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Summaries in Newspapers: A Textlinguistic Investigation

Udo Fries

0. Linguists and laymen alike are aware that different texts may be interrelated in a variety of ways. This has been described, e. g. by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), as the phenomenon of *intertextuality*, a term which is somewhat hazy as it may refer to quite different things. There are, e. g., texts which can only be properly understood if the reader/listener knows other texts that have been produced previously. A standard example is the case of parodies, which refer to an original that is paraphrased or commented upon: you cannot understand a parody if you don't know the original. The same criterion of intertextuality is used for replies in conversation (Beaugrande 1980: 20). Here the reply is not a "parallel" text to the original, but refers to the content of a text that must be known to speaker and listener alike. I have also used the term intertextuality in connection with highly conventionalized texts, e. g. death announcements, which can only be properly produced if the author has some knowledge of the traditional text-type.

This paper is about a special type of intertextuality existing between texts of different length. The shorter of these we may call *summaries*. Once again, the type of intertextuality is somewhat different: even though it may be helpful, we do not need to know the longer text – which I would like to call the *original text* – in order to understand the summary. Quite on the contrary, one of the functions of summaries is to give information to a reader who has no time to read through the original – something which has become especially important in the 20th century. Another function which may be added to that of information is evaluation. Book reviews are a typical case in point: they should not only inform the reader about the contents of a book but should also give a critical evaluation of the original text; the purpose of a review may very well be to dissuade a reader from buying a particular book. Another function of book reviews, incidentally, is the self-presentation of the author of the review: his readers should realise what a clever chap he is.

With some types of summaries, the function of advertising is added to that of information: these texts should persuade the reader not only to read but also to buy the original. As a good example, which also sheds some light on the texts I want to discuss later, we may look at book-advertisements by some publishers. Take, e. g. the following German example, consisting of three texts that refer to one original. The first text is the headline copied from the original text, which now becomes part of the abbreviated version.¹ There is then a second abbreviated version consisting mainly of nominal constructions – to inform the very busy reader of the contents of the book, and thirdly, there is the full text – the summary proper. All these texts are related to one another, and thus represent a clear instance of intertextuality. These are the three texts:

- (1) i Die Ableitung der denominalen Verben mit Nullsuffigierung im Englischen.
- ii *Kurztext:* Auf der Basis eines Satzkorpus formuliert diese Arbeit eine produktive Wortbildungsregel für englische denominalen Verben mit Nullsuffigierung (z. B. *drink*), die ins Lexikon eingegangenes Alltagswissen des Sprechers verarbeiten.
- iii Für die denominalen nullsuffigierten Verben des Englischen wird auf der empirischen Grundlage eines Satzkorpus eine produktive Wortbildungsregel als Ableitungsbeziehung zwischen (Basis)nomen und denominalen Verb formuliert, die die schon 'registrierten' Ableitungen und die Innovationen erklärt. ...

Summaries or *abstracts* are important text-types that have developed over the last few decades, and without which modern science could not exist. It is not surprising, therefore, that much has been written about the art of reviewing and of producing summaries or abstracts of longer texts, such summaries being required to contain all the necessary information and nothing but this necessary information. The major problem is, of course, how to determine which parts of a text are of prime importance and must be reproduced in the shorter version. For the type of summary we are now going to discuss these problems are, however, only of minor importance.

1. In the following analysis I will deal with summaries on the front pages of newspapers, in particular those of the *London Times*, from which I have collected a corpus of 100 summaries and full texts. Various

¹ Headlines may be regarded as part of the text, but also as texts in their own right. Traditionally they are treated as separate entities, cf. e. g. Mårdh (1980) or the classic study by Straumann (1935). For studies relating headlines to texts cf. Harweg (1968), and most recently Hellwig (1984).

terms seem to be used for this type of text. The *Times* – unofficially – calls them ‘read-through’, but they may simply be called ‘News in brief’. For a textlinguistic analysis, a number of questions may profitably be asked:

- 1.) What is the function of these summaries?
- 2.) What do these texts look like? What are their syntactic and thematic structures?
- 3.) What do the headlines of these texts look like? Are they typical of this particular text-type?
- 4.) What is the relationship between headline and text of this particular text-type?
- 5.) What is the relationship between these texts and the longer versions within the newspaper?
- 6.) What is the relationship between the two headlines?
- 7.) In what ways does our text-type refer to the text within the newspaper?
- 8.) What elements are identical in the two types of text?
- 9.) From which part of the long text are the elements in the short version derived?

