

EMPIRE OF THE PUN:
The use of wordplay in the headlines and
subheadings of *Empire* magazine

Bachelor's thesis
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May 6, 2009

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
KIELTEN LAITOS

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Kandidaatintutkielma

Englannin kieli

Toukokuu 2009

24 sivua + 2 liitettä

Sanaleikit ovat jokapäiväinen keino tavallisille ihmisille huvittaa niin toisiaan kuin itseäänkin, mutta sanaleikeillä on myös muita käyttömahdollisuuksia. Esimerkiksi eri mediat ovat ottaneet tavaksi käyttää sanaleikkejä muun muassa herättämään kiinnostusta sekä myymään tuotteita ja ideoita. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli hahmottaa numeerisesti sanaleikkien käyttöä elokuva-alan aikakauslehden *Empire* otsikoissa ja alaotsikoissa, sekä pohtia syitä käyttötapoihin. Sanaleikkejä on tutkittu jonkin verran, mutta aiemmat tutkimukset ovat keskittyneet etenkin mainoksiin ja muuhun mediaan kuin aikakauslehtiin. Tutkimuksessa termiä sanaleikki käytettiin laajassa merkityksessä, ei pelkästään tarkoittamaan sanojen monimerkityksellisyyksiä, vaan myös kattamaan muun muassa sanoilla ja niiden osilla tehdyt kulttuuriset viittaukset sekä rakenteelliset leikit.

Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui yhteensä kahdestatoista *Empire* -lehden numerosta (1/06 – 12/06), joista alkukeväällä 2009 kerättiin yhteensä 250 otsikkoa (N=179) ja alaotsikkoa (N=71), joissa oli ainakin yhdentyypinen sanaleikki. Otsikot poimittiin kaikkialta lehdistä, mutta lehdissä toistuvia (pysyvien osioiden) otsikoita ei laskettu mukaan. Löydetyt sanaleikit luokiteltiin kategorioihin, jotka muodostettiin aiemman samantyyppisen tutkimuksen pohjalta. Kategorioiden sisältämät otsikot ja niiden prosentuaaliset osuudet koko näytteestä laskettiin numeerisesti. Hypoteeseina oli, että osassa otsikoista ja alaotsikoista olisi useampi kuin yksi sanaleikki, ja että sanaleikit keskittyisivät muutamaa kategoriota.

Tulokset osoittivat hypoteesit oikeiksi. Yhteensä erilaisia sanaleikkejä löytyi otsikoista ja alaotsikoista 307 kappaletta, mikä tarkoittaa, että 250:stä otsikosta 57:ssä oli kaksi sanaleikkiä. Löydetyt 307 sanaleikkiä jakaantuivat yhteensä 14:ään kategoriaan, joista kaksi kategoriaa kattoivat hieman vajaa puolet (49,5%) kaikista sanaleikeistä. Mahdollisia taustasyitä saaduille tuloksille arveltiin olevan sanaleikkien käyttötarkoitus kiinnostusta herättämässä, sekä sisäpiiriin kuulumisen tunteen luominen lukijoiden ja toimittajien yhteistä tietopohjaa hyväksi käyttäen.

Tutkimuksen tärkein ongelmakohta on sen subjektiivisuudessa: ei-syntyperäisen tutkijan ei välttämättä ole aina täysin mahdollista tunnistaa kaikkia teksteissä esiintyviä sanaleikkejä. Myös lehden erittäin tiukka sidonnaisuus elokuvagenreen voi aiheuttaa ongelmia: lehden tutkiminen vaatii tutkijalta tietoa alasta, eivätkä kaikki ”sisäpiirin vitsit” näin aina tule selviksi. Lisätutkimus voitaisiin laajentaa myös muualle lehden teksteihin, kuten arvosteluihin ja kuvateksteihin. Myös vertailevaa tutkimusta saman alan eri lehtien välillä voitaisiin tehdä.

Asiasanat: wordplay, headline, subheading, magazine

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1 INTRODUCTION

Language is an instrument of various things: power, intrigue and knowledge to name but a few. It is also an instrument and a source of a couple of the human being's key characteristics: curiosity and playfulness. With language and of language people construct forms, expressions and variations of language to amuse both themselves and each other. Every day people either themselves produce or otherwise encounter play with language. Amusement, however, is not the only use people have for the funny side of language. Playing with language is a powerful tool to persuade, raise interest and attraction and even sell products and ideas.

One of the ways to play with language, and also probably one of the most common ways to do it, are wordplays. Their usage is so wide-ranging that one can encounter them almost in every area of language use. Their efficacy in reaching their purpose as entertainment makes them excellent tools for the modern applications of language: advertisements, comics, comedians, films and newspapers are but a few examples of media and people who play with words in order to sell, raise interest or make a point.

The frequency of wordplays in media has led to various studies on the subject. There have been several studies done on wordplays in advertisements, for example those conducted by Leigh (1994) and van Mulken et al. (2005). Also, some researches have concentrated on wordplays in both films and television. Examples of this are the study done by Díaz Pérez (2008) and some of the pro gradu theses conducted at the University of Jyväskylä. The pro gradu studies of the University of Jyväskylä also include approaches to wordplays from the point of view of newspaper language, for example the study conducted by Kauppi (1971).

Despite the frequency of studies on wordplays, there is, to my knowledge, no study exactly from the same perspective as mine. I will analyse the use of wordplays in the headlines of a film magazine from a quantitative point of view, that is to find out how frequent the use of wordplays in the magazine is. Some of the earlier studies have also covered headlines but their focus has been on advertisement headlines rather than on magazine headlines. In addition, the studies covering the written media, i.e. magazines or newspapers did not take the same perspective as I, and tend not be very recent. These factors combined leave a valid space for my study in the field of research on words.

