both neutral and expressive, whereas based on their structure, they obtain a form of factual or evaluative propositions. The headlines written in a form of the factual propositions normally indicate the location (city) of the incident and persons by their positions occupied or the type of a crime committed. The headlines written in a form of the evaluative propositions are prevailed by the adjectives and numerals capable of forming a significant emotional load of a headline. Consequently, a study under consideration confirmed theoretical assertions that a headline is an important point of an article as it determines resolution by a reader to read through the article or not. Meanwhile, both neutrality and expressiveness serve to give a certain emotional load to the headline.

**Keywords:** online media, headlines of criminal articles, neutrality, expressiveness.

### INTRODUCTION

Media is highly important in modern world as it covers so many different functions from information transmission to manipulation. Currently, one of the most popular forms of media is the internet or online media. Among other characteristic functions performed by online media, one must add manipulating the readers with the pursuit of popularity that is directly linked to the fierce competition. Not surprisingly, headlines of articles are used as the main tool in this battle. A headline serves as a bait to catch the reader. Taking into account that modern person is often impatient and continuously in a hurry, the presentation, structure and length of headlines used in online media changes accordingly. The tendency is observed to attract readers' attention by using expressive headlines or headlines written in a form of composite sentence covering nearly all the information to be conveyed. One of the manipulation techniques is so-called 'blood wanted' when the information carrying strong emotional effect about murdering, violence, other crimes is presented suggesting that this is a normal part of

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everyday life<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the purpose of headlines of crime stories is to present the information in such a way that makes the reader want to read news on aggression, criminal incidents, etc., that evoke mainly negative emotions, and makes the reader to accept the information provided as an integral part of life. This study discusses means and measures used for creating headlines of such articles and ways of using them to catch readers' attention.

**The subject** of the study – the headlines of articles on crimes in online media.

**The objective** of the study – to analyse the headlines of articles on crimes in online media.

**Tasks** set for the study:

1. To discuss the role of headlines in online media.
2. To examine the suggestibility and manipulative power of the headlines of crime articles in online media.

Descriptive and analytical **methods** were used for discussion and analysis of the material in the study. The *pilot study* was undertaken enabling to confirm or to deny the theoretical aspects of headline functions as well as to examine if headlines of crime stories in online media carry an emotional load. The material for this study was collected in September-October of 2017 from websites of *delfi.lt*, *15min.lt* and *lrytas.lt*. Total 150 headlines were collected that were further classified based on their function performed (neutral or expressive) and the structure. Based on this particular aspect, headlines of crime articles have been further addressed in this study.

## HEADLINE AS A MAIN TOOL OF MEDIA

Media has overwhelmed the life of modern people and become not so much a means of information transmission but more a powerful tool of manipulation. The manipulation can be twofold: it can be aimed at influencing the attitude of a user or to attract user's attention while selecting among different types of media, in other words, for the media striving to survive after getting over fierce competition, which is in turn possible only if media has many users. It should be noted that when assessing manipulative power of media, it is not a 'no lie' – a conformity with the truth or what is considered to be the truth, i.e., the fact, reality, etc., – that is considered to be one of the essential components of the manipulative discourse, but rather an inconspicuous delusion enabling to benefit in a roundabout (indirect) way<sup>2</sup>. It is the inconspicuousness that

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<sup>1</sup> „Manipuliavimas visuomenės nuomone“, <https://ruvi.lt/2013/02/06/manipuliavimas-visuomenes-nuomone>.

<sup>2</sup> Juodytė, A. Manipuliacinės įtraukimo į komunikaciją strategijos periodinėje spaudoje, *Žurnalistikos tyrimai*, 2008, 1, p. 25.

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represents a core element here – user is supposed not to feel or understand that he/she is being deceived, “media impact is made not by obvious propaganda or publications expressing a single attitude but through indirect effects such as interlinked details of news, arrangement of words in a heading, the size of a headline, selection of illustrations”<sup>3</sup>.

