

# The Pragmatic Gravity of the Semantic Compositionality of News Headlines: Violating Grice's Principle as a Linguistic Model to Calibrate the Communicative Weight of That Gravity

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## Abstract

The first fold of the aim of this study was to investigate the pragmatic gravity of the semantic compositionality of news headlines; the second fold of the aim of this study was to investigate violating Grice's principle of Cooperation as a linguistic model to calibrate the communicative weight of that pragmatic gravity; accordingly, two proposals emerge throughout this study: the first is that the semantic weave, of news headlines, is normally charged with a great pragmatic capacity which serves, by proxy, the interests of various agents of the communicative continuum; the second is that violating Grice's Maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) is applicable to news headlines, and that can calibrate the magnitude of that pragmatic capacity. To achieve this two-fold aim of this study, the researcher followed an exploratory qualitative methodology; the corpus of the available related literature has been scrutinized, by the researcher, in a survey-like approach, to establish enough evidence that can augment the argument and the proposals of this study; in addition, it should be stated that a discretionary reflexive assertions, reflecting the opinion of the researcher, have been given within the summary sections of the literature review; by the same token, a discretionary tabulation of the practical examples, which have been scattered within the corpus of the related literature, to allow a unified cohesive understanding in regard to the proposals of this study. Findings of this study confirm the existence of the pragmatic gravity of the semantic weave of the news headlines; findings revealed that the semantic weave, of the news headlines, is not dictated, contrary to what has been acknowledged within the bulk of the available literature, by only the economic and the limited space demands of a given newspaper, but, on the

contrary, that semantic weave is structured to have a pragmatic impact on the intended readers; findings also confirm that tracking the violation of Grice's maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance), within news headlines, can be an effective linguistic model to reveal, calibrate, and evaluate the pragmatic communicative aspects of news headlines. As a result, this study has come up with various conclusions and recommendations.

### **Keywords**

Semantic, Pragmatic, News Headlines, Grice's Principle of Cooperation, Grice's Maxims, Violating, Newspaper, Reader, Stimulus, Response, Behavior

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## **1. Statement of the Problem**

What constitutes a launching pad for this study is the relative agreement within the available related literature that the traditional functions and roles of news headlines have been anchored to an economic port; in other words, the semantic reality of news headlines has been oriented towards two strategic goals: the first is to attract the attention of the potential reader to the news story, while the second is to urge, that potential reader, to continue reading, and, then, buy the news story or the newspaper; moreover, the semantic weave of news headlines, in reference to the available related literature, is also dictated by the limited space that can be available within the printing matrix, of the newspaper, which normally allows a carefully calculated slot that decides how much information should be included, and how much paper can be saved as a result; this limited space and the consequences it entails are also connected, as far as the researchers has opined, with the economic consideration. The economic consideration and the limited space parallels, though they are considerable, stand for a notable gap because they may not be able to explain the profound interest in news headlines and the high-level of adequacy that the writers of news headlines should acquire; by the same token, it can be stated that the focus on the economic parallel and the availability of a limited space for news headlines, within the printing matrix of the news paper, downgrades the importance of the communicative pragmatic function news headlines that are normally supposed to achieve. Accordingly, and as far as the researcher has found, those proposed pragmatic functions of news headlines have not adequately been foregrounded throughout the available related literature, but on the contrary, the pragmatic functions of news headlines have been approached in a mostly scattered manner that, as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, allows a shaggy and blurred vision towards the functions of news headlines; to deepen the gap, this scattered rendering, of the pragmatic functions of news headlines, has been twined with a notable lack of acknowledgement of a linguistic model that can reveal, confirm, and value those pragmatic functions of the news headlines; accordingly, and as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, it can be stated that the pragmatic functions of

news headlines should be approached and rendered in a unified cohesive format, and be anchored to a well established linguistic model so as to enable a solid ground of understating that can orient various practices in English language teaching (ELT).

## **2. The Significance of This Study**

One side of the significance of this study lies in the fact that its investigative scope can enable a tabulated cast for some quite enough examples of the various aspects of the semantic compositionality of news headlines, which have been scatteringly documented in few studies of the available literature; in this study, the significance of this tabulated and unified cast of the semantic compositionality of news headlines can enable accessible layers of understanding of the functions of the news headlines which have traditionally viewed so far; the functions of the news headlines have traditionally been confined, as confirmed by most of the available literature, to an economic parallel while abiding by the limited space availability within the printing format of the newspaper; moreover, the significance of this tabulated reality of the semantic compositionality of the news headlines, in this study, lies in the fact that it provides a corresponding evidence to the existence of communicative pragmatic functions of news headlines that are interwoven within the semantic compositionality of news headlines. In this regard, another facet of the significance of this study lies also in the fact that excavating and investigating those pragmatic functions of news headlines represent a rare endeavor which has been proposed to shed more light on communicative domain that these pragmatic functions entail, and, eventually, the ideology, point of view, attitude, and narrative charge these pragmatic functions are supposed to pass. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it can suggest a proposed linguistic model to value these pragmatic functions of news headlines in a unified systematic method which is not based on a subjective point of view; as far as the researcher has found, this is the first study to propose Grice's principle of cooperation as a reliable linguistic model which is capable of revealing and explaining the covert and overt proximity between the semantic compositionality, of the news headlines, and the dense pragmatic communicative cloud that will break. Another dimension of the significance of this study is that it can provide new perspectives about how semantics, pragmatics, and Grice's maxims work within a written communicative continuum, and what this perspective may add to the teaching and learning of English, especially in a foreign setting.