In this paper I will first look at the background information of my study in Chapter 2, which consists of two parts: insights into different aspects of wordplays and a brief overview

on headlines and subheadings. Then I will proceed to introducing the data and methods used in this study in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will present the results of the study, which I will analyse in Chapter 5. I will conclude with summarising the results and analysis along with suggesting improvements and further studies in Chapter 6.

2 ON WORDPLAYS AND HEADLINES

In this chapter I will discuss the theoretical background behind the phenomenon of wordplays, and headlines. In Chapter 2.1 I will first introduce the idea of wordplay in general, then continue with a more in depth examination of the subject by looking at the different ways of defining wordplay in Chapter 2.1.1, inspecting the various forms and functions of wordplay in Chapter 2.1.2, and ending with a closer look on the use of wordplay. In Chapter 2.2 I will discuss headlines and subheadings, that is what they are and how and why they function as they do. I will end Chapter 2 by presenting my research questions and hypotheses I had prior to realising the study.

2.1 Wordplays

Wordplays often refer to intentionally using words and word forms that differ from the conventional or expected. Wordplays can be, and often are, used in everyday language use, but they also are a very effective way to spice up language in various media, such as newspapers, magazines, television and cinema to name but a few. In this chapter I will discuss the different aspects of the phenomenon of playing with words ranging from definitions to structural features of wordplay. In Chapter I will first introduce some definitions of wordplay, continue with discussing the different forms wordplays can occur in and, thirdly, illustrate some of the uses of wordplays.

2.1.1 Definitions of wordplay

One of the definitions of wordplays, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008), is that wordplays (or figures of speech) are “any intentional deviations from literal statement or common usage that emphasizes, clarifies, or embellishes both written and spoken language”. This means that a seemingly fixed form, word or expression is used deliberately in a way that

is out of character to highlight or explain something that is being said or written. The intentional deviations from the norms of language use are made understandable and acceptable through the context and the author and reader's shared knowledge.

Delabastita (1996: 128), on the other hand, defines wordplay (as quoted by Díaz Pérez 2008: 37) as following:

Wordplay is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings (Delabastita 1996: 128)

This is a narrower definition than that of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008), referring in my view more to puns than the entire variety of ways to play with words that forms the hyperterm wordplay. It focuses more on the meanings and forms, whereas the other definition includes also for example such wordplays that use insertions and omissions or associations. In my paper I will have a wider approach to wordplays, since *Empire* magazine does not limit their play with words to just puns, but it ranges from puns to alliteration and use of a person's or a film's name in a wordplay to name but a few. The latter are often understood as examples of rhetorical figurative speech (see for example Iarovici et al. 1989 and Leigh 1994), which are used in all kinds of texts for persuasive purposes – to enhance meanings, attract the reader and to maintain attention (see Larson 1992). I will include in the term 'wordplay' both punning and the rhetorical figures of speech, which are all discussed more in depth in Chapter 2.1.

I understand wordplays as a variety of textual features used in an unusual, yet humorous and interesting way in order to arouse curiosity, give pleasure and attract the reader. In addition I include the importance of context and shared knowledge in the definition: a wordplay cannot work properly without the author and the reader both having experience in the cultural environment of the text. These aspects are also emphasized by Iarovici et al (1989: 444).

2.1.2 The forms and functions of wordplays

In addition to the different definitions, wordplays can be categorised variedly. The Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008) states that in Europe the most common way to categorise wordplays is to divide them into five sections:

1. figures of resemblance or relationship
2. figures of emphasis or understatement
3. figures of sound
4. verbal games and gymnastics
5. errors

The first category consists of such methods as the use of simile ('*you eat like a horse*') and metaphor ('*it's raining cats and dogs*'), the second rhetorical questions and antithesis, which is the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas ('*from unnatural to natural*'), the third for example alliteration; symmetry of consonant sounds ('*Mad Max*') and repetition. The fourth category includes puns ('*Decimals have a point.*') and anagrams and the fifth for example malapropism, which means accidentally replacing a word in an utterance with a word that near in sound and structure but otherwise incorrect (Katamba 2005: 282) and spoonerism, which means the accidental transposition of sounds in an utterance, for example when saying "*Is the bean dizzy?*" when meaning "*Is the dean busy?*" (Katamba 2005: 275).

This categorisation is a very loose collection of wordplays and also includes unintentional wordplays and slips in its fifth category. For my study the most important categories were the categories 2-4, since the headlines of *Empire* magazine do not use so many metaphors or similes, nor can they be considered to be errors made by the writers. That is why I used a more compact categorisation in my research, which was greatly aided by the categorisation by Leigh (1994).

Leigh's basic categorisation is also fairly loose, but he has a clear system of subcategorisation, which I was able to adapt to fit the needs of my material. Whereas Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008) divides wordplays into five categories, Leigh (1994: 18-22) introduces a categorisation which consists of two hypercategories, which he again divides into smaller subcategories. As can be seen in the diagram in Appendix 1, the two larger categories are *the tropes*, which cover the play with meanings, and *the schemes*, which consists of wordplays with grammar (Leigh 1994: 18). The subcategories under *the tropes* are *puns* and *associations*. These are again divided into smaller sections of wordplay. *Puns* including such subcategories as *antanaclasis*, which are plays with homonymy and polysemy ('*Our frequent fliers can frequent other fliers*' – British Airways ad) and *paronomasia* meaning plays with homophones ('*If you want to get read, use red.*' - Panasonic copiers ad). Associations consist of six larger subcategories (see the exact names in Appendix 1) and sixteen smaller subcategories (such as allusion, irony and onomatopoeia). (Leigh, 1994: 19-20)