Internet or online media is the youngest type of media so far which has become rapidly widespread and gained recognition among users. It can also be said to have changed entire understanding of journalism as well as ways and forms of information transmission. Moreover, it has got users accustomed to fast presentation of information by using minimum means – a brief text, a photo or video and a catchy headline. The latter determines if reader decides to read an article, to be more precise, to open an article because that’s what determines the number of users. The article can then remain not read till the end or not read at all; what matters is its activation only. In this respect, the headline becomes sort of a brand in online media – if it is attractive the product will be chosen. The function of a headline in media is usually to reflect the main idea behind the article, however following such a tradition, the article may end up with attracting no one’s interest. Theory of communication states that heading is commonly characterized by neutrality. However, “recently this function attributed to headlines remains more or less a concept of the theoretical level due to the desire of information providers and producers to manipulate the accents of information provided. Headlines tend to become a tool used to control attitudes and choices of the audience”<sup>4</sup>. This idea is also endorsed by Ž. Pečiulis stating that purpose of the heading is to express the main idea of the publication in a single sentence, however in Lithuanian media this aim often remains unrealised as publishers and journalists are often of the opinion that attracting attention is more important than informing<sup>5</sup>. Eventually, headlines assumed a rather different purpose – to attract the attention of a reader at any price, and subsequently it has even become not important if the headline reflects the main idea or not, or even go to extremities when the content of the article does not match its heading at all. On the other hand, such an information can hardly be called an article as it rather often happens that the headline is longer the content followed after it. “That’s how a certain insignificant fact taken out of its context or some hyperbolic idea becomes a headline despite the fact that such a headline does not reflect the content of a publication at all.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Pečiulis, Ž. *Medijos, žiniasklaida, žurnalistika tradicinėje ir tinklaveikos visuomenėje*, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2012, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Nugaraitė, A. Antraštės poveikis ir įtaka medijų komunikacijoje, *Agora: politinių komunikacijų studijos* 3, p.117.

<sup>5</sup> Pečiulis, Ž. *supra note* 3, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.

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In analysing headlines and reviewing their concepts, researchers (A. Bitinienė, R. Marcinkevičienė, R. Koženiauskienė) emphasized the importance of the headline for the text by discussing its essence in different ways. According to R. Marcinkevičienė the headline is “the highest level of a hypertext”<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, A. Bitinienė (2007, 64) sees the headline as undisclosed content of the text presented in a condensed form used to encode the deep meaning of the text<sup>8</sup>. R. Koženiauskienė defines a headline (2013, 46) as a brief text presented in a single sentence which is used to depict the matter of the publication, its main contents. Furthermore, she has suggested that a headline can be equated with a rhetorical piece existing individually on its own, and also emphasized the briefness of a headline<sup>9</sup>. Changes in information conciseness reach their peak when a heading alone is used to express certain news. However, to prevent it from looking poor, a huge photography is presented alongside. Despite the fact that such an information is void, online media does not seem to lose its popularity so far, on the contrary – its popularity keeps increasing. Subsequently, responsibility borne by journalists keeps decreasing as online information can be modified, changed, corrected, and mistakes can be removed from it at any moment in time – after all, the most important thing is to be the first to present the sensational news be it a single sentence. Formation of such a situation is determined by ever increasing pace of life when the society has no time for reading long, although well-developed articles. Meanwhile, media publishers while refining articles, can lose their chance to stand the first with the news. Current situation has formed in result of such a vicious circle. Headline still remains the core component used to manipulate the attention of a reader. According to Ž. Pečiulis, “the headline of a publication, whatever genre category it is attributed to, is probably the single important element of the journalistic piece that determines choice of a reader *to read it or not*”<sup>10</sup>. However, the heading must be a catchy, shocking and activating the feelings and emotions of a reader leading to his/her increased curiosity. And if the articles themselves tend to shorten, their headings often tend to grow in length. And the function their impact is associated with the expressive language conveyance<sup>11</sup>. According to J. Pikčilingis, language is characterised by the triple purpose of use: communication, conveyance and impact. Function of emotional impact takes the first place in stylistics.

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<sup>7</sup> Marcinkevičienė R. *Žanro ribos ir paribiai. Spaudos patirtys*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2008, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Bitinienė A., 2007, *Publicistinis stilius*. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla.

<sup>9</sup> Koženiauskienė R. *Retorinė ir stilistinė publicistinių tekstų analizė*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Pečiulis, Ž. *supra note 3*, p. 169.

<sup>11</sup> Bitinienė A. *Publicistinis stilius*. Vilnius: VPU leidykla, 2007, p. 15–16.

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Subsequently, when trying to engage or convince a reader a certain way of expressing thoughts is selected: an indicative sentence is replaced by the exclamatory or interrogative one, sections of a sentence are arranged in a specific order, combined and matched in unusual ways, one or several of them are omitted, or on the contrary, various ‘additives’ and ‘insertions’ are used that matter-of-factly are unnecessary, etc.<sup>12</sup> Natural links of a heading to the contents of a text enable to give the text a heading, and to clearly describe it.