## **3. The Limitations of This Study**

This study bears the thematic limitation that its investigative scope was restricted to print news headlines, in the classic sense of newspapers, and not in an online or digital format; news headlines in other forms of mass media do not fall within the investigative magnitude of this study. This study also bears the thematic limitation that the investigative scope was based on a backward metho-

dology in regard to Grice's principle of cooperation; in other words, the findings of this study correlate with violating the maxims of Grice's model (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance), but not abiding by them. This study bears the limitation that the tabulated matrixes of the semantic compositionality and communicative pragmatic functions it—the semantic compositionality—entails represent some of the sample examples that were documented within the available related literature, and that there might be other examples, within the same domain, that are neither tabulated nor categorized within the boundaries of this study; by the same token, those tabulated examples, of this study, which are given to explain the violation features of the maxims Grice's model (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance), are not connected with a specific maxim in a taboo relationship, but, on the contrary, a given example can go with more than one maxim at the same time because there is no specific thematic boundary for each of those maxims; in other words, this study bears the limitation that some examples of violation are glued to a given maxim of Grice's model, though they might go with other maxims, in accordance with what the researcher has understood the case to be within the available related literature. This study also bears the limitation that Grice's principle of cooperation is basically more applicable to spoken communications than that of written communication. A further limitation that this study bears is that the potential reader's variables such as gender, social status, education, geographical area, native language, and their effect on comprehending a given news headline, do not lie within the investigative scope of study.

#### 4. Theoretical Background

News headlines, in reference to the bulk of the available related literature, have been defined variously: news headlines have been viewed as the windows through which readers can look into the news story, as miniature texts that are able to give a distilled summary of the news story, and as middle agents and negotiators in between the newspaper or the news agency and the potential reader; news headlines have also been considered as a special register that exploits a wide range of semantic features in order to maximize the magnitude of pragmatic effect, which news headlines can be charged with, to generate a package of behaviors, attitudes, and tendencies within the domains of those potential readers. In this sense, it can be added that those definitions, which the bulk of the available related literature has highlighted, have been anchored to an adequate understanding of the behavior of the potential readers who commonly tend to quickly scan as many headlines as possible in newspapers public-stands, or elsewhere; traditionally, news headlines are supposed to function as attention-grippers as well as propellers to motivate as many potential readers as possible to continue reading the whole news article, and, eventually, buy the newspaper; this traditional function of news headlines, which is based, as the researcher of this article believes, on valuing the conditional behavior of the potential reader who is pro-

posed to give a response when she or he is encountered by a proper stimulus (in this case the entity of a given news headline) . Moreover, the traditional consideration of the central function of news headlines is also based on economic proposition as the “successfulness” of the news headline is measured against how many times the news story is actually read, and, of course, how many copies of a given newspaper are eventually sold. As a result, it should be stated, as confirmed by some of the available related literature, that news headlines must be oriented to “tell and sell” and, also, to provide the proper stimulus that can drive the desired response from the part of the reader. To achieve these traditional broad goals, news headlines must be written carefully enhancing various semantic molds and linguistic patterns; news headlines must be stringed by prudent editors who have enough competency, knowledge, and a profound sense of the communicative sphere and those who are involved. Another consideration, which is also based on that economic proposal of the central function of news headline is the fact that a very limited space ratio has always been available for a news headline; consequently, the semantic weave of the news headline must be distilled enough, summarized enough, and oriented enough to achieve the proposed traditional goals, of a given news headline, which are centrally anchored to the economic and the limited space parallels; [Monsefi & Mahadi \(2016\)](#) further explain that “news headline language is characterized by several linguistic, pragmatic, rhetorical and functional features that distinguish it from other varieties of language that are not specialized. In the present study, the rhetorical features of English news headlines.”