The schemes consist of *playing with word order, deliberate word omissions and insertions, repetition and rhyming*. Under the *plays with word order* are such categories as *antithesis* (use of contrast, 'Sundown vs. Sun damage' – Sundown sunblock ad) and *climax* ('You're in trouble. You've had an accident. You need a lawyer.' - American Express ad). *Word omissions and insertions* include for example *asyndeton* (leaving out conjunctions, 'Come. Feel the warmth of Mexico.' – Turismo de Mexico ad) and *polysyndeton* (use of multiple conjunctions, 'Panasonic also gets you read with blue, or brown, or green.' - Panasonic copiers ad). The category *repetition* is divided into several subcategories, such as *alliteration* (repetition of initial or medial consonants, 'Salon Secrets for thick, fuller hair.' - Jhirmack ad), *assonance* (repetition of vowel sounds, 'I hate to wait!' - Avis ad) and *polyptoton* (repeating words derived from the same root, 'Get your money's worth. Or your money back.' - General Electric ad). The two subcategories under *rhyme* are *end rhyme* ('KitchenAid. For the way it's made.' - KitchenAid ad) and *internal rhyme* ('7-Footer. High and dry for those who sky.' - Wigwam Mills ad). (Leigh, 1994: 21-22)

I used Leigh's (1994) basic system of categorising the wordplays, but made some alterations in the smaller categories by fusing some categories and relocating some categories and subcategories. This was due to the diversity and specificity of Leigh's (1994) categories: the wordplays in *Empire* magazine did not include all types of wordplay recognised by Leigh. Thus my categories are condensed and adjusted to suit the purpose of my study.

Also Iarovici et al. (1989) categorise some wordplays often used in headlines. They do not use any strict classification, but rather introduce the various types of wordplay. The common wordplays include in their view for example homonymy and polysemy, and additionally allusions, antithesis and irony. As for example Katamba (2005: 122) states, homonyms are words that carry multiple meanings, though they are written orthographically in the same way *e.g. light* and *table*. Also polysemy has to do with double meanings: the same word or phrase holds different meanings depending on the context and the intentions of the language user. The distinction between homonymy and polysemy might often be quite difficult to define, but the basic difference is that homonyms are words having similar written forms but unrelated meanings, whereas polysemic words' meanings are somewhat related (for example the *foot* of a person or a mountain) (see for example Yule 1996: 120-121; Katamba 2005: 122).

As for the other categories of Iarovici et al. (1989), allusions are references to other

texts, media and to elsewhere within the culture. Antithesis is, according to Leigh (1994: 21), “the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas”, and it often uses antonyms, word pairs such as *big – small*, *strong – weak* in creative expressions. Irony as a type of wordplay can for example be realized through mocking mimicry of some established form of writing or speech, as can later be seen in the examples of headlines in *Empire* magazine. The division of wordplays by Iarovici et al. (1989) and the description of each type of wordplay were also of use when I categorised the wordplays found in *Empire* magazine, since it was a basic set of categories that were clearly defined, and the wordplays of the headlines were fitted fairly well into these categories.

2.1.3 The use of wordplays

The use of wordplays or figures of speech is a humorous method to increase the attractiveness and interaction of a certain piece of text. They are frequently used in e.g. advertisements, headlines, captions and slogans: Leigh (1994: 26) argues in his study of quite a reasonable sample of advertisement headlines (N=2138) that more than 70% of print advertisements use at least one kind of wordplay in their slogans or headlines. The wordplays found in different media consist of multiple kinds of wordplay, such as play with homonymy, paronymy, polysemy, allusions, alliteration etc. (e.g. Iarovici et al. 1989), but the definitions and categorisation of wordplays vary. I will discuss the categorisation I chose for this paper more in depth in Chapter 3.3, but in brief it can be said that I formed the categories based on the categorisations done by Iarovici et al. (1989) and Leigh (1994) and my own perceptions of the wordplays in *Empire* magazine.

Wordplays are constantly being used in order to attract the audience's attention, to give the audience the pleasure of understanding the wordplays and to create an atmosphere of common knowledge, which again makes the accompanying text more accessible for the audience (Iarovici et al. 1989: 444; van Mulken et al. 2005: 708). The purpose of wordplays stays quite the same despite the environment they are used in. Iarovici et al. (1989: 444-445) argue that rhetoric devices are useful in headlines of any kind of text for increasing the reader's attraction to the text following the headline, and van Mulken et al. (2005: 708) agree that a successful wordplay in an advertisement gives the reader a pleasurable experience, which the reader might well associate with the product the advertisement is trying to sell.

Leigh (1994: 17) takes this even further and states that a wordplay helps the reader to remember the advertisement and the product. Considering all the above one could argue that wordplays are used in order to sell the accompanying product, whether it is a text, a picture or something the ad is marketing. In the case of *Empire* magazine I believe this to be true, and in addition to that, I think some of the wordplays are also used in order to display the author's or authors' knowledge of the cultural background of films. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

In addition to the purposes of arousal of attraction and giving pleasurable experiences for the audience, a wordplay can function as the indicator of the point of view the author takes in the accompanying text. Iarovici et al. (1989: 446-447) state that the humor and irony of wordplays can show the author's attitude, and also make the reader adopt the author's point of view. This means that wordplays are a very good way to persuade the audience, as well as entertain them. For this kind of persuasion it is important for the author to know the demographics of the audience (Larson 1992: 297), since putting one's attitude in plain sight by wordplays and word choices might estrange the audience as well as it can attract them and make them sympathize with one's point of view.

2.2 Headlines and subheadings

In this chapter I will discuss the headline and subheading as textual phenomena, that is their functions as part of an entity that form a certain type of text: an article, an advertisement or even a picture. A headline functions as the main title of the text, often written in a larger font than the rest of the text. A subheading on the other hand can be defined, according to Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2006), as a secondary title usually placed under the headline which gives additional information on both the headline and the accompanying text.