There are several Lithuanian researchers (R. Koženiauskienė, D. Liepinytė-Kytrienė, D. Kalinauskaitė) from different fields (linguistics, communication, journalism) who have addressed headlines, several different classifications for the analysis of headlines have been proposed all of them being related to the functions performed by them, the purpose of which – the created emotional load. Based on them headlines are being classified by scholars, Furthermore, headlines can be grouped based on their structure. Depending on its function, a headline can be *neutral* and *expressive*<sup>13</sup>; based on the structure, headlines can obtain a form of a *proposition*, a *quote* or a *question*; respectively, propositions are further classified into *evaluative* and *factual* ones, and quotes – into *explicit* or *rephrased* ones.<sup>14</sup> D. Kalinauskaitė offers a similar classification of headlines with some modifications applied.<sup>15</sup> Taking into consideration that headlines represent a linguistic formation, they can be analysed depending on the comprising parts of the speech, elements of syntax, prevailing tropes, etc.

## THE HEADLINES OF CRIME STORIES – FROM NEUTRALITY TO EXPRESSIVENESS

Headlines were collected from 3 websites of online media – *lrytas.lt*, *15min.lt* and *delfi.lt*. Headlines of articles falling under criminal rubric were selected with the aim to assess what functions performed and what structure was characteristic for them. In total 150 headlines were analysed. The pilot study was undertaken in order to assess the theoretical aspects of headline functions as well as to examine if headlines of crime stories published in online media carry an emotional load. Respectively, further and more extensive studies of other rubrics are possible

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<sup>12</sup> Pikčilingis, J. *Lietuvių kalbos stilistinė sintaksė. Kalbos figūros*. Kaunas: Šviesa, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Koženiauskienė, R. *Retorinė ir stilistinė publicistinių tekstų analizė*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Liepinytė-Kytrienė D. Antraščių–faktinių teiginių poveikio priemonės interneto portale delfi.lt, *Taikomoji kalbotyra*, 2013 12 16. Prieiga per internetą: <http://taikomojikalbotyra.lt/azalija.serveriai.lt/lt/2013/12/antrasciu-faktiniu-teiginiu-poveikio-priemones-interneto-portale-delfi-lt>.

<sup>15</sup> Kalinauskaitė, D. Trumpojo teksto žanro specifika: naujų portalų antraščių tyrimas, *Darbai ir dienos*, 2014, t. 62, p. 30–31.

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with the aim to compare functions performed by the headlines as well as their structure and emotional load. As it was already mentioned above, headlines are being studied by Lithuanian researchers but pretty sparsely. This study might be treated as a small contribution to further investigations of headlines. Although a headline is a small piece of language, it “can be seen as a novel autonomous genre of text which is evidenced by the revealed peculiarities of headlines found in various news portals, and first of all – by their functions. There are various functions performed by headlines: they are used to inform, to tell, to analyse, to comment, to express an attitude, emotions, to convince, to assess and to appeal someone. Such a functional autonomy of headlines found in several news portals is associated with the changes that took place in their structure: headlines have evolved from having a form of a single-word or phrase to the ones forming an entire sentence”<sup>16</sup>. As it was already mentioned above, sometimes headlines happen to be shorter than the information presented afterwards or even equivalent to it. Such changes might have been determined by the strong establishment of online media, and pursuit of catching reader’s attention, which is feasible by simply presenting almost all the available not so copious information in a single well-formed extensive sentence. According to D. Kalinauskaitė, “the headlines presented in a form of a sentence are often formulated as propositions that are supported not only by the factual information (factual propositions) but rather often by certain evaluation made by the author of the headline (evaluative propositions)”<sup>17</sup>. It means that the headline moves away from its initial function to indicate the main idea of the article, and becomes a manipulative tool that instantly intrigues, catches eye and forms attitude. Furthermore, a study found the headlines having negative connotations to prevail<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, when analysing headlines of stories falling under crime rubric, probably the headlines having a positive connotation cannot be expected to prevail as the very topic bears a negative implication. Meanwhile anyone’s attention is easily attracted by the ills of life suffered by someone else, thus information having a negative connotation remains in memory for a longer period of time.

The collected headlines of crime articles are discussed depending on their functions and structure, while distinguishing among neutral and expressive headlines in the first place. Based on their structure, the neutral headlines can obtain a form of *a factual proposition*, *a precise* or *rephrased quote*, whereas expressive headlines can be further classified into *evaluative*

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<sup>16</sup> Kalinauskaitė, D. *supra note* 15, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Pečiulis, Ž. *supra note* 3, p. 170.