Depending on the available related literature, and as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, the economic consideration and the limited space availability, which orient the functions of news headlines, cannot fully explain the much interest, scrupulous carefulness, and assiduous attention exerted by writers of the news headlines and news papers editors to generate as “successful” headlines as possible; [Dor \(2003\)](#), cited in [Majeed & Salih \(2012\)](#), in this regard, confirm that the idea that “the headline presents a summary of the story is criticized due to three reasons: First, some highlight a single detail of the story or contain a quotation from the story or some headlines contain materials which do not appear in the news item; second, some headlines contain complex riddles especially in tabloid newspapers and. Third headlines have a pragmatic function.”; accordingly, this study, proposes the existence of other functions that news headlines are supposed, directly or indirectly, to play in order to meet the demands of that economic function, and, at the same time, can explain what the traditional view of the functions of news headlines have not fully been able to explain, at the top of these functions is the carefully orchestrated pragmatic function. This proposal, the inevitability for news headlines to perform a pragmatic function, entails molding the behavioral and cognitive realities of the potential reader who is proposed to exhibit a response to the cinematic linguistic-cast of the news headlines; a set of graphic techniques, font foregrounding, and color schemes are enhanced

to set up the corresponding stimulus that can guarantee the desired response from the part of the potential reader; Uppuleti & Ganta (2015), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016) consider that “news headlines as medium of mass communication which are capable of providing all essential and critical information for regular readers in order to shape, support or defend, or revise their views.” Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014) explains that “headlines constrain further information processing which means narrowing the cognitive choices and realities, and, at the same time, foregrounding a pragmatic path; Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014) further explains that “readers struggle to update their memory in order to correct initial misconceptions.” This means, as far as the researcher of this study understands, that the potential readers’ context, which is normally affected by various variables, is indispensable from the semantic context of news headlines; in other words, the potential reader is driven to build a previously oriented pragmatic realities.

Although this study considers those pragmatic functions, which news headlines are proposed to function, but, at the same time, the investigative scope of this study corresponds with the fact that the pragmatic functions of news headlines have not been adequately approached by previous research in the sense that the concentration has gone to the mentioned traditional functions of the news headlines; it is also notable, as far as the investigative scope of this study is concerned, that no linguistic model has been suggested as a calibration tool for those pragmatic functions that are interwoven within the semantic context of the news headlines. As a result, this study proposes Grice’s cooperation principle as a linguistic revealer and calibrator to those pragmatic functions of news headlines. Grice’s principle of cooperation includes four maxims (quantity, quality, manner, an relation); Grice (1975), cited in EL-Sakran (2015) explains what these maxims of the cooperation principle stand for:

**“Quantity:**

- Make your contribution as informative as required. (Don’t say too much or too little.)
- Make the strongest statement you can.

**Quality:**

- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

**Relation:**

- Be relevant. (Stay on topic.)

**Manner:**

- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- Be orderly.”

Under the umbrella of the cooperative principle, these maxims basically function within two supposition: the first is that they—the maxims—can measure the

“successfulness” of the spoken and conversational contexts; the second, is that the speaker or the sender normally exhibit cooperative tendency whenever communicating; in the sense; the speaker or sender of the message quantitatively say no more and no less than what the message dictates, qualitatively say the truth, relationally stay on topic, and mannerly avoids obscurity and ambiguity. Grice’s principle of cooperation was criticized by a bulk of the available related literature as it—the cooperation principle—takes the speaker’s tendency to cooperate for granted; in other words, the speaker or the sender of the message, in this communicative continuum, is always “pure” enough to literally stick to these maxims; but, on the other hand, as confirmed by some available literature the opposite may be true, which means that these maxims, in many cases, are purposefully violated to maximize the orienting pragmatic impact of the message, to pass an ideological stand, or, even, to foreground or hide a given narrative; in this regard [Riyanti & Sofwan \(2016\)](#) concludes that “Grice’s maxims, consciously or unconsciously, are violated by the writers and editors of these news headlines.” This proposal goes against the commonly acknowledged, at least by a considerable amount of related literature concerning the functions of headlines, supposition that the central function of news headlines is based on economic consideration more than a pragmatic one. Correspondingly, this study proposes violating Grice’s maxims as a linguistic model to uncover those pragmatic functions of news headlines, and the proposed effect they are supposed to achieve.

## 5. Review of Related Literature

### 5.1. The Semantic (Linguistic) Features of News Headlines

This section will give an overview of the semantic features, of news headlines, which the available related literature has discussed so far; overviewing the semantic features of news headlines stands for an essential entrance to comprehending various facets attached to news headlines such as domains of definitions, types, and importance as they are integrated with a carefully selected language, a specific semantic weave, and precisely weighted lexis; as a result, the following section, of the available related literature, sets the boundaries of some important linguistic features that the language of news headlines normally carries: [Bell \(1991\)](#), cited in [Monsefi & Mahadi \(2016\)](#); [Morley \(1998\)](#), cited in [Din & Ghani \(2020\)](#); [Kronrod & Engel \(2001\)](#), cited in [Isani \(2011\)](#); [Reah \(2002\)](#), cited in [Din & Ghani \(2020\)](#); [Soler \(2008: p. 52\)](#); [Hakobian & Krunkyan \(2009\)](#), cited in [Din & Ghani \(2020\)](#); [Roohani & Esmaeili \(2010\)](#); [Shi \(2014\)](#); [Silaški \(2009\)](#), cited in [Karazoun & Abdelmajid \(2016\)](#); [White \(2011\)](#); [Sherpa \(2012\)](#); [McArthur, Lam-McArthur & Fontaine \(2018\)](#), cited in [Din & Ghani \(2020\)](#) acknowledge the fact that writing good news headlines is both a challenging and a demanding task which few people can master, and that news media realize the importance of news headlines and the orienting impact they can have on the reader, receiver, or “customer”; correspondingly, news headlines are normally written by an editorial desk, prudent journalists, or specialized reporters. The