Headlines can be seen as the most important part of a text. For example Leigh (1994: 17) states that a headline's importance in a text (and in his case, print advertisements) is based on their function as a slogan to the entire text and as an attraction to the reader. Headlines are used in various sorts of texts, ranging from newspaper articles to essays, academic theses, advertisements and even pictures. The headline's position in front of the text, and its emphasis by often large and visible fonts (Iarovici et al. 1989: 441) makes it the window to the

following text and thus important.

Even though headlines are important to the accompanying text, they are not, in my view, inseparably attached to them. Iarovici et al. (1989: 441) argue that a headline cannot stand alone, and would not even work by itself, but always needs to be attached to a text. This, in my opinion, is not always true, since my study (alongside many others) is based on examining headlines as separate units of a text. I think a headline is an important part of a text, but it can be taken out of its context and viewed as an independent piece of text with form, function and meaning of its own. It has to be nevertheless said that the additional features a headline possesses when attached to a text, such as tone or opinion of the author, may not always be visible when a headline is inspected separately, but most of the different aspects and qualities of headlines can, however, be examined.

Further reason for studying headlines as separate units is that today it is increasingly likely to encounter headlines as separate units: for example a large number of websites display only the headlines of texts published online, and to read the texts one has to open new browser pages. In addition, many people read newspapers and magazines by glancing through the headlines without reading the accompanying articles, which further proves a headline's position as an independent text.

As Leigh (1994: 17) argues, headlines can be analysed from very different points of view. The actual physical form can be analysed (e.g. the font, number of words), and also the psychological aspect is a legitimate view to headlines. In this paper I concentrate more on the linguistic approach to headlines. However, I do not believe the other approaches are completely separate from the linguistic aspect, but rather they are largely connected to the linguistic features used.

The headline has two functions according to Iarovici et al. (1989: 442), *a semantic function* and *a pragmatic function*. The former means that a headline tells the reader something about the following text, and the latter that a headline's task is to form a connection between the author and the reader. The semantic function is made visible through the associations to the subject in the headline and the pragmatic function through rhetoric means and thus the linguistic features of the headline (Iarovici et al. 1989: 445). The author shows his appreciation of the reader's capacity to understand and notice linguistic features by using different linguistic methods to enhance the effect of the headline, and this forms the notion of shared knowledge, as Iarovici et al. (1989: 444) state.

Headlines in newspapers and magazines are not usually written by the author of the accompanying text, but instead most publications have a copy editor who is in charge of the headlines in particular (Lennon 2004: 80). Lennon also argues that this can mean that as the responsibility of selling the texts to the audience is on one person, the quality and inventiveness of the headlines might be in jeopardy. On the other hand I see the concentration of headline creation as an asset, since the copy editor can put all energy of writing into the process of contriving witty and catchy headlines.

2.3 The research questions and hypotheses

By doing this study I wished to establish some knowledge on the wordplays used in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine, which is a British magazine concentrating on films and film industry. I wanted to see if there can be wordplays found in the magazine and categorise the wordplays I could find. If possible, I also wanted to discuss some possible reasons behind the use of (certain types of) wordplay. My research questions were as follow:

1. How many wordplays are there in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine? What kind of wordplays are they? Are there any preferred types of wordplay, and if there are, what are they?
2. What are the possible reasons behind the use of wordplays? And if there is evidence of preferences in the types of wordplay, what is the reason for it?

On the basis of the pilot study my group did for the course *What Is A Word* in Spring 2008 some hypotheses could be made. The first was that it would be probable that quite a few headlines and subheadings that utilise more than one type of wordplay could be found. Secondly, I was likely to find that the wordplays tend to concentrate on some categories, since the pilot study showed that allusions and plays with extended/multiple meanings of a word or a phrase were dominant in the magazine.

3 DATA AND METHODS

The purpose of this study was to discover whether there are wordplays used in the headlines and subheading of *Empire* magazine, and what kind of wordplays they are. Additionally the intention was to form categories on the wordplays found, and count the percentages of wordplays in different categories. In this chapter I will introduce the data used in the study and the methods I utilized in doing the research. Also, I will reason the choices I made with material and methods, and also discuss some alternative ways of executing the study and why I decided not to use them. First I will briefly discuss the magazine itself, then continue with introducing the material and data, and last explain the method of the study.

3.1 *Empire* magazine

Empire magazine is a British film magazine, which is published monthly. It is the largest film magazine in the UK with a circulation of 189,619 (Jul-Dec 2008), and likely the most selling film magazine in the world. Its target audience consists of 76 % male readers, who are film enthusiasts and professionals worldwide. (Bauer Media online.)

The magazine consists of several regular sections, in addition to multiple film reviews, interviews, special features and exclusives. The focus of the magazine is not a narrow look at some area of films and film industry, but instead ranges from blockbusters to classics and modern cinema. (Bauer Media online.) I could have chosen some other film magazine (e.g. another British magazine *Total Film*) for this research, but the diversity of *Empire's* interests and sections along with its appreciation among the enthusiasts and professionals of the business made it the most practical choice as an example of a film magazine. Also, it has a target audience that covers very likely all types of film enthusiasts, instead of limiting its target to for example people who only like classic films or blockbusters, which means that the language used is not strictly limited but can vary quite widely.

3.2 The data

My choice of data includes the headlines and subheadings of altogether twelve issues of *Empire* magazine, beginning from the January 2006 issue and ending with the December 2006

issue. I decided for the year's span in the issues, since I believed it would give me enough material to analyse. One year's worth of issues was also, in my view, enough for me to make some generalisations on the basis of what I would find. I gathered the data at the end of January and early February 2009.

Other options for the data were also available. First, I could have chosen either fewer issues or more issues, but I believe there would have been some problems with both of those decisions. In the former case there might not have been enough data to analyse, and in the latter the research might have expanded slightly too large for this type of small study. Second, I could have chosen some other parts of the magazine to analyse, for example only the reviews or interviews, but I chose headlines and subheadings instead, since they would be easy enough material to gather, and would give an overall look on the magazine's editorial inventiveness.