What I cannot pursue here is the problem of general rules that must be followed in order to produce a good summary, nor can I consider rules that would automatically change a text into a summary. I am rather interested in what is actually done by producers of summaries in newspapers. These writers are not necessarily the authors of the long texts which we find within the newspaper, so that the author who writes an article cannot be held responsible for headlines and summaries. This may help to explain some of the inconsistencies we find between these various texts.

2. The function of summaries outlined above is first of all achieved by a number of typographical and linguistic means. All the texts are clearly separated from other short notices in the newspaper. They appear at exactly the same place in every issue and consist of a headline followed by a short text, both of which are supposed to draw the reader's attention to the full version of the news-item within the paper. All these texts appear to be about the same length, and all of them are followed by a final line referring to the page on which more information on that particular topic can be found. This is an important aspect for the reader, as it is the only clear indication of the referential character of the text-type. Other indicators can only be detected within headline and text them-

selves, but do not explicitly refer to another text. It is rather through the lack of sufficient information and because of the interest aroused by these texts that the reader will look for the corresponding article within the newspaper.

3.1. Let me begin my analysis with a short comparison of the headlines. From the very layout of the newspaper it is clear that there is less space available for the read-throughs than for the longer articles. This is clearly borne out by the number of words per headline in the read-throughs.

In the short versions there are altogether 281 words in the corpus, which means that the average headline consists of 2.81 words. The long texts have longer headlines, amounting to 721 words; that means 7.21 words per headline, a figure which is confirmed by other analyses of English newspaper-headlines. The restricted space available for the read-throughs is, no doubt, a decisive factor in the choice of the wording of a headline: in the short versions the most common headline consists of only 2 words. Consider the number of words per headline and the layout, i. e. the number of lines needed for each individual headline:

(2)				
2 words: 62%	1-line: 62	—	—	
3 words: 16%	1-line: 15	2-lines: 1	—	
4 words: 4%	1-line: 1	2-lines: 2	3-lines: 1	
5 words: 14%	—	2-lines: 9	3-lines: 5	
6 words: 3%	—	2-lines: 2	3-lines: 1	
7 words: 1%	—	—	3-lines: 1	
<hr/>				
Headlines:	1-line: 78	2-line: 14	3-line: 8	

In 2- and 3-word headlines there is usually only one line involved, while in the longer headlines two and three separate lines are used up. On the whole, however, the one-line headline is the most common type, accounting for 78% of all examples. The relatively large number of headlines consisting of 3 words is due to the large number of phrasal verbs in this type of headline.

In the case of the long texts headlines often spread across more than one column, and thus a count by lines would not yield any useful results for comparison. Such headlines consist of 3 to 13 words, with 5- and 6-word headlines the most common type.

(3)

3 words: 1	9 words: 10
4 words: 3	10 words: 11
5 words: 20	11 words: 8
6 words: 21	12 words: 4
7 words: 12	13 words: 1
8 words: 9	

I will not analyse these headlines any further, as they have been the subject of general investigations of newspaper headlines. What is important here is the difference between the headlines of the two text-types; the short, 2- or 3-word headlines are typical of summaries, whereas the longer headlines – from 4 words upwards – are examples of the more general and better-known type of newspaper headlines. Most often they consist of 5–6 words, but others consisting of 7–11 words are by no means rare.

3.2. Let us look more closely at headlines consisting of 2 words. We will doubtless expect these two words to stand in some relationship to one another, such as subject – predicate, attribute – head-word, or topic – comment. Hellwig (1985: 8) calls this “semantische Zweigliedrigkeit”. As the most common type we find nominal headlines consisting of two nouns in an attributive relationship, which often defy easy semantic analysis.