language of news headlines, as a graphic visual reality, must abide by some constraints such as the availability of limited space which dictates that type of language, structure, and style enhanced to produce the content of the news headline; the language must be as brief as possible, attention-grabbing, ideas-generating, of a telegraphic cast, expressive, curiosity-awakening, analysis-welcoming, and thought-provoking in order guarantee achieving, through the semantic and pragmatic functions, what news headlines are generally supposed to achieve. This special and graphic register of the news headline normally entails specific kind of metaphoric, sensational, and, mostly, unusual vocabulary items and expressive terminology; this morphological braid of the news headline contains metaphoric lexis that mostly connotes exaggeration, boldness, polarization, sensitivity, and ideas—charging capacity; poetic style, phonetic devices, and some figures of speech are notably exploited within the boundaries of nearly all news headlines: versification, rhyme, rhythm, homophones, alliteration, puns, word play, alliteration, and metonymy are commonly tracked in news headlines to establish “a voice” within news headlines as miniature written texts; these linguistic techniques and semantic weave, it should be stated, are orchestrated in accordance with an economic parallel that considers as many techniques as needed to convince the reader, receiver, or “customer” to buy the news story, and, eventually the newspaper. To get a practical understanding, consequently, this study has excavated, from within the previous review of the available literature, the most common language forms and techniques exploited by the writers of news headlines; the has been scattered semantic forms and techniques, within various related studies, are presented and categorized in a unified tabulated (**Table 1**) cast that can allow a practical comprehension of those language forms and techniques coined with the related studies:

The a above mentioned section of the review of the available literature has revealed essential features in regard to the language of news headlines and the parallels according to which those language features are dictated and directed; the availability of limited space and the economic parallels are traditionally viewed as driving forces that molds the semantic and visual entity of news headlines; this acknowledgment, of the semantic (linguistic) features of the news headlines, is very significant because various aspects of news headlines such as defections, types, importance, and functions are all anchored to a semantic(linguistic) port.

## **5.2. News Headlines: Definitions, Types, Importance, and Functions**

The following section of the review of the available related literature presents a multi-towered overview in regard to the types, importance, language, and functions of news headlines; the has been scattered overview, within the body of the available related literature, is presented in an a adequate cohesive cast that can enable a deeper layer of understanding and a wider scope of manageability: *Mårdh* (1980), cited in *Isani* (2011); *Halliday* (1985); *Bell* (1991), cited in *White* (2011);

Reah (2002), cited in Omer & Ali (2013); Dor (2003), cited in Isani (2011); Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, LDOCE (2003), cited in Karazoun &

**Table 1.** The main language forms and techniques enhanced within news headlines and the set of related literature.

| <u>Language Forms and Technique</u>  | <u>Related Literature</u>  |
|--|--|
| <b>A: Omission</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omission of punctuation marks.</li> <li>• Omission unnecessary capitalization.</li> <li>• Omission of verbs.</li> <li>• Omission of subjects of the sentences.</li> <li>• Elliptical sentences (in such headlines the auxiliary verbs, subjects, articles can be omitted).</li> <li>• Omission determiners.</li> <li>• Omission of articles.</li> <li>• Omission of verbs and auxiliaries.</li> <li>• Omission of both verbs and subjects.</li> <li>• Omission of articles.</li> <li>• Omission of finite verbs.</li> <li>• Omission relative pronouns.</li> <li>• Omission titles.</li> <li>• Omission of function words.</li> </ul> | <p>Leigh (1994), cited in Monsefi &amp; Mahadi (2016); Znamenskaya (2005), cited in Din &amp; Ghani (2020); Bednarek &amp; Caple (2012), cited in Molek-Kozakowska (2013); Mårdh (1980), cited in Bazza (2012), cited in Karazoun &amp; Abdelmajid (2016); Sherpa (2012: p. 75); Prakash &amp; Dhawan (2017), cited in Gasparyan (2019); Din &amp; Ghani (2020);</p>   |
| <b>B: Poetics\Phonetic</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Versification: rhyme or rhythm, alliteration;</li> <li>• Homophones;</li> <li>• Metonymy;</li> <li>• Use of puns and word play.</li> </ul>  | <p>Develotte &amp; Rechniewski (2001), cited in Din &amp; Ghani (2020); Znamenskaya (2005), cited in Din &amp; Ghani (2020); Soler (2008); Shie (2010); Isani (2011); White (2011); Bednarek &amp; Caple (2012), cited in Molek-Kozakowska (2013); Mårdh (1980), cited in Bazza (2012), cited in Karazoun &amp; Abdelmajid (2016); Uppuleti &amp; Ganta (2015), cited in Karazoun &amp; Abdelmajid (2016); Prakash &amp; Dhawan (2017), cited in Gasparyan (2019); Din &amp; Ghani (2020);</p> |
| <b>C: Verbs</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finite verb in the headlines.</li> <li>• A non-finite structure in the headlines.</li> <li>• Verb less phrases for headlines.</li> <li>• Verbal phrases—infinitive, participial and gerundial.</li> <li>• Active verbs.</li> <li>• Passive constructions the verb “to be” is often omitted.</li> <li>• Present tense is the most common.</li> <li>• Infinitive is often used instead of future tenses.</li> </ul>   | <p>Soler (2008); Prášková (2009), cited in Karazoun &amp; Abdelmajid (2016); Al Janaby &amp; Abed (2011); Shishkova (2015);</p>  |
| <b>D: Words</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of confusing words and phrases that do not hold any meaning if read in isolation:</li> <li>• The use of emotionally colored words and phrases</li> <li>• The use of words and phrases rather than long complete sentences</li> <li>• The use of short words.</li> <li>• The use of specific word order.</li> <li>• Exploit some loan words.</li> </ul>  | <p>Prášková (2009), cited in Al Janaby &amp; Abed (2011); Majeed &amp; Salih (2012); Mårdh (1980), cited in Bazza (2012), cited in Karazoun &amp; Abdelmajid (2016); Sherpa (2012); Gasparyan (2019); McArthur, Lam-McArthur, &amp; Fontaine (2018), cited in Din &amp; Ghani (2020);</p>  |

