

MASTER'S THESIS

A contrastive analysis of English and Chinese headlines of Hong Kong local news stories

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**A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE
HEADLINES OF HONG KONG LOCAL NEWS STORIES**

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Abstract

This study aims to conduct a contrastive analysis of linguistic features between Chinese and English headlines in terms of compression techniques by analyzing a number of headlines of local news stories of one Chinese newspaper and one English newspaper published in Hong Kong, namely Ming Pao and the South China Morning Post respectively. Five strategies of compression and the related linguistic features are identified. The five strategies are the use of abbreviation, the use of synonymy, the variation of passive construction and the use of punctuation as well as the omission of function words and content words.

It is found that the familiarity level of Chinese abbreviations is higher than English ones, and Chinese abbreviations are thus used more frequently. It is also found that more strategies of synonymy are adopted in Chinese headlines, and it explains why synonymy is found more frequently. The primary verb 'be' in the English passive construction and Chinese passive markers are always found omitted. Besides, in English headlines, a comma replaces the conjunction 'and' while no commas are needed when 和 is omitted in Chinese headlines, owing to the structure of Chinese idioms. More content words are also found omitted in Chinese headlines without any changes in meaning. It is believed that the results of this study have useful implications both in linguistic theories and practical work of news editing.

摘要

本論文按新聞標題的壓縮方法來比較及分析中文與英文標題的語言特點，文中分析了香港一份中文報章和一份英文報章的一些本地新聞標題，這兩份報章分別為明報和南華早報。本文指出五種壓縮策略與相關的語言特點，這五種壓縮策略分別為縮寫的應用、同義的應用、被動句的變化、標點的應用，以及虛詞與實詞的省略。

研究發現讀者對中文縮寫詞的熟悉程度比英文縮寫詞為高，因此，中文縮寫詞的應用也比較頻繁。中文標題也使用比較多的同義策略，這解釋了為何中文同義的應用比較頻繁。研究也發現英文被動句的‘be’與中文的被動詞經常省略。除此之外，在英文標題中，逗號替代了‘and’，但中文標題中的「和」省略後則無須補上逗號，這與中文成語結構有關。中文標題中也有比較多的實詞可省略而又不影響原文的意義。本論文的研究結果相信對新聞編輯上的語言學理論與實際工作兩方面都會有幫助。

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Rationale and significance | 1 |
| 1.2 Aim of the present study | 4 |
| 1.3 Definition of newspaper headlines | 5 |
| Chapter 2 Theoretical framework | 6 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2.2 Use of abbreviation to achieve the goal of compression | 6 |
| 2.3 Use of synonymy to achieve the goal of compression | 7 |
| 2.4 Variation of passive construction to achieve the goal of compression | 11 |
| 2.5 Use of punctuation to achieve the goal of compression | 13 |
| 2.6 Omission of function words and content words to achieve the goal of compression | 18 |
| Chapter 3 Previous works on newspaper headlines | 26 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|----|
| 3.1 | Introduction | 26 |
| 3.2 | Ingrid Mardh (1980) | 26 |
| 3.3 | A. M. Simon-Vandenberg (1981) | 33 |
| 3.4 | 羅建國 (1984) | 36 |
| 3.5 | A. C. Chin (2000) | 39 |
| 3.6 | 郭可 (1995) | 43 |
| Chapter 4 Design of Study | | 46 |
| 4.1 | Research sample | 46 |
| 4.2 | Data collection | 47 |
| 4.3 | Treatment of data | 49 |
| Chapter 5 Findings | | 51 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 51 |
| 5.2 | Use of abbreviation to achieve the goal of compression | 51 |
| 5.2.1 | Use of abbreviation in English news headlines | 53 |
| 5.2.2 | Use of abbreviation in Chinese news headlines | 56 |
| 5.3 | Use of synonymy to achieve the goal of compression | 62 |
| 5.3.1 | Use of synonymy in English news headlines | 62 |
| 5.3.2 | Use of synonymy in Chinese news headlines | 67 |
| 5.4 | Variation of passive construction to achieve the goal of compression | 76 |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|-----|
| 5.4.1 | Variation of passive construction in English news headlines | 78 |
| 5.4.2 | Variation of passive construction in Chinese news headlines | 86 |
| 5.5 | Use of punctuation to achieve the goal of compression | 94 |
| 5.5.1 | Use of punctuation in English news headlines | 94 |
| 5.5.2 | Use of punctuation in Chinese news headlines | 97 |
| 5.6 | Omission of function words and content words to achieve the goal of compression | 100 |
| 5.6.1 | Omission of function words and content words in English news headlines | 103 |
| 5.6.2 | Omission of function words and content words in Chinese news headlines | 110 |
| Chapter 6 Discussion | | 124 |
| 6.1 | Introduction | 124 |
| 6.2 | Use of abbreviation to achieve the goal of compression | 124 |
| 6.2.1 | Use of abbreviation in English news headlines | 124 |
| 6.2.2 | Use of abbreviation in Chinese news headlines | 125 |
| 6.2.3 | Comparison in the use of abbreviation | 127 |

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 6.3 | Use of synonymy to achieve the goal of compression | 128 |
| 6.3.1 | Use of synonymy in English news headlines | 128 |
| 6.3.2 | Use of synonymy in Chinese news headlines | 130 |
| 6.3.3 | Comparison in the use of synonymy | 132 |
| 6.4 | Variation of passive construction to achieve the goal of compression | 133 |
| 6.4.1 | Variation of passive construction in English news headlines | 133 |
| 6.4.2 | Variation of passive construction in Chinese news headlines | 135 |
| 6.4.3 | Comparison in the variation of passive construction | 138 |
| 6.5 | Use of punctuation to achieve the goal of compression | 142 |
| 6.5.1 | Use of punctuation in English news headlines | 142 |
| 6.5.2 | Use of punctuation in Chinese news headlines | 143 |
| 6.5.3 | Comparison in the use of punctuation | 146 |
| 6.6 | Omission of function words and content words to achieve the goal of compression | 147 |
| 6.6.1 | Omission of content words and function words in English news headlines | 147 |
| 6.6.2 | Omission of content words and function words in Chinese news headlines | 150 |
| 6.6.3 | Comparison in the omission of function words and content | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| words | 163 |
| Chapter 7 Implications | 169 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 169 |
| 7.2 Theoretical implications on headline writing | 169 |
| 7.2.1 Findings conformable to theories | 169 |
| 7.2.2 Findings supplementary to theories | 174 |
| 7.2.3 Findings unconformable to theories | 181 |
| 7.3 Theoretical implications on linguistics | 184 |
| 7.4 Practical implications on headline writing | 189 |
| Chapter 8 Conclusion | 193 |
| 8.1 Summary | 193 |
| 8.2 Limitations | 195 |
| 8.3 Recommendations | 196 |
| Appendices | 197 |
| Appendix 1 Illustrations of main headlines, sub-headlines and super-headlines | 197 |
| Appendix 2 Illustrations of headlines in vertical and horizontal patterning | 198 |
| Appendix 3 Corpus of English headlines | 200 |

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Appendix 4 | Corpus of Chinese headlines | 211 |
| Appendix 5 | Headlines with abbreviations | 246 |
| Appendix 6 | Familiar abbreviations and unfamiliar abbreviations in the English corpus | 248 |
| Appendix 7 | Headline counting rules | 249 |
| Appendix 8 | Familiar abbreviations and unfamiliar abbreviations in the Chinese corpus | 250 |
| Appendix 9 | Synonymy in the English corpus | 252 |
| Appendix 10 | Synonymy in the Chinese corpus | 257 |
| References | | 262 |