(4) Prison ordeal
Sex confession
Debt hopes

Thus, while *Prison ordeal* and *Sex confession* in (4) may readily be interpreted as “someone experiences a prison ordeal” and “someone confesses something about a sexual act”, in *Debt hopes* it is very unlikely that “someone hopes for debts”; it is much more likely that someone hopes that some debts will be reduced (?), removed (?), or forgotten (?). No limits are set to the reader’s imagination: indeed, this may be regarded as one of the means of arousing his interest, of making him read on in order to find out more about the subject matter. Another point worth considering is that no agent is mentioned in this type of headline. Thus, there is again something left for the reader to find out. This, however, is not always the case:

(5) Walesa fear
Reagan hint
Dali denial

In the examples in (5) it is always a well-known public figure that is mentioned. No doubt it is assumed that the reader would like to hear more about how the "denial", "hint" or "fear" are connected with these agents; it is therefore not surprising if the texts following the headlines begin with the names mentioned:

- (6) Mr Lech Walesa returned to work in the Gdansk shipyards voicing fears of being arrested in the May Day demonstrations "which could be a trap for me"

President Reagan's reversal of his ban on grain negotiations with the Soviet union is seen as a further indication that he intends to seek another presidential term

Art experts and close friends of Salvador Dali, the surrealist painter, denied the claims of a Catalan artist who said he had flooded the market with faked Dalis

In the third example it is not Dali himself who is the agent, the person who did the denying, even though he is closely connected with the denial; consequently the summary does not begin with his name.

Instead of the name of a person, we may also come across the names of countries, institutions or the like, which are also supposed to be well-known to the readers and thus are of news-value: they arouse the interest of the reader.

- (7) US anger
Ethiopia famine
Rolls-Royce loss

Once again, the texts begin with the names mentioned in the headline:

- (8) The United States has reacted angrily to the apparent rejection of their offer to stage the 1986 World Cup. They have asked the international football federation to think again.

Large areas of Ethiopia are in the grip of the worst drought since that of 1973 which killed hundreds of thousands. A million are in immediate peril. Britain is giving £ 250,000 extra help

Rolls-Royce, the state-owned aircraft engine manufacturer, lost £ 91 m before tax last year, after making a profit of £ 18 m in 1981. The loss reflects a big fall in demand for engine spares.

As the second text shows, the situation is sometimes more complicated, but the general principle seems to apply. Other nominal headlines consist of a noun in the genitive as an attribute to another noun. In accordance with the general rules for genitives, these nouns usually refer to human beings:

- (9) Invader's story
 Spencer's bill
 Lion's selection

In the texts which follow these headlines, the same principles that have just been discussed apply. This may also be the case when attributive adjectives constitute the first member of the two-word constructions, though here we must reckon with such a close relationship between the two words that they form a semantic unit which cannot be split up in the following text.

- (10) i Polish reshuffle
 ii Golden touch
 iii Nuclear split

Whereas in (10)i we expect a text giving information about (a) a reshuffle which takes place (b) in Poland, in the texts following, (10)ii and iii, the noun phrases of the headlines are taken as a unit. In these cases there is much more freedom in the wording of the text.

- (11) In a reshuffle of the Polish Government the Minister of Agriculture has been replaced and General Moczar, chairman of the Supreme Chamber of Control, has been retired.

Eugene Evans, aged 16, who left school last year, expects to receive £ 35,000 this year as a computer programme designer with a firm in Liverpool.

A Labour Party internal policy report strongly opposing the development of nuclear power has been rejected by a party committee, exposing deep divisions within Labour on nuclear policy.

The difficulty of the texts in (11) derives in part from the metaphorical headline in (10)ii and the wordplay in (10)iii, hovering between "nuclear fission" and the "deep divisions" within the Labour Party mentioned in the text. Besides nominal headlines, we find various types of verbal headlines. Among these there are finite verbal headlines consisting of a subject and a predicate.

