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English 100

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Stylistic Analysis: Newspaper Journalism

Newspaper journalism creates a different type of writing than other types of journalism. One of the many unique things about newspaper journalism is that there exist various genres within it, exemplified and displayed throughout the various sections of a newspaper. The research that I have conducted in the field and the experience I have accumulated in analyzing articles that fall under the genre of newspaper journalism will come into play as I look at the stylistic qualities that exist in news articles as compared to sports articles in a newspaper.

Depending on the type of column or section of the newspaper that one is writing for, the stylistic elements of the piece may vary. This simple fact and aspect about newspaper articles is one of the many things that gives it its stylistic diversity. The combination of various writers, genres, areas of interest, and experiences is what gives a newspaper and its internal sections its diverse voice. It is a unique platform where a diverse group of writers present work in their own voice, and when all are placed together, produce the voice of the newspaper as a whole. This is not traditional in most types of writing, and the only other place where a single source of information contains a multitude of voices is a magazine or online news source of sorts.

There are many different articles and categories of pieces which make up a newspaper, each with their own set of stylistic values and characteristics, giving the newspaper that diversity and variety. Even pieces within the sections vary in length, depending on how relevant and important that story is on that day. To exemplify the dynamic styles that a newspaper contains, I have looked at an article that focuses on a news topic, and one that is under the realm of the sports section.

To start off with, I will look at a piece that is from the sports section of the newspaper. If I were to look at a newspaper from the San Diego Union Tribune—from the day after the Super Bowl 2016—on the front page I would see an oversized picture of the Patriots, and the large, bolded headline of “Patriots win wild, historic Super Bowl.” Below that headline and picture, a paragraph or two that are sized to make it take up a few columns, and then a small bolded page number and letter for reference and as a signifier to the reader to indicate where the full article is continued. It is written by someone whose experience resides in sports writing and covering news regarding specific sports teams, and whose official title is simply “writer.”

In terms of content, the article contains a brief overview of the game and its events, accounting for each turnover, each touchdown, each interception. The vocabulary is that which would be heard from sportscasters who are analyzing the game at halftime, or following the game. The article does not use words that would typically be used in other pieces like those talking about current events or world-wide news sections, or anything that would make it seem “fluffy.” It is language and vocabulary that specifically belongs to that discourse community. Other than the overview of the game’s events, it would contain interviews of the players after the

close of the game, from the field and even from press conferences after the celebration has occurred.

Now, looking at an article from the same newspaper on the same day as the Super Bowl article, I can see that there is an article in the news section, which is categorized by community, with the bolded headline “Officials predict dire wildfire season”. This headline stands above a large, dramatic picture of a Sheriff’s department helicopter dropping massive amounts of water on a brush fire. Unlike the sports article, it is not featured on the front page, but takes its own page within the “News” section that is dedicated to San Diego news. The entire article is provided below the headline and picture, which takes only a few columns. This article is written by a man whose writing experience solely involves the backcountry of Escondido and San Diego, as well as pieces on the city government. His title, like that of the sports article, is “writer.”

Referring to the content of the article, it contains some of the same basic elements that the sports article does, but in a different degree. Like the sports article, this news article features quotes from interviews and news conferences, but in this case, the quotes and snippets from these interviews are what make up the vast majority of the article. There is very little room for freedom in terms of extraneous writing since this article is factual and serves to present information about a specific event. Granted, this is what any newspaper article does, but articles that cover news stories do not typically have room for writing other than the facts and first-hand accounts relating to the topics. Each quote that is used has a reference to who has said it, including that person’s entire title; perhaps to provide a certain exigence.

Learning about what goes on behind the construction of these articles was extremely interesting. The only section in a newspaper that has room for personality and more freedom in terms of information is the opinion section. Each section of the newspaper is like its own discourse community, with a different kind of language used in the articles that pertain to that subject, as demonstrated in the analysis of the sports article. Interviewing a journalist who worked a couple decades ago was extremely telling because it showed me that the work that goes into the articles is still the same today as it has been over the past few decades. Even though the variety of topics may have expanded, the content and stylistic qualities within the writing in the genre of newspaper journalism has remained the same. Regardless of the subject the article covers, articles that fall under the umbrella of newspaper journalism contain factual information and serve to provide straight, accurate information.