I began gathering the data by going through all the magazines from cover to cover and trying to find and identify wordplays in both the headlines and subheadings. The headlines and subheadings were taken from every section of the magazine, but I excluded the fixed headlines with wordplays of some specific sections. The reason for this was that the wordplays in those headlines were likely to have been created before the time period in question and thus I did not want to include them in the study. I wrote down all the headlines and subheadings with identifiable wordplays, the issue and section of the magazine I found them in and a short explanation of the wordplay in question. I got together a data which consisted of altogether 250 headlines and subheadings with one or more wordplays in them. Of the 250 there were 180 headlines and 70 subheadings.

3.3 Methods of analysis

After gathering the data I began the analysis. First I read through the headlines and subheadings I had found, and also the explanation I had written after each headline or subheading. Then I began to identify the wordplays in the material. In this process I used Leigh's (1994: 19-22) table of categories of wordplay as major source, and used it as a guideline for my own categorisation. I again went through the entire material, and named each type of wordplay I found by adapting Leigh's names for different categories to fit my material.

Having gone through the entire material and naming the wordplays, I wrote down all the different types found and compared it with Leigh's (1994: 19-22) table to see which were

the most important categories for my study. After that I formed an Excel file of the categories, in which I titled each column with one type of wordplay. Then I placed every headline and subheading in the column that represented the wordplay used in them. If there were wordplays which utilized two or more type of wordplays, I marked them with coloured font to be able to separate them from the ones that used only one type of wordplay.

After placing the headlines and subheadings in the table I counted the number of headlines and subheadings in each category and compared the numbers to the entire amount of wordplays found and to the total number of headlines and subheadings. I counted the percentages for each category, in order to examine which were the largest categories, and which the smallest.

I will now explain the categories I formed after examining the material and comparing it with Leigh's (1994: 19-22) table of categories. A table of my categories, their precise definitions and examples of each category can be found in Appendix 2. As the table shows, first I divided the wordplays into two main categories, *the tropes*, which play with meanings of the words, and *the schemes*, which play with grammar. The trope category consists of two subcategories, *puns* and *associations*. The pun category covers plays with multiple meanings and relation in meaning, and is further divided into three sections. The first of them consists of *polysemy and homonymy*, the second of *homophony* and the third of *fixed phrases with a twist*. *Associations*, on the other hand, consists of various types of associative wordplays, and is further divided into four subcategories. The subcategories are *allusions*, *oxymoron*, *parody* and *onomatopoeia and ortographical play*. Since the allusions were very multiple, that subcategory was divided into four different subcategories, references to person's name, a film's name, to a film's contents and to other media and texts.

The schemes were also divided into two main subcategories, *repetition* and *rhyming*. As there were various types of repetition, this subcategory consists of three subcategories, *alliteration*, *repetition of word with same root* and *repetition of the same word*. At first the rhyming category consisted of two different categories, *internal rhymes* and *replacement of a part of a phrase with a rhyming word*, but after placing the headlines into the categories I noticed that all the examples of the latter used also some other type of wordplay and rhyming was not the primary wordplay. Thus I decided to discard this category, and place all the rhymes simply under *rhyming*.

This division into categories was in my view the best option, since it was extensive

enough to cover all the different wordplays, but still compact enough to be fairly easily understood. I could have done even further subcategorisation, for example divide the large category polysemy and homonymy into separate categories and the category of references to a film's name into references to the name of the film in question and references to other films' titles. The mentioned types of wordplay were, nonetheless, so close to each other, that for clarity I decided to put them into the same category. Furthermore, I could have put onomatopoeia and oxymoron into two separate categories, but these types of wordplay are sometimes very difficult to tell apart and, as can be seen in Chapter 4, there were quite few examples in both categories, so I decided to merge them into one category.

4 RESULTS

In this chapter I will present the results of the study. I will first introduce the numerical results of the different types of wordplays, then proceed with percentages and figures that illustrate the distribution of wordplays in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine.

As discussed in Chapter 3.2, there were altogether 250 headlines and subheadings that utilized wordplays in the material, 180 headlines and 70 subheadings. On average there were approximately 20 (20.9) headlines/subheadings with wordplay in one issue of *Empire* magazine, figure which I was able to count by dividing the total number of headlines/subheadings with the number of the sample issues of *Empire*, i.e. 12.

I counted also the approximate percentage of headlines/subheadings that used wordplay per issue by counting the total number of one issue's headlines and subheadings and dividing the number of headlines/subheadings with wordplay in that particular issue by it. The result was that approximately 18.2% of the original headlines and subheadings utilise at least one type of wordplay. I tried to make the sample issue fairly normal, i.e. that it would not be the Christmas number or a special features number. I did not include the fixed headlines and subheadings or the headlines of most reviews that were the exact names of the film in question and thus not *Empire* originals. I decided to generalise the result of this calculation to represent the average number of headlines/ subheadings with wordplay per issue, since it would take more time to count each issue separately, and since each issue is quite different as a whole.

Of the 250 headlines and subheadings there were 57 with multiple wordplays. This fitted well into the first hypothesis I mentioned in Chapter 2.3, since there were quite a few

headlines and subheadings with multiple wordplays. All in all I was able to identify 307 wordplays in the data, and the 307 could be divided into fourteen different types of wordplay (see the categories in Appendix 2).

The second hypothesis that most of the wordplays found would focus on one or two categories proved also correct. The largest categories were *I A 1) Polysemy and homonymy* and *I B 2 Allusions* as a whole. They covered altogether 225 of all the wordplays, that is some 73.3%. The single largest category was *I B 2) b References to a film's title* with an entry of 88 (some 29 % of all the wordplays), and quite close in size was category *I A 1) Polysemy/homonymy* with 64 entries (some 21% of all the wordplays).