- (12) Ethiopian wins
 Bank withdraws
 Firemen hesitate

Here, the interest of the reader is aroused in two ways: firstly, he needs a closer identification of the agent (which Ethiopian, which bank or which firemen are being talked about), and, secondly, he needs further information on the predicate: what is the contest in which an Ethiopian has won, from what has the bank withdrawn, or about what are the firemen hesitant? The texts must at least give a first answer to these questions:

- (13) An Ethiopian, Bekele Debele, won the world cross-country championship in a thrilling finish to the race at Gateshead. Only two seconds separated the first four runners.

Midland Bank has decided not to extend its branch network nationwide to cater separately for individual and corporate customers because of the high cost of implementing the strategy.

The threat of a series of one-day firemen's strikes this week receded after it became apparent that enthusiasm for industrial action was waning.

Both the Ethiopian and the bank are identified by their respective names, Bekele Debele and Midland Bank; the firemen are those who had threatened to go on strike. In all three texts we also get further information on the predicate of the headline: in the first text of (13) we hear which race the Ethiopian won, and we are even given some of the details of the performance of the other competitors – altogether enough to satisfy our initial curiosity, and at the same time incentive enough for those interested in the topic to turn to the corresponding article in the newspaper to find out some of the remaining very important details that are not given in the front-page text; e. g., who were the other athletes, over what course was the race run, and what were the final results? For those readers not interested in cross-country racing the information given in the front-page text is, however, quite sufficient to allow them to turn to other matters. One can easily apply the same principles to the two further examples given in (12) and (13). The most common type of verbal headline consists of a subject followed by a participle or adjective, with the copula being suppressed.

- (14) i Licence withheld
 ii Aid arriving
 iii Israel angry

In (14)i and ii it is essential that the character of the licence and the aid be further described, whereas in (14)iii the subject need not be elaborated on. Further information on the predicate, however, must be given in all three instances.

- (15) One of the four surviving single vellum sheet copies of the Magna Carta, dated 1297, was temporarily withheld from export by Mr Paul Channon, Minister for the Arts

Relief agencies said their aid was reaching Ethiopian drought victims and there was no evidence that it was going to the Soviet Union.

Israel has reacted angrily to President Reagan's decision to continue to withhold delivery of F16 jet fighters while Israel troops occupy Lebanon.

Each single text leaves open many questions that an interested reader would probably like to have answered in the full text within the newspaper.

3.3. Usually part of the headline is repeated in the summary, which helps the reader comprehend the text. In the headline, however, such words frequently appear in an abbreviated form, which is expanded in the summary. This is shown in the following survey:

HEADLINE OF SUMMARY	TEXT OF SUMMARY
<i>Surname only</i>	<i>Full name</i>
Walesa	Mr Lech Walesa
Dali	Salvador Dali, ...
Watson(?s prize)	John Watson ...
<i>Surname only</i>	<i>Title + name</i>
Reagan	President Reagan
<i>Name only</i>	<i>Name + apposition</i>
Dali	Salvador Dali, the surrealist painter,
Rolls-Royce	Rolls-Royce, the state-owned air-craft engine manufacturer,
Carson	Willie Carson, the royal jockey
<i>General noun</i>	<i>Addition of name</i>
Ethiopian	an Ethiopian, Bekele Debele
Bank	Midland Bank
<i>General noun</i>	<i>Substitution of proper name</i>
Star	Vitas Gerulaitis, one of the world's top tennis professionals
<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Full form</i>
US	The United States

These instances may be taken as special cases of *Expansion* or *specification* of the whole or part of the headline. In addition, we come across more general examples of expansion:

Same chair	the same electric chair in Alabama that took 10 minutes to execute Evans on Friday
Turkey	Turkey's ruling military council
Bill	the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill

Headlines and texts may differ with regard to the parts of speech employed: in headlines nominal expressions are preferred, while in the texts we find verbal constructions:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb phrase</i>
anger	has reacted angrily
loss	lost
denial	denied
confession	admitted

Often, the noun in the headline corresponds to a noun in the text which is embedded in a verb phrase – usually as the object of the verb:

fear	voicing fears
decision	faces a delicate decision
challenge	faces a legal challenge

Whenever there is a finite verb in the headline, it occurs in the simple present tense. The corresponding texts report the events in the past (or present perfect) tense.