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*propositions, precise or rephrased quotes, questions, and factual propositions*<sup>19</sup>. The classification offered by D. Kalinauskaitė is based on similar principles. Analysis of the collected headlines of crime articles instantly reveals that headlines are formulated using no questions, precise or rephrased quotes. Factual and evaluative propositions prevail both in neutral and expressive headlines. According to D. Krasauskaitė, factual propositions should be used for conveying not far-fetched, not exaggerated information that reflects the reality in an objective manner. The fact is something that has already happened, has a rational explanation why it is proposed so but not somehow otherwise<sup>20</sup>. In other words, a specific incident, circumstances, etc., is indicated that are known and has already happened. In this case, there should be no place for manipulation, as such headlines should not be aimed at making the emotional impact. Frequency, such headlines are used to indicate the place (a city) where the incident discussed below took place, following by what has happened and for what reason or under what circumstances. Such absolutely neutral headlines are used to highlight less shocking traffic accidents (In Vilnius, a car owned by ‘eTransport’ crashed into a truck [Lith. orig.: „Vilniuje susidūrė „eTransport“ automobilis ir sunkvežimis“] (delfi.lt); In Vilnius, Antakalnio street was totally jammed up after a traffic collision involving 4 vehicles in a constant car crash location [Lith. orig.: „Vilniuje, nuolatinėje avarių vietoje, susidūrus 4 automobiliams, užsikimšo Antakalnio gatvė“] (delfi.lt)) as well as to provide the relevant information about the criminals wanted and arrested by the police or raids carried out (The Police of Tauragė are looking for a man who left without paying for fuel [Lith. orig.: „Tauragės policija ieško už degalus nesusimokėjusio vyro“] (15min.lt); Kaunas’ Police officers caught two robbers [Lith. orig.: „Kauno pareigūnai sučiupo du plėšikus“ (lrytas.lt); Total 15 police officers took part in a police operation that enabled finding hundreds of thousands of euros and 50 kg of gold [Lith. orig.: „Policijos operacijoje dalyvavo 150 pareigūnų: rasta šimtai tūkstančių eurų, 50 kg aukso“] (delfi.lt); The illegal chain of pawnshops discovered located all over the territory of Lithuania [Lith. orig.: „Išaiškintas nelegalus lombardų tinklas visoje Lietuvoje“ (lrytas.lt)). Neutral headlines are also used to inform about the penalties and prison sentences that may be incurred as well as their impositions (Three citizens from Šakiai district may be imprisoned for using counterfeit money [Lith. orig.: („Trims Šakių rajono gyventojams už netikrų pinigų realizavimą gresia laisvės atėmimas“] (delfi.lt); In Molėtai, a record-breaking car thief was

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<sup>19</sup> Liepinytė-Kyrienė, D. Antraščių-faktinių teiginių poveikio priemonės interneto portale *Delfi.lt*. *Taikomoji kalbotyra* 2013 (2), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

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sentenced [Lith. orig.: Molėtuose nuteistas automobilių vagis rekordininkas“] (delfi.lt)) as well to inform about other disasters, criminal and legal incidents (In Kaunas, a flat has burst in flames [Lith. orig.: „Kaune užsidegė butas“] (15 min.lt); Two cases of January the 13<sup>th</sup> were united into a single case by the Court [Lith. orig.: „Teismas į vieną sujungė dvi sausio 13-osios bylas“] (15 min.lt); In Zarasai, a drunk policeman was beaten [Lith. orig.: „Zarasuose sumuštas neblaivus policininkas“] (lrytas.lt)). As the above-presented instances show, neutrality is expressed through only identifying the incidents and saying what has happened – such headlines are formulated avoiding any evaluative words. A bare fact is stated, sometimes circumstances are identified and persons while indicating their professions or type of a crime committed, a city is identified, too. Such headlines serve to simply inform a reader without unduly impacting on his/her emotions and not aiming at triggering an excessive response. Sometimes, this is sufficient, given the fact that readers are attracted by so-called manipulative technique ‘blood wanted’. The neutral headlines can also have an inverse technique – they can serve to intrigue by the situation outlined in an abstract fashion with the details possibly being discussed in the article itself. For that portion of the society who treats criminal incidents as integral part of everyday life, the very fact about the incident that has happened is a strong enough motive to read through the article on it.