When the results are looked at different levels of hierarchy in the categories (see Appendix 2), the variation between categories becomes clear. In Table 1 it is illustrated how distinctly the wordplays are divided at the first level of hierarchy the focus laying on *the tropes*. i.e. playing with meanings and associations. *The schemes*, which are plays with grammar cover only some 8% of all the wordplays found in the twelve issues of the magazine. This division of wordplays is even more visible in Figure 1, which is a diagram of the percentages of the two main categories.

Table 1. The numbers and percentages of wordplays at the first level of hierarchy in the categories.

Category	Number of wordplays per category (N)	Percentage of all the wordplays
I The Tropes	283	~92%
II The Schemes	24	~8%
Totals	307	100%

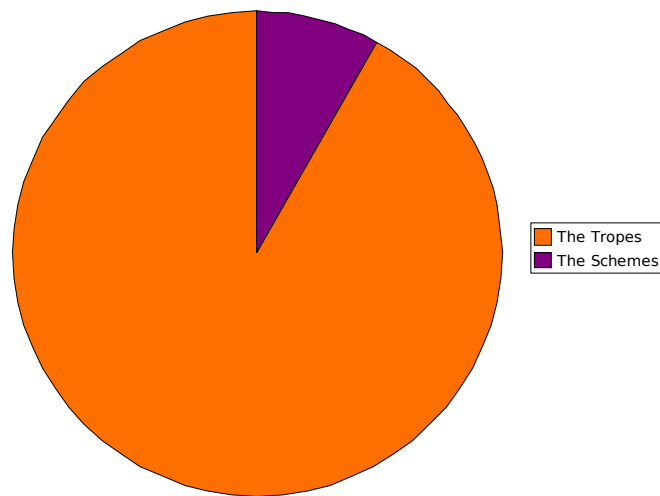


Figure 1. The distribution of wordplays on the first level of hierarchy in the categories

At the second level of hierarchy the main result is the distribution of wordplays between *puns* and *associations*. As can be seen in Table 2, *associations* take up over 50%, and puns cover a third of the total number of the wordplays. Figure 2 further illustrates the division of wordplays into the second level categories. The two main subcategories under *the schemes* are in the clear minority, repetition being the slightly larger category of the two.

Table 2. The numbers and percentages of wordplays at the second level of hierarchy in the categories.

Category	Number of wordplays per category (N)	Percentage of all the wordplays
I The Tropes		
A. Puns	100	~32.6%
B. Associations	183	~59.6%
II The Schemes		
A. Repetition	13	~4.2%
B. Rhyming	11	~3.6%
Totals	307	100%

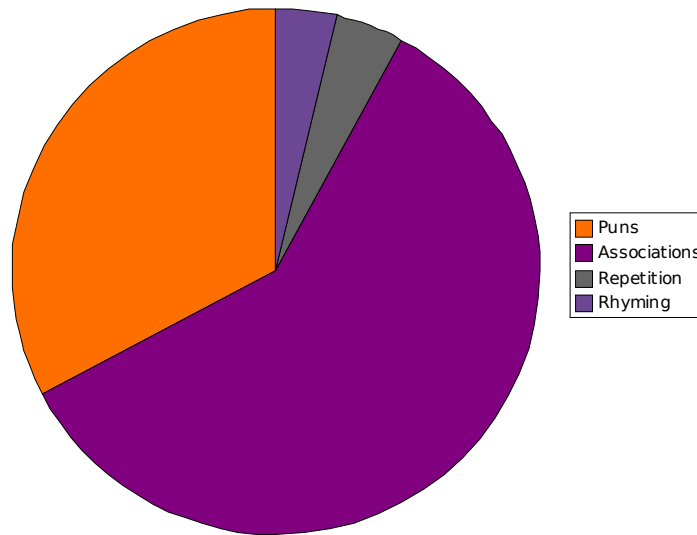


Figure 2. The distribution of wordplays on the second level of hierarchy in the categories

When the distribution of wordplays into the categories is studied at the third and fourth levels of hierarchy, it can be seen that, as mentioned above, *polysemy / homonymy* and *allusions* are the two largest categories, and of those *allusions* covers altogether over half of the entire number of wordplays found. What can also be seen by looking at Table 3 is that under the third level category *allusions* there is a fourth level subcategory of *references to a film's name* which is by numbers a larger category than any other of the third level categories (including *polysemy / homonymy*) with an entry of 88, and percentage of some 28.7. This is not evident in Figure 3, which covers only the distribution of wordplays at the third level in hierarchy, since there was a fourth level of subcategories in only one third level category, that is *allusions*. In Table 3 the totals out of brackets represent only the totals of the third and fourth level categories, and the totals within brackets include also the second level category of *rhyming* which did not contain any subcategories.

Table 3. The numbers and percentages of wordplays at the third and fourth level of hierarchy in the categories.

Category	Number of wordplays per category (N)	Percentage of all the wordplays
I The Tropes		
A. Puns		
1) Polysemy / homonymy	64	~20.8%
2) Homophony	8	~2.6%
3) A phrase with a twist	28	~9.1%
B. Associations		
1) Allusions	162	~52.8%
a. Reference to a person	21	~6.8%
b. Reference to a film's name	88	~28.7%
c. Reference to a film's contents	34	~11.1%
d. Reference to other media and text	19	~6.2%
2) Oxymoron	3	~1%
3) Parody	11	~3.6%
4) Play with onomatopoeia and ortography	7	~2.3%
II The Schemes		
A. Repetition		
1) Alliteration	5	~1.6%
2) Polypoton	7	~2.3%
3) Repetition	1	~0.3%
B. Rhyming	(11)	(~3.6%)
Totals	296(307)	~96.4 % (100 %)