Verb – present tense
 (Ethiopian) wins
 Pound surges

Verb – past tense
 won the world ... championship
 Sterling surged

4.1. As we have seen above, most summaries are of roughly equal length. The shortest occupies 4 lines, the longest 14; the majority, however, are between 5 and 7 lines in length, the average figure being 6.58. It is interesting to consider whether the length of the headlines of the summaries in any way indicates the length of the text. This does seem to be the case: with two-word headlines, the average text-length is 5.8 lines, whereas with headlines of more than two words, this figure is 7.8. Usually (in 67% of the examples), these texts consist of 1 sentence (calculated by full-stops), but they may extend to 4 sentences: this, however, is clearly exceptional. The average number of sentences is 1.38, once again with a lower figure (1.23) for 2-word headlines: and a higher figure (1.62) for headlines of more than two words.

4.2. An analysis of the 67 one-sentence summaries shows that there are two major types, if we compare these texts with the longer versions within the newspaper. One type I would like to call the ordinary summary. In these the gist of the story, or what the particular author of the summary considers to be the most important and perhaps most effective elements of the story, is formulated in the summary; the general rules

governing summaries mentioned at the beginning of this paper would apply here. Then there is a second and, for this particular text-type, more important type of summary, in which the first sentence of the long text is used as the basis of the summary. This procedure is, of course, not possible with every text – I would even maintain that in general the first sentence of a text does *not* contain the *theme* of the text. For a different opinion, cf. Werlich (1976: 27 ff), who argues that the “thematic text base” is a text-initial linguistic unit. Yet very often the introductory sentences of a text have nothing whatsoever to do with the main content and purpose of a text, and in all such cases a summary that simply reproduced the first sentence would be quite useless. One example should suffice to make this clear:

The text begins:

- (16) It was the first evening of Passover and a thick, sticky fog lay heavily over the half-ruined villa where the Israelis have their company headquarters beside the Damascus road.

The only important element here is *Passover* which accordingly reappears in the summary. Otherwise the summary brings in facts that are only reported later in the longer article:

- (17) Israeli soldiers about to celebrate the Passover had to leave their meal uneaten as gunfire and explosions erupted nearby. It was the beginning of an ambush in which an Israeli soldier died.

Incidentally, in newspapers it is mostly articles on the sports pages that cannot be summarised by simply reproducing the first sentence of the text: cf. (18) and (19). This corroborates my thesis that we are here dealing with a very particular sort of text-beginning, which is “textsortenspezifisch”, i. e. specific to particular traditional text-types.

- (18) FULL TEXT: England are accustomed to breaking fresh ground at the national stadium. ...
 (19) SUMMARY: England were held to a 0–0 draw by Greece at Wembley and Scotland drew 2–2 with Switzerland at Hampden Park in European Championship matches.

Here, the summary gives the results of two matches. The full article, of course, would never give the two results in textinitial position. Instead, it begins by relating some aspects of the background: and whenever an article begins with background information this will not become part of the summary.

4.3. The following analysis concerns examples taken from summaries consisting of one sentence only, and a comparison with the initial

elements of the corresponding long texts reveals a number of differences. The summaries, though not written in an elliptical style, are restricted in length and must therefore omit "unnecessary" information. The following types of ellipsis occur:

1.) Complex names are reduced to simpler variants. This we have already observed when comparing summary headlines with the texts of the summaries; now it turns out that the summaries themselves consist of abbreviated forms in comparison to the full text. Thus, the summaries clearly stand between the headlines (and, incidentally, also the headlines of the full text-versions) and the original texts.