**Continued**

## E: Sentences:

- Ungrammatical sentences.
  - Questions in the form of statements.
  - Complex sentences.
  - Nominative sentences
  - Interrogative sentences.
  - Full declarative sentences.
  - Direct sentences instead of question headlines.
- Saxena (2006), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Al Janaby & Abed (2011); White (2011); Sherpa (2012); Dor (2003), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Prakash & Dhawan (2017), cited in Gasparyan (2019);

## F: Other techniques

- The frequent use of complex noun phrases in subject positions.
  - Nominalization.
  - Taking advantage of prepositions.
  - Piling up information in extended noun phrases.
  - Deliberately break up set expressions or deform special terms.
  - Neologisms.
  - Ambiguity.
  - Widely known abbreviations should/ may be used.
  - Attributions of those whose statements or comments are presented in articles should be used in headlines.
  - The use of numerals rather than numbers.
  - Punctuation marks: evading or exploiting.
  - The use of complex noun phrases.
  - Make use of noun phrases.
  - The use of initials.
  - Source domain.
  - Juxtaposition.
  - Cataphoric rather than anaphoric structure.
- Chiang (2002), cited in Al Janaby & Abed (2011); Znamenskaya (2005), cited in Din & Ghani (2020); Saxena (2006), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Soler (2008); Al Janaby & Abed (2011); White (2011); Majeed & Salih (2012); Mårdh (1980), cited in Bazza (2012), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Sherpa (2012); Prakash & Dhawan (2017), cited in Gasparyan (2019); McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine (2018), cited in Din & Ghani (2020); Gasparyan (2019); Baicchi (2003), cited in White (2011).

Abdelmajid (2016); Omer & Ali (2013); and Shi (2014), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016) present some various definitions of news headlines: news headlines are defined as titles at the opening of the news story which are foregrounded by means of space, graphics, color, and font size to market the news story; news headlines can also be considered as a summary to the news story because they –headlines—are little texts that stand as an abstracted abstract; news headlines are also viewed as “eyes” or “windows” through which the potential reader can scoop distilled information about the news story; moreover, news headlines function like “negotiators” or middle agents between the producer of the news headline (the writer and whomever she or he is functioning on behalf) and the potential reader, receiver or “customer “ of that given headline; the bulk of the available related literature defines news headlines in reference to what they are capable of evoking in the potential reader, receiver or “customer”; news headlines are proposed to evoke, in the potential reader, receiver, or “customer”, a charged cognitive and emotive tendencies which can impact and orient her or his decision to carry on the process of reading the whole news story or, else, to abort; news headlines are also defined as “Headlines” as they constitute a special “written register” that is produced and written while exploiting various lin-

guistic, textual, contextual, and visual effects that have an orienting impact on the reader.