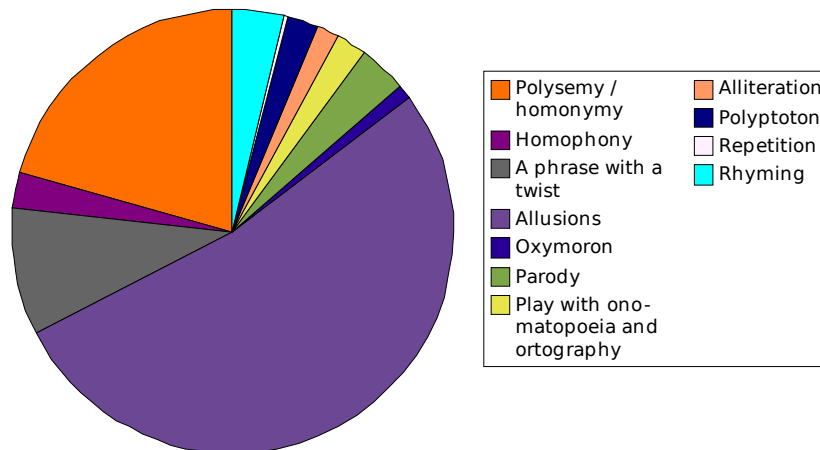


Figure 3. The distribution of wordplays at the third level of hierarchy in the categories

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will first discuss the answers I found to my first research question, then proceed to examining the hypotheses and the results and finish the chapter by considering some reasons for the overall results and use of wordplays in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine and thus answering the second research question. The results of the study were successful in the sense that they answered the research questions I had, and also corresponded to the hypotheses I named prior to carrying out the study.

The first research question was about how many and what kinds of wordplays could be found in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine, and whether there were any preferred wordplays used. For this question I found fairly straight forward answers: within a year's worth of issues of the magazine, there were 250 headlines and subheadings with at least one type of wordplay, and altogether 307 wordplays. On average there were some 20 headlines/ subheadings with wordplays per one issue. The 307 wordplays could be divided into fourteen separate categories, and of those categories clearly largest were *associations* as a

whole and *polysemy/ homonymy* in the hypercategory of *puns*.

The first hypothesis related to the first research question was that there would be a fairly large proportion of headlines and subheadings that utilised more than one type of wordplay. This also proved to be true, since the number of those headlines of the 250 was 57. Also the second hypothesis was concerned to the first research question; I predicted that most of the wordplays would concentrate in only few different categories. This also proved true, as can be seen in the Tables 1, 2 and 3 and Figures 1, 2 and 3 in Chapter 4, there were few major categories and many notably smaller categories. The results also somewhat followed the results of for example Leigh's (1994) research on print advertisement headlines, since also he agreed that some types of wordplays occur more often than others. Leigh's (1994) results concerning the position of puns also agreed with mine, since in his study the category of puns was the second largest, like it was in mine.

Where my results differed from Leigh's (1994) was the distribution of headlines: his results showed that the two main categories, *the tropes* and *the schemes* had nearly the same number of entries with *the schemes* slightly larger, whereas in my study *the tropes* covered the clear majority of wordplays. Also, whereas allusions were the type of wordplay most frequently used in *Empire* magazine, it was not so in Leigh's (1994) study of advertisements. In my opinion this is because advertisements are not as limited a text type as articles in a magazine of a very specific genre in which the connoisseurs wish to showcase their knowledge more than sell an item, as it is with advertisements.

When discussed further, the reason why *the schemes* were not as popular a choice of wordplay as *the tropes* in *Empire* magazine is, in my view, the result of them not being as relevant and important for the purpose of the headlines of the magazine. Headlines, as discussed in Chapter 2.2, sell the accompanying product, whether an item or a text. In the case of a text (or an article in *Empire* magazine), however, the selling process must be instant and it has to raise interest at that precise moment, and forth is purpose allusions and puns are better, since the riddling and including the reader attracts them to further test their abilities, as discussed later in this chapter. Grammatical wordplays in headlines, on the other hand, are often intended to be more memorable, such as alliterative slogans or rhyming poem-like forms that stick to one's mind. This is in my view one of the reasons for them being quite scarce in magazine headlines, but frequent in advertisement headlines as shown by Leigh (1994).

The matters discussed in the earlier paragraph function also as a partial answer to the second research question which concerned the reasons behind the use of wordplays, and the possible preferences of the types of wordplay. Another answer is the involvement and attraction of the reader, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.3. The wordplays function as baits for the readers to become interested in the text accompanying the headline, and proceed to reading it. As for the preferences, there are, in my view, two main reasons. The first is the shared knowledge and representing one's expertise of the genre of films, and the second is the pleasurable experience given by solving the riddle and 'getting' the fun of it.

The theory of shared knowledge as a reason of using wordplays was also recognised by Iarovici et al. (1989) among others, and is well supported by my results that presented *associations*, and within it *allusions*, as the largest category. The references to film titles, people, films' contents and other texts were constant in the headlines and subheadings, and they appeared as a norm for every issue to contain. Sometimes the allusions were quite specific and required thorough knowledge of the subject to be understood. If the allusions were understood, it will give, as agreed by both Iarovici et al. (1989: 444) and van Mulken et al. (2005: 708), the reader a feeling of being included and better access to the accompanying text.

Punning being another major way of playing with words is most likely due to their purpose of being not only humorous but also enigmatic. As Iarovici et al. (1989) and for example van Mulken et al. (2005: 708) argue, some types of wordplay do not necessarily require any major thought processes from the reader, but puns' characteristic of being riddles as well as wordplays assures their popularity. I would like to add that this characteristic is true also with allusions, since the reader is given a task to solve which other text, media, person etc. if being referred to, and that is where they gain pleasure and more interest in the accompanying text.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the numerical use of wordplay and the types of wordplay in the headlines and subheadings of *Empire* magazine, and to consider some of the reasons behind the use. The results showed that the use of wordplay was fairly frequent, and the wordplays were most likely to be either puns or associative wordplays, such as allusions.