- (20) i FULL TEXT: Turkey's ruling military national security council yesterday lifted a 1980 ban on political activities, paving the way for general elections promised for this autumn or early next year. ...
 ii SUMMARY: Turkey's ruling military council has lifted the 1980 ban on political activities, paving the way for a general election promised for this autumn or early next year.
 iii SUMMARY HEADLINE: Turkey relents
 iv TEXT HEADLINE: Turkey lifts ban on political parties

As we can see from (20), the *national security* reference is omitted in the summary, and the *ruling military ... council*, which appears in the summary, is deleted in the headlines.

A further example:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Summary</i>
General Mario Benjamin Menendez	General Mario Menendez

Often, it is not part of the name itself that is deleted, but part of an appositive description of a person mentioned.

John Lennon, the former Beatle John Lennon

2.) Time adverbs such as *yesterday*, *last night*, *last week*, etc. are omitted, and the deletion of these adverbs may bring about a change of tenses in the summary: the past tense is then no longer obligatory. Example (20) is a typical case in point: the deletion of *yesterday* leads to a change of tense in the summary from past to present perfect, which is also more appropriate for the particular text-type of the summary – which has to "sum up" the present situation rather than report what happened the day before. Thus, while I can agree with Werlich (1976:

86) that summaries belong to the group of expository texts, I do not believe that "the *temporal text structuring* (...) of a narrative text (...) is reflected in the summary" (Werlich 1976: 91). Other examples:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Summary</i>
The threat of a series of ... strikes receded last night after it became apparent. ...	receded after it became apparent
during the Argentine occupation last year. ...	during the Argentine occupation.
Lord Spencer was ordered yesterday to pay ...	Lord Spencer has been ordered to pay ...

Often, the time-adverb may be embedded in a longer phrase describing the reporting situation; in that case the whole phrase may be deleted:

it was announced last night

—

3.) Prepositions and adverbs may be deleted if the text remains easily comprehensible. This sort of telegraphic ellipsis is familiar not only from telegrams, but particularly from spoken, conversational language. In replies to questions, prepositions are among those elements that are most easily deleted for the sake of brevity.

<i>Text</i>	<i>Summary</i>
a series ... of ... strikes, starting this week,	a series of ... strikes this week
to prevent sightseers from looking into the grounds	to prevent sightseers looking into the grounds
is seen here as	is seen as

4.) Attributive adjectives whose function is largely to comment on or evaluate the following noun-phrase may be omitted in the summary:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Summary</i>
its ambitious branch network	its branch network

5.) Noun-phrases, though customarily used, may, strictly speaking, be redundant and may therefore be deleted. As in the previous points, a maxim of brevity can be observed in the summaries. The full text of the example given above runs as follows:

- (21) i FULL TEXT: Lord Spencer was ordered yesterday to pay £ 1,000 damages and costs to a woman whose dog was shot by his gamekeepers.
 ii SUMMARY: Lord Spencer has been ordered to pay £ 1,000 to a woman whose dog was shot by his gamekeepers.

or

the possible involvement of British intelligence in the case.	the possible involvement of British intelligence.
---	---

6.) An indefinite article may be changed into a definite article, thus presenting the information which follows as if it were previously known to the reader – which is also a means of making the reader more curious about the details of the main news report. An example of this is once again found in sentence (20).

7.) Relative clauses may be reduced to verb phrases by omitting the relative pronoun and the finite part of the verb:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Summary</i>
which is dated 1297	dated 1297
which is published this morning	published this morning

8.) Subordinate clauses may be turned into nominal groups – if they are not deleted altogether – as less important information:

President Reagan's surprise announcement that he is reversing his ban	President Reagan's reversal of his ban
---	--

Britain's leading foreign affairs "think tank" which is popularly known as Chatham House,	the leading foreign affairs "think tank",
---	---

9.) In consecutive sentences, the cohesive devices may be changed to bring about a shorter version. Instead of repetition substitution may be used:

<p>The Inland Revenue has released nine statements ... These statements</p>	<p>The Inland Revenue has released nine statements ... They ...</p>
---	---

10.) Finally, there are a number of diverse changes which are more difficult to interpret: singular and plural, word-order shifts, shifts of tenses in indirect speech, and a few others. These inconsistencies may simply be due to different authors writing the text and the summary.

