

# 新聞英語讀法

WAYS TO JOURNALISTIC ENGLISH READING

許長庚編著

Hsu Chang-Keng

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## Preface

Many students find their school English inadequate for dealing with the language spoken and written in America today chiefly because there is a marked cleavage between their bookish English and its living counterpart. In order to bridge the gap, students should read as much as they possibly can material that is up-to-date and representative of American living and writing. The best way to do this, as we all know, is to read newspapers, newsmagazines, and other periodicals published in good English.

Prof. Hsu has devoted himself to the study of journalistic English for more than a decade, and over the years his jottings and notes have accumulated considerably. Now, after careful and critical sorting and organization, he has put them into a book which eloquently testifies to the fact that reading English magazines and newspapers not only helps us learn a living language but also widens the horizon of our knowledge in various areas of interest. Besides, this book is informative, enlightening and readable, and will undoubtedly benefit those who are really interested in improving their English.

*Tsai Chin-Song*

Taipei, March 30, 1978

## FOREWORD

This book is intended to be a comprehensive study of some of the most striking characteristics of journalistic English and what it can contribute to the solution of the problems encountered in the course of teaching and learning of journalistic English at the university level.

The aim of this book is to give a thorough discussion of each striking feature with ample examples; the method is to bring up the problems and then offer some possible solutions.

The examples and statements quoted or cited in this book are chosen purely on the basis of the author's preference.

Owing to his limited knowledge of English and as a layman of journalism, the author has not been able to go deeper into the topic as expected. However, if, as a result of reading this book, the reader can get some insights into the problems of journalistic English, this book will have achieved its goal.

The author wishes to express his sincere thanks to Dr. Cheng-chung Yu Nyeu, Chairperson of Department of Western Languages and Literature, National Chengchi University, without whose encouragement, this book will not have been made possible.

Gratitude is also due to Professor Ts'ai Chin-Song for his wonderful preface and Mr. Lin Shuo-yen for his painstaking proofreading.

*Hsu Chang-keng*

Taipei, Taiwan

July, 1978

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate the author's ability to put into practice the research method, which may pave the way for further study in any field of his own interest in the future. And in the course of delving into the materials for this subject, the author has the opportunity to examine closely issues upon issues of *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U. S. News & World Report* and a good many related books, from which he has learned a great deal.

This particular study arises out of the author's burning interest in teaching and learning journalistic English, and his long cherished belief that a most effective approach to it is to make a detailed and comprehensive study of newspaper and magazine reading. Such a study might shed some light on the problems he has encountered in the process of teaching. An attempt, therefore, has been made to center on an exhaustive analysis and description of every striking feature of journalistic English. The analysis will be divided into fifteen chapters and each chapter will be taken up and developed to a degree of a completeness of its own.

In this book, emphasis will be placed on the illustration of the ample examples with definitions here and there and from these illustrated examples a conclusion may be drawn.

In addition to the Introduction and the Conclusion, the whole book will be in fifteen chapters: the first seven chapters belong to the characteristics of newspaper English and the last eight chapters are devoted to the characteristics of newsmagazine reading.

The Introduction deals with what this book is about; the first four chapters put special emphasis on the essentials to and

the basic knowledge of newspaper reading.

Chapter five indicates the ways to form coined words, some of which will be extremely helpful to the students, for the dictionary at times lets them down; Chapter seven lays out some down-to-earth methods on how to transcribe Chinese characters.

The last eight chapters call students' attention to classical expressions, foreign words, compound words, verb-and-noun combination, which abound in journalistic English.

The last two chapters are about the author's special interest in figurative expressions and advertising English.

The three things that will be discussed in the Conclusion are first, the summing up of the book, secondly, the discussion on some findings as a result of the present study, and finally, a short comment on teacher's attitude toward teaching as his profession.

Finally, an appendix is added to include a list of hyphenated words or phrases, special expressions, idioms and English-Chinese terms, which can be served as a little dictionary and which might come in handy for quick reference.