The reasons behind the use were congruent with those generally agreed: the attraction of the reader's attention, holding that attention, giving pleasurable experiences and feelings of shared knowledge to the reader.

Although the results matched fairly well with what was expected, the study is not by any means absolute or impeccable. The categories are not perfect, since they leave room for subjectivity: what may be, for example, without a doubt homophony or polysemy for one person, may be seen as a twist of a common phrase by another. Another example is that what may on one hand be seen as parody could also be considered as twisting a form of speech or phrase. Additionally, another problem with this kind of study is the subjectivity of actually identifying the wordplays. The genre of the magazine is very specific, and thus the wordplays tend to play quite strongly with inside knowledge of the genre. This, and the fact that I am not a native speaker of the language, could have caused a margin of error in the results, since I might not have simply been able to recognise all the wordplays in the magazine.

This analysis leaves room for further applications and improvements. The study covered only one aspect of the use of wordplays in *Empire* magazine, since the data consisted only of headlines and subheadings. The various types of articles in the magazine also include wordplays and other plays with language, to which the linguistic analysis of the magazine could be extended. In addition, this analysis introduces only one magazine's tendency to play with language, and further studies could include also other magazines of the same type and comparison between magazines in order to establish whether the results of this study could be further generalised.

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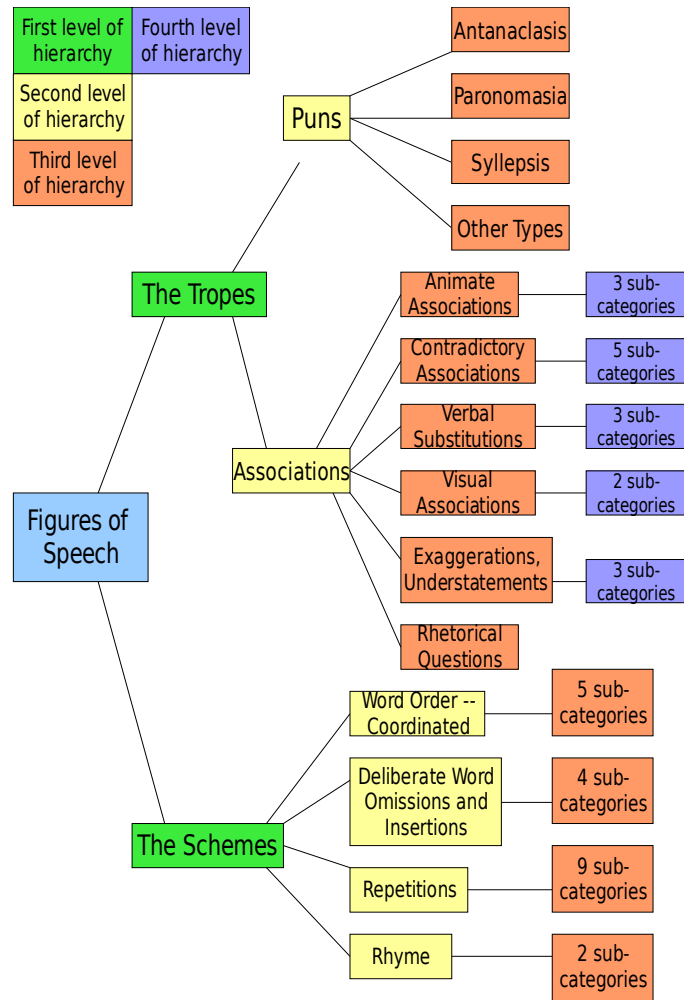
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Appendix 1: An explanatory diagram of the categories by Leigh (1994).



Appendix 2: The categories used in the study; their definitions and examples

Category	Definition	Example
I The Tropes	Play with meanings of words (and phrases).	
A. Puns	Play with multiple meanings.	
1) Polysemy / homonymy	Words (or phrases) that carry multiple meanings.	Moon Bloodgood: She's raising temperatures in Eight Below
2) Homophony	Words that sound alike but are different in written forms.	Those who Cannes, win!
3) A phrase with a twist	A fixed phrase used in an unexpected way, often by replacing a part of the text with something else.	Remake my day
B. Associations	Wordplays with associative means.	
1) Allusions	References to elsewhere within culture/ people/ other texts etc.	
a. Reference to a person	References to the person in question, or in some cases to some other person entirely.	Nacho Libre: (Jack) Black comedy about a Mexican Priest-Turned-Wrestler
b. Reference to a film's name	References to both the name of the film in question, or to some other.	The Man who wasn't all there
c. Reference to a film's contents	References to the contents of either the film in question, or some other film.	Zodiac; David Fincher serial-kills again!
d. Reference to other media and text	References to e.g. books, television shows, songs, quotes etc.	Life, liberty and the pursuit of hard cash
2) Oxymoron	Contradictory ideas placed in juxtaposition.	Jaime Pressly; A pocket-sized lady with a mighty big punch
3) Parody	Mimicry of the style, form or ideas of another text.	Deliver Preacher from development hell into good hands
4) Play with	Play with the written form of	EXCLUSSSSIVE!

onomatopoeia and orthography	the word; words that imitate the sound of what they represent, words that are written in an unusual way.	REPTILES RELOADED!
II The Schemes	Play with grammatical features of words (and phrases).	
A. Repetition	Repeating words/ parts of words.	
1) Alliteration	Repetition of the initial consonants of adjacent words.	'Horror porn' bucks box office blues
2) Polypoton	Repetition of words with the same root word / repetition of a root word and its derivative.	Evan Rachel Wood: Pretty persuasive in Pretty Persuasion
3) Repetition	Repetition of the same word or phrase.	Sylvester Stallone is back back back
B. Rhyming	Rhyming words; within a phrase, in two adjacent phrases.	Jack's pack is back