The expressive headlines tend to affect the reader emotionally, to manipulate his/her attitudes, make him/her read through the article about the incident even though he/she is not interested in the incident at all. Such headlines form reader’s prior opinion, thrust the evaluation of the incident, manipulate the importance of the information being provided and its necessity for the reader. The evaluative propositions are characterised by the subjectivity, transmission of the surplus information, however there comes a refusal to accept the assertion by D. Kalinauskaitė that the evaluative propositions used in headlines contrast the reality of facts and reflect facts that not actually exist in reality<sup>21</sup>. It is understood that it would be more precise to suggest that the evaluative propositions tend to impart the peculiar tendentious colour having manipulative features, but they are still closely related to the fact being described that has actually happened. Usually they refer to what and where happened as well as under what circumstances whereas the evaluative attitude is being created by means of adjectives (sometimes together with the adverbs) (The Court has been exceptionally kind for the drug dealer but the Prosecutor holds her ground [Lith. orig.: „Narkotikų prekeiviui teismas buvo

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<sup>21</sup> Kalinauskaitė, D. Trumpojo teksto žanro specifika: naujienų portalų antraščių tyrimas, *Darbai ir dienos*, 2014, t. 62, p. 17.



išimtinai švelnus, bet prokurorė nepasiduoda“ (...)]; The Customs have destroyed 656 kg of hashish which is the maximum amount recorded in the history of the institution [Lith. orig.: „Muitinė sunaikino didžiausią institucijos istorijoje hašišo kiekį 656 kg“]; Money were found by the thieves in even weird holout (Lith. orig.: „Pinigus vagys aptiko net keistoje slėptuvėje“]; In Vilnius, a car accident was caused by a drunk police patrol [Lith. orig.: „Vilniuje avariją sukėlė poilsiaujantis girtas policijos patrulis“]), numerals (The Prosecution aims at putting in prison for twelve years the citizen of Širvintos who was caught growing 256 pieces of hemp [Lith. orig.: „Prokuratūra siekia 256 kanapes auginusį širvintiškį į kalėjimą uždaryti dvylikai metų“]; In Šilutė district a 15 thousand euros worth watch was stolen [Lith. orig.: „Šilutės rajone pavogtas 15 tūkst. eurų vertas laikrodis“]), less often – by using verbs (Mass manhunt of paedophiles: most of them caught in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda and Šiauliai [Lith. orig.: „Masinės pedofilų gaudynės: daugiausia jų įkliuvo Vilniuje, Kaune, Klaipėdoje ir Šiauliuose“]; Policemen were recorded on video throwing out thieves from minibuses [Lith. orig.: „Nufilmuota: policininkai vagis išmėtė iš mikroautobusų“]). And sometimes a general context of a headline’s text is simply intriguing in itself (Mother knocked out her daughter’s tooth and cut off her hair [Lith. orig.: „Motina dukrai išmušė dantė ir nukirpo plaukus“]; A woman stabbed her husband in N. Akmenė [Lith. orig.: „N. Akmenėje moteris peiliu badė savo vyrą“]; 656 kg of hashish ended up in a furnace and were transformed into electric power [Lith. orig.: 656 kilogramai hašišo atsidūrė krosnyje ir pavirto elektros energija“]; A businessman complained that the entire apartment block was stolen from him turning its residents into hostages [Lith. orig.: „Verslininkas skundžiasi: iš manęs pavogė visą daugiabutį, kurio gyventojai liko įkaitais“]). The expressiveness, the imagery can be conveyed by personifying actions and objects being described (In Kaunas road safety barriers continue to suffer [Lith. orig.: „Kaune ir toliau kenčia kelio atitvarai“]); readers are also highly interested in disclosure of the alleged secret (Police officers involved in massive searches of pawnshops told about the operation accomplished: both the team of ARAS and fire brigade suddenly became necessary [Lith. orig.: „Masiškai lombardus krėtę pareigūnai papasakojo apie operaciją: prireikė ir „Aro“ pareigūnų, ir ugniagesių“]; Participants lifted up their voice about the suspected kidnapper of the biker [Lith. orig.: „Dalyviai prabilo apie įtariamą baikerio pagrobėją“] (Irytas)). Accordingly, the expressive headlines presented by means of the evaluative propositions are distinguished by more vivid expression, use of adjectives that denote exclusiveness of the certain incident or object as well as use of numerals that mainly denote something unusual and use of other parts of speech that form an emotional load carried by the headline under

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consideration. The impression is intensified by using certain words that serve to add variety to headings used to name the articles describing the incident. Headlines gain the emotional load, and convey the expressive function while striving to catch the reader's attention.