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# **PART ONE**

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWSPAPER ENGLISH**

### **Chapter One**

#### **The Headlines**

In teaching and learning newspaper and magazine reading, the teacher and his students have found it at once exciting and rewarding. The exciting is that students are able to keep abreast of the latest development of ever-changing current events, with a burning interest in learning the serious side as well as humorous side of local and international affairs. The serious news items such as Watergate scandal, the impeachment of Mr. Nixon and his resignation, the apartheid policy in South Africa, Lockheed scandal in Japan and Mr. Carter's human rights may provide them with enough food for thought, whereas, on the other hand, students can enjoy humorous news: cartoonists' caricature of Super K, the streaking fad in U. S. universities, and modern fashion like mini-skirt, midi-skirt, micro-skirt; monokini, bikini, minikini and string.

The rewarding is that students can familiarize themselves with a variety of styles and new expressions in the newspapers and magazines. Generally speaking, in a newspaper there is the very formal editorial, the argument of the news analysis, the slang or sarcasm in a letter to the editor, the elliptical phrasing of some columnists, the truncated style of the headline and the dialect of the comic strip. So by reading newspapers and magazines, students will not only increase their vocabulary but also improve their reading ability.

The English newspapers to be used in this study are the *China Post* and the *China News*.

### How a Headline is formed in English newspapers

In reading English newspapers, one of the difficulties the student will face is the headlines. A headline is full of special grammatical structures, technical expressions and abbreviations. The student must keep it in mind that the purpose of and function of the headline is to catch the reader's attention at a glance on the one hand and sum up the whole news story on the other.

For this reason, the structure of English in a headline is somewhat different from that of prose or other writings, at least, from the grammatical point of view.

If he knows what's what about the structure of a headline, the student will be in the right direction toward reading any English newspaper at his disposal.

The following points are some of the most essential characteristics (structures) of a headline:

1. Use simple present tense to indicate the action or event which happened in the past, as in:<sup>1</sup>  
 200 G. I.'s *Clash* With 50 Koreans (=200 Government Issues, i. e. American soldiers clashed with 50 Koreans)  
 Mr. Lu *Wins* Japan Golf Prize In Play-Off  
 Cabbie Murderer *Gets* Death  
 U S *Oks* Lebanon Offer On P O W s
2. Use present progressive to indicate the action or event which is going on at the present moment or in the near future, for instance:

Water Supply *Running* Low In Taipei Area (=Water supply is running low in the Taipei area)

Columbia VIPs *Visiting* Here

Amin *Missing* After Assassination Attempt

Andy Young *Watching* His Tongue

Protectionism *Posing* Threat To World Trade

3. Use the infinitive to indicate the future event or action, for example:

Cuba *To Swap* Captives With US (=Cuba is to swap captives with U S)

H K Students *To Continue* Demonstrations

Panther Leader *To Return* To U S

Gays Rally Worldwide *To Fight* For Rights

India *To Elect* New Prexy On Aug. 8

4. Use the past participle tense to indicate the action or event in the passive tense, as in:

Taiwan Drug Trafficker *Sentenced* To Death (=Taiwan drug trafficker was sentenced to death)

Two Jailbreakers *Charged* In 36 Taipei Burglaries

Peiping *Found* Fishing In Troubled ME Waters With Equipment As Bait

Russians *Said* Spying In Canadian Waters

5. Verb-to-Be is often omitted, unless to avoid ambiguity, for example:

S. Africa *Optimistic* About Future Of Gold (=South Africa is optimistic about the future of gold)

Late-Hour Accord Likely In U. S. — U. K. Air Talk

France Bound To Accept World Court's Jurisdiction

Concorde Valuable For Atmosphere Study

Security Situation In SE Asia Still Crucial, Sensitive

6. Use short phrase for effective purpose, as in:  
 Sanatorium For Needy  
 Butterfly Park In South  
 Local News In Brief  
 Taiwan Rice For Manila
7. The articles ( *a*, *an* and *the* ) are usually omitted in a headline, for instance:  
 Car Rams Into Clinic (= *A* car rammed into *a* clinic)  
 New Crackdown on Auto Pollution  
 Sanatorium For Needy (= *A* sanatorium is for *the* needy)
8. Use comma ( , ) for the omission of *and*, as in the following:  
 Severe Quake Hits Chile , Argentina (=Severe quake hits Chile *and* Argentina).  
 Bus Collision Kills Two , Injures 40  
 U. S. , U S S R To Enlarge N-Test Ban Talk  
 Chris Evert , Russ Gal Enter Wimby Finals
9. Use semi-colon ( ; ) to separate two independent clauses with two different events, as in:  
 India Goes Nuclear; U. S. Concerned  
 Hua Fires Dissidents; Teng's Return Likely  
 Amin To Sever Ties With U. K., Switch Embrace France;  
 Confirms Pilot
10. Use colon ( : ) to indicate the sources of the news, as in:  
 Shen: ROC To Overcome Any Difficulty  
 Carter: SALT Talk Not To Link With Human Rights Concept  
 Many Scholars To Return From U. S. : Dr. Chien  
 Secret Diplomacy Unavoidable: Dr. K

### OPEC Agrees To Freeze Oil Price: Yamani

11. Use question mark (?) to indicate the event or the news which is highly doubtful, for example:

Mao In Critical Condition?