All other changes that are of major importance can only be described within the larger framework of the study of summaries. What I have done here has been to look at summaries from the point of view of their production, i. e. I have taken the full texts inside the newspaper as the starting point. If we adopt the reader's view-point, then the summary comes first, and only afterwards does he turn to the full article. Finding this article may sometimes prove more difficult than expected, since neither the headlines nor the text-beginnings need consist of identical elements. In this case, the reader must rely on additional semantic clues; thus, the repetitions which we have observed have an important function in relating the two texts to each other.

4.4. I have argued above that the summaries are supposed to lead the reader to a perusal of the corresponding article within the newspaper. This, one could imagine, may be achieved through the thematic structure of the summaries. Unfortunately, only a few thoughts about this structure can be presented here. First of all, we must take into consideration the fact that the reader begins to read his text with the headline; thus, when he begins to read the first line of the text, he already has some knowledge, some expectation of what the following lines will contain. Hence, when he reads, e. g., *houseprices up*, he knows what the topic of the following lines will be, and he will do everything possible to relate these lines to the headline. When he sees that the text begins with a paraphrase of the title, he is reassured and can concentrate on the new information that is presented:

(22) House prices have risen by up to 8 per cent during the last three months in some parts of the country, according to a market survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

The source of the news items is given in final position: it is a very heavy element, and thus particular attention is drawn to this part of the summary: I suppose that one would therefore like to hear more about *the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors*. Indeed, the text itself, which is

constructed in a slightly different way, has this element as the beginning of its second paragraph, taking it as a topic to be expanded:

House prices have risen by eight per cent during the last three months in some parts of the country, according to a market survey published today. The latest report from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors covering the quarter to the end of February shows. . . .

With regard to the thematic structure of summaries, we have thus found one type, and it seems to be one of the most common types, in which the two parts of the headline are presented first, and then some new information is added in the second half of the text. Let me give a few examples with the topical part of the headline in capitals:

- (23) i Israel angry.
ISRAEL HAS REACTED ANGRILY to President Reagan's decision to continue to withhold delivery of F 16 jet fighters while Israel troops occupy Lebanon.
- ii Carson banned.
WILLIE CARSON, the royal jockey, *WAS BANNED* from riding for six days after being found guilty of reckless riding at Ayr.
- iii *Sterling gloom.*
THE GLOOM OVER STERLING'S PROSPECTS and oil price outlook has led to renewed fears over the rise in interest rates and dearer bank loans.

In a second type of summary, the two parts of the headline are simply expanded without any other information being added; the additions explain, as it were, the two elements. They may also explain why these elements have been together in the first place. There is no clue to the direction which the main article will take, or the direction in which the attention of the reader is to be drawn:

- (24) i Watt to quit
 Mr David Watt, director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the leading foreign affairs "think tank", is to resign at the end of the year.
- ii *IRA* trial clash
 The New York trial of four men accused of gun-running to the *IRA* was adjourned for a week after a courtroom clash about the possible involvement of British intelligence.

In a third type, the reader has to read through the whole of the summary before he comes to the parts already known from the headline; when he finally reaches this point, the text ends abruptly, leaving him wondering how the text will continue – and possibly he will then turn to the main text:

- (25) i Ambush death
 Israeli soldiers about to celebrate the Passover had to leave their meal uneaten as gunfire and explosions erupted nearby. It was the beginning of an *ambush in which an Israeli soldier died*.
- ii Afghan hope
 Señor Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the United Nations Secretary-General, said after talks in Moscow that he was *encouraged about Afghanistan*.

It is clear that these types are idealizations and that the list is not exhaustive. Nevertheless, this may offer a way of analyzing a traditional text-type which is, more than any other, embedded in and related to other texts. An investigation of these *summaries* may therefore shed light on both the production and the reception of texts.

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