## CONCLUSIONS

When evaluating the importance of media in modern word it is substantial to take into consideration its functions. Being one of the most popular media, online or internet media in pursuit of catching reader's attention usually tends to use headlines as a bait. Headlines manipulate readers' attention and for this reason they are being formulated in a way that makes it impossible to resist the intriguing information contained. However, this is characteristic not for all the headlines; some of them simply convey the information on the incidents. Headlines are classified based on their functions being performed and the structure. Analysis of headlines of crime stories showed that depending on their functions, they can be both neutral and expressive, whereas based on their structure, they obtain a form of factual or evaluative propositions. The headlines written in a form of the factual propositions normally indicate the location (city) of the incident and persons by their positions occupied or the type of a crime committed. The headlines written in a form of the evaluative propositions are prevailed by the adjectives and numerals capable of forming a significant emotional load of a headline. Consequently, a study under consideration confirmed theoretical assertions that a headline is an important point of an article as it determines resolution by a reader to read through the article or not. Meanwhile, both neutrality and expressiveness serve to give a certain emotional load to the headline.

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## KRIMINALINIŲ ĮVYKIŲ VERTINIMAS ELEKTRONINĖS ŽINIASKLAIDOS ANTRAŠTĖMIS

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### Santrauka

Medijų svarba šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje yra labai svarbi, jų funkcija – nuo informacijos perdavimo iki manipuliavimo. Viena populiariausių šiuo metu medijų forma – internetinė žiniasklaida. Tarp jai būdingų funkcijų taip pat reikia įterpti ir manipuliavimą skaitytojais siekiant populiarumo, kuris tiesiogiai susijęs su aršia konkurencija. Pagrindinė priemonė tokioje kovoje tampa straipsnių antraštė. Ji yra masalas, ant kurio turi užkibti skaitytojas. Atsižvelgiant į dabartinį nuolat skubantį, nekantrų šiuolaikinės visuomenės žmogų, kinta ir antraščių pateikimas, ir jų struktūra bei ilgis. Linkstama skaitytojo dėmesį patraukti ekspresyvia antrašte arba sudėtinio sakinio tipo antrašte, kurioje sutalpinama beveik visa norima pasakyti informacija.

Vienas iš medijų manipuliacijos metodų yra vadinamasis „reikalingas kraujas“, kai pateikiama stipraus emocinio poveikio informacija apie nužudymus, smurtą, kitus nusikaltimus įteigiant, kad tai yra normali gyvenimo dalis. Taigi kriminalinių straipsnių antraščių tikslas – informaciją pateikti taip, kad skaitytojas norėtų skaityti netgi daugiausia neigiamas emocijas keliančias naujienas apie agresiją, kriminalinius įvykius ir pan. O pateiktą informaciją priimtų kaip neatsiejamą gyvenimo dalį. Atsižvelgiant į tai, pasirinktas šio straipsnio objektas – internetinės žiniasklaidos kriminalinių straipsnių antraštės. Tyrimo tikslas – išanalizuoti internetinės žiniasklaidos kriminalinių straipsnių antraštes. Atliktas žvalgomasis tyrimas norint praktiškai įvertinti teorinius antraščių funkcijų aspektus, taip pat iširti, ar internetinėje žiniasklaidoje pateikiamų kriminalinių straipsnių antraštės turi emocinį krūvį. Analizuojant surinktas kriminalinių straipsnių antraštes, galima iš karto pastebėti, kad antraštės sudaromos nenaudojant klausimų, tikslų ir perfrazuotų citatų. Vyrauja faktiniai ir vertinamieji teiginiai – tiek neutraliosios, tiek ekspresinės antraštės. Faktinius teiginius perteikiančiose antraštėse paprastai nurodoma įvykio vieta (miestas), asmenys pagal pareigas arba pagal nusikaltimo pobūdį. Vertinamuosius teiginius perteikiančiose antraštėse vyrauja būdvardžiai ir skaitvardžiai, galintys sudaryti nemažą emocinį antraštės krūvį. Taigi atliktas tyrimas patvirtina teorinius teiginius, kad antraštės yra svarbi straipsnio vieta, nes jos yra tai, kas lemia skaitytojo apsisprendimą skaityti ar neskaityti straipsnį. O jų tiek neutralumas, tiek ekspresyvumas sudaro tam tikrą emocinį krūvį.

**Pagrindinės sąvokos:** elektroninė medija, kriminalinių straipsnių antraštės, neutralumas, ekspresyvumas.

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