U Thant Open To Draft?

NATO For Far East?

It is interesting to note that the *China Post* and the *China News* have their own ways of handling the headlines: the former tends to headline in small letters except the proper nouns and the word at the very beginning of the headline, while the latter, in a more conservative manner, capitalizes all the words other than the prepositions and the articles, if any.

In traditional practice, it is almost without fail that every word in a headline should be capitalized.

### Handy Headline Words

As rhetorics has it, short words may convey and describe its own meaning more vividly and to the point. Short words may be good words, perhaps the best words to use in the headline. For this reason, they can make the headline more effective and forceful. Another reason is to save some space when the situation calls for.

Here are some short-length words and their more ponderous synonyms:<sup>2</sup>

Accord	agreement	Take	to counterfeit
Aid	assist	Fight	to conquer
Aide	assistant	Grab	to acquire

Bare --- reveal	Group --- committee
Bid --- invitation	Hike --- increase
Body --- group	Hold --- arrest
Boost --- increase	Hold --- retain
Chief --- president	Hurt --- injure
Cite --- honour	Laud --- praise
Clash --- controversy	Named --- elected, appointed
Oust --- expel	Skakeup --- reorganization
Pair --- couple	Slate --- schedule
Parley --- conference	Slay --- murder
Peril --- danger	Spur --- encourage
Plot --- conspire	Unit --- committee
Quit --- resign	Urge --- promote
Raid --- search	Vow --- pledge
Set --- arrange	Win --- victory

---

**Notes:**

1. All these headlines are taken from the *China Post* and the *China News*.
2. Dewit Lin, *An Approach to English Newspaper Reading* (Wu-chow Publishing Company Taipei, 1972), p. 9—p. 10.

## **Chapter Two**

### **News Agencies, Dateline and Lead**

After knowing something about the structure of a headline, the student is now ready for some technical expressions in English newspapers. This chapter is intended to introduce a few major news agencies, the dateline and the lead.

#### **News Agencies**

A news agency is an agency which sends out the news to every nook and corner of the world. At present there are a good many news agencies all over the world. The following are some of the most popular ones:

A P -- the Associated Press (America)

U P I -- the United Press International (America)

A F P -- Agence France Presse (France)

Reuter -- Reuter's Telegraphic Agency (England)

T A S S -- T A S S News Agency (Russia)

Kyodo -- Kyodo News Service (Japan)

C N A -- Central News Agency (Republic of China)

#### **Dateline**

A news story, after the headline, comes the dateline. The dateline is a line at the beginning of the news story in which the name of the place, the date and the news agency are given. Its function is to indicate the sources of the news. The dateline



is usually written in the order of the place, the date and the news agency. For instance:

Taipei, July 1 (CNA) --

Washington, July 6 (AP) --

Tokyo, July 5 (UPI) --

Taipei, July 2 (CNA-AP) --

There is no definite rule when it is to be translated into Chinese. It is entirely a matter of style and up to one's liking. The general ways of translations by Chinese newspapers are of two kinds: London, July 5 (AP) can be translated as either (倫敦七月五日美聯社專電) or (美聯社七月五日倫敦專電)。

The (CNA-AP) means that the news of the AP is transmitted by the CNA

## Lead

The lead is the opening paragraph of the news story, containing all the essential facts in the story. The essential facts of the story are those so-called 6 W's, i.e. Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? of the news story. In short, a lead, like a headline, is to sum up the news in one single paragraph or two.

A good lead, no matter how short or how much it is extended out, has the following qualities: <sup>1</sup>

1. Answers all of the questions that a reader wants to have answered when hearing of a particular event. These include: the cause and result (the *how* or *why* and the *what*), *who* and often the *where* and the *when*. Not all of these must be present in every lead, but no important one should be omitted.