These perspectives of various definitions of the news headlines interrelate with some various layers of classifications and types of news headlines; in this regard, Mårdh (1980), cited in Al Janaby & Abed (2011); Jenkins (1990), cited in Omer & Ali (2013); Develotte & Rechniewski (2001), cited in Isani (2011); Chovanec (2003), cited in Isani (2011); McConnell-Ginet & Eckert (2003), cited in Omer & Ali (2013); Gattani (2005), cited in Isani (2011); Isani (2011); Bednarek & Caple (2012), cited in Molek-Kozakowska (2013); Shishkova (2015), have presented multiple methods of categorizing news headlines: the first method includes classifying news headlines in reference to the intended effect, of the news headlines, which has yielded three types of news headlines: the informative headlines which give a glimpse about the topic of the news story, the indicative headlines which include those headlines that provide something like a summary of what has happened in the news story, and the eye-catcher headlines which are oriented toward grabbing the attention of the reader; the second method constitutes classifying headlines in accordance with their linguistic reality or semantic weave: these include the nominal headlines, the verbal headlines, the adverbial headlines, and the two-member sentence headlines which has a subject and predicate; the third method categorizes two types of headlines: the content-centered (informative) headlines or the reader-centered (pragmatic) headlines which both respectively functions as “ideational headlines” and “interpersonal” headlines; the fourth method categorizes headlines as “elliptical” in accordance with the two domains of “reader accessibility” and the “informative impact” of their—news headlines—semantic cast; in this regard Isani (2011) concludes that that “the more informative the headline, the lower the challenge to reader accessibility, and inversely, the greater the comprehension resistance, the higher the pragmatic design, the less informative the headline and the higher the challenge to reader accessibility.” Isani (2011) also concludes that “low reader accessibility would apply to semantic-orientated, explicitly informative headlines requiring little decoding effort on the reader’s part.” In this regard also, the researcher of this study believes that a strict balance, in the semantic weave of the headline and the pragmatic magnitude, should be established because of two reasons: the first, not all readers do have the same density of variable such as the cognitive and comprehending capabilities; moreover, a given news headline can be, semantically or pragmatically, challenging to one reader, but not to another reader; second, the researcher of this study believes that a higher level of pragmatic demand and a challenging semantic weave may yield the opposite effect, in that it might generate some kind of avoidance, from the part of the reader, to the headline and the news story it “represents”; the fifth method classifies headlines in accordance with some other maxims such as the generic peculiarity, elliptical molding, and the would-be pragmatic impact on reader’s interpretive, cognitive, responsive tendency, and emotive experience; this type of headlines is distinguished by its specific telegraphic written cast, linguistic features, and typical con-

tent, and known as “headline”; accordingly, [Bednarek & Caple \(2012\)](#), cited in [Molek-Kozakowska \(2013\)](#) define “‘headline’ as a specific language style and point to some of the linguistic characteristics that make it different from other styles typical of news discourse. These include the omission of function words, frequent nominalizations and pre modifications, the use of untensed phrases instead of clauses, the use of the present tense to increase timeliness, the increased frequency of adverbs of manner, the decreased frequency of attributions and time specifications, the use of marked/emotional/evaluative words, the inter-textual references in the form of pseudo-direct quotes or allusions, as well as such patterns as proverbs, idioms and puns.”

The above mentioned categorization of news headlines is inseparable from the perception of the importance of news headlines; for that reason, the following section, of this review, will thematically function as an intensifier to the previous sections by viewing the importance of news headlines:

[Van Dijk \(1988\)](#), cited in [Carvalho \(2008\)](#); [Van Dijk \(1988\)](#), cited in [Isani \(2011\)](#); [Bell \(1991\)](#), cited in [Haider & Hussein \(2019\)](#); [Dor \(2003\)](#), cited in [Majeed & Salih \(2012\)](#); [Tiono \(2003\)](#), cited in [Al Janaby & Abed \(2011\)](#); [Ludwig and Gilmore \(2005\)](#), cited in [Prášková \(2009\)](#); [Isani \(2011\)](#); [Majeed & Salih \(2012\)](#); [Sherpa \(2012\)](#); [Shi \(2014\)](#), cited in [Karazoun & Abdelmajid \(2016\)](#) argue that considering the behavior and attitude of the intended reader, receiver, or even the “customer”, news headlines constitute the most preferred section, of the news story, which the readers’ eyes primarily catch because of some critical “visual” effects that have been worked on by the writer of the headline; manipulating the rhetoric of the headline also plays on the curiosity and the psychological drives that orient the reader’s general tendency to scan, without reading the whole news story, as many headlines as the quick rhythm of this modern age allows. Moreover, news headlines play an economic role which is considered through understanding the behavior of the reader, receiver or “customer”; in this sense, most readers, receivers or “customers” tend to “glance” the news headlines in public places facades, and as a result of this “glance” the decision to buy the whole newspaper sprouts, or, else, does not; by the same token, and economically speaking, news headlines, should urge and convince the reader, receiver or “customer” that a given newspaper, which includes the headline and news story, is worth every penny paid to buy it; news headlines are also considered as essential negotiators within the communicative continuum as they inform, summarize, attract, and most probably convince the reader to behave and take action in various forms. In this regard, the researcher of this study believes that the importance of news headlines is not based only on economical pretexts, but also on their—news headlines—communicative scope through which it is very possible to pass, in a very condensed linguistic structure, ideological glimpses, preferences, biases, a photo shopped imagery, points of view, and specific orchestrated themes and ideas. These functions, roles, attributes, or parallels function within the communicative continuum, of news headlines, as far as the researcher has found, may not be able explain other functions that are sup-

posedly connected with the semantic and visual entity of news headlines; as a result, the following section, of the review of the available literature, gives an adequate consideration to the interrelated functions news headlines play such as semantic function, visual representation, and the pragmatic function:

Crystal (2003), cited in Majeed & Salih (2012); Van Dijk (1988), cited in Isani (2011); Mallette (1990), cited in Bedřichová (2006), cited in Majeed & Salih (2012); Bell (1991), cited in Molek-Kozakowska (2013); Bell (1991); Nir (1993), cited in Bonyadi & Samuel (2013); Bell (1991), cited in Monsefi & Mahadi (2016); Morley (1998), cited in Soler (2008); Kronrod & Engel (2001), cited in Isani (2011); Chovanec (2003); Dor (2003), Geer & Kahn (1993); Ifantidou (2009); Van Dijk (1988), cited in Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014); Dor (2003); Ifantidou (2009); Smith (1999), cited in Shie (2010); Saxena (2006), cited in Lee (2012); Soler (2008), cited in Nazzal (2017); Al Janaby & Abed (2011); Dor (2003), cited in Isani (2011); Majeed & Salih (2012); Bednarek & Caple (2012), cited in Haider & Hussein (2019); Lee (2012); Sherpa (2012); Molek-Kozakowska (2013); Shishkova (2015); Gasparyan (2019); Haider & Olimy (2019), cited in Haider & Hussein (2019); Din & Ghani (2020) relatively agree that news headlines, in a traditional sense, are meant to summarize, inform about, and report the news story through giving as many hints about the news story or report as possible with a relatively condescend linguistic matrix and a carefully worked on rhetoric and metaphor; in this sense, news headlines function as the seed of information that could be “planted” in the reader’s “mind” and which could, when sprouted, capture the reader’s attention which may, as an outcome, urge her or him to buy the news story and, eventually, the meant newspaper; the semantic features of news headlines, in this regard, set the boundaries of the news story and the scope of its narrative line that correlate with the cognitive capabilities of a common reader, receiver, or “customer”; accordingly, the semantic weave of some news headlines is normally augmented by providing a sub-headline to further ensure the frame of the story line of the news report or news item. This attention-grabbing and curiosity-arouser functions of the headline correlate with readability variable of a given news story and a given potential reader, receiver or “customer”, and eventually with the economic feasibility of the newspaper itself in the form of how many copies can be sold of a given newspaper; in other words, news headlines, through their semantic structure and visual reality, are traditionally supposed to “tell and sell” and to “attract and contract”; understanding the reading behavior, of the reader, receiver or “customer” is a critical issue as it decides the marketing magnitude and the level of engagement with those potential readers, receivers or “customer”; news headlines, with their linguistic weave and mosaic production, can boost the reader’s imagery which enable constructing a set of distilled scenery of the news story; by the same token, generally, this directorial and cinematic design for news headlines is steered towards dragging the steps of the reader who usually pays a glance into someone who is oriented to be curious enough to continue reading a given news story, and, then, eventually, becomes someone who is totally con-

vinced to buy a given newspaper. This economical function of news headline, once more, may not be able to fully explain, as the researcher of this study believes, the profound attention paid to writing and producing well-developed headlines. This proposition has been supported by a volume of the available related literature which focuses on the semantic features and their resulting pragmatic functions:

Hall (1986), cited in Lestari & Paramita (2022); Graney (1990), cited in Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014); Bell (1991), cited in Soler (2008); Randall (2000), cited in Isani (2011); Develotte & Rechniewski (2001), cited in Din & Ghani (2020); Dor (2003), cited in Majeed & Salih (2012); Dor (2003), cited in Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014); Dor (2003), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Koller (2004), cited in Soler (2008); Andrew (2007), cited in Molek-Kozakowska (2013). McCrudden & Schraw (2007), Otero & Kintsch (1992), cited in Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014); Chiluya (2009); Ifantidou (2009), cited in Bonyadi & Samuel (2013); Roohani & Esmaeili (2010), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Majeed & Salih (2012); Sherpa (2012); Ecker, Lewandowsky, Chang, & Pillai (2014); Tabula & Agbayani (2015); Uppuleti & Ganta (2015), cited in Karazoun & Abdelmajid (2016); Monsefi & Mahadi (2016); Din & Ghani (2020); Although news headlines are directed and casted in a condensed, brief, and summarized realm, they bear a huge capacity to communicate a specific message with readers, receivers, or “customers”; news headlines, in this sense, and while keeping their traditional function as attention-grippers, are very capable of driving and orienting the attention of those potential readers, receivers, or “customers” to a particular point of view that is endorsed by another person, community, party, or any other side of this communicative continuum; the second step, which is sought, is to persuade those target readers, receivers or “customers” to take a stand favoring a specific narrative, ideology, attitude, or an opinion. To achieve this, writers of headlines normally exploit a wide range of semantic features to drive the reader into a preferred kind of interpretation, and, then, urging that target reader to articulate various ideas, form a mental scenery, construct a proximate imagery to her or his cognitive repertoire in regard to the news story; these processes are supposed to yield a would-be attitude, a stand, a point of view, behavior, or tendency, from the part of the reader, which can reshape her or his cognition of a given news story, and also revises her or his views in order to be, in a general sense, simply, with or, else, in very rare cases, be against the news headline writers’ attitude, belief, or ideology that mirror, may be, the general policy of the newspaper or news agency on behalf of which those writers, of news headlines, are normally functioning; the pragmatic sphere of a given news headline is concealed within a “telegraphic” language that acts like a beacon which orients the reader to take the route to the content of the news story as well as to the intended scope of meaning which the news headline covertly encapsulates.

Headlines are, directly or indirectly, manipulated by their writers, who mostly abide by the general policy and stand of the newspaper or the news agency, and

who consciously or subconsciously, favor or work for a particular ideology, belief, personality, a situation or a reference source domain: writers deliberately foreground one aspect of the news story rather than others; they make use of various semantic weaves and stylistic techniques that have a desired pragmatic impact such as reordering the words of the headline, prioritizing one specific event of the news story, highlighting a scenic item or word, restructuring events in an unexpected matrix, giving prominence to specific characters of the news story in anecdotal casting, neologizing some vocabulary items and terms of the news story, praising or eulogizing specific personalities, redefining and conceptualizing the climax of the news story, and, then, overtly or covertly anchoring the news headline to a commonly appreciated source domain or a historical domain. These semantic weaves and stylistic devices aid writers of the headline in reframing the whole scene in order to set up the boundaries of the intended stance that readers, receivers or “customers” may be led to take. Writers of news headlines, directly or indirectly, depend on accumulative generally-established knowledge to calibrate the target common readers’ gender, age, interests, mood, beliefs, tendencies, preferences, expectations, social class, intellect, and nativity; this kind of knowledge is used to enable the writers of the news headline to decide what works to construct a bridge of communication connecting the potential readers’ context and mental frame work with the news story or a specific domain of such news story; Dor (2003) confirms this by concluding that the “construction of a successful headline requires an understanding of the readers—their state-of-knowledge, their beliefs and expectations and their cognitive styles—no less than it requires an understanding of the story.” Accordingly, it should be stated that the deep knowledge of the semantic weave of a given news headline and the pragmatic magnitude it—semantic weave—is capable of giving birth to, and, in addition, an adequate knowledge of the target readers’ variables are essential recipe ingredients for setting up an effective stimulus to the target reader, receiver or “customer” so as to exhibit a desired response that the pragmatic function, of news headlines, reinforces and, somehow, guarantees.

To sum up, the previous section of review of the available related literature has revealed that there are other deeper functions that news headlines are normally supposed to play rather than the traditional functions that mainly revolve in an economic orbit; the previous review has confirmed the existence of the pragmatic function of news headlines, but without prescribing a linguistic model that can measure the gravity of those pragmatic functions, their effect on the reader, and their capacity to serve a given attitude, belief, or ideology that mirror the, may be, general policy of the newspaper or news agency; as a result, this study, in a scarce maneuver, proposes Grice’s maxims of cooperation as a suggested model to enable deeper understanding of those pragmatic functions of news headlines and their orienting force. The following section of the review of the available literature introduces the Grice’s principle of cooperation and the maxims that correspond with such a principle (quantity, quality, relevance, and

manner):

### 5.3. Grice's Principle of Cooperation

Grice (1975), cited in Ayunon (2018) summarizes that "Cooperative Principle which advances the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant, and clear." Jin (1999), cited in Ayunon (2018) concludes that "the Cooperative Principle is not a rule to control ordinary conversation but rather a law observed in research on social talk." Hadi (2013) concluded that Grice's cooperative principle is at the "center of the disciplines of pragmatics and the important role it plays in this field cannot be denied. Grice (1989), cited in Levinson (1983) "classifies four basic maxims of conversation, which express a general co-operative principle. These principles are maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner. Grice (1975), cited in Levinson (1983) more explains that "the principles are not only applicable in spoken communication which involved speaker and hearer. They are also applicable in written communication involving a writer and readers." Ayunon (2018) further explains that "The CP [cooperation principle] is primarily concerned with the distinction between 'saying' and 'meaning', trying to answer the question 'how do speakers know how to generate implicit meanings and how can they assume that their addressees will reliably understand their intended meaning?" Davies (2000), cited in Ayunon (2018) confirms that "CP [cooperation principle] is the basic underlying assumption speakers make when they speak to one another, that they are trying to cooperate with one another to engage in a meaningful conversation."

Regardless the fact that Grice's model, as stated by the available related literature, is seemingly applicable to spoken communications more than written communications, this study based its proposal and argument on the premise that Grice's model maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) are applicable to news headlines as miniature written texts; the bulk of the available related literature hailed the cooperation principle as an effective linguistic tool to measure the semantic and pragmatic value of spoken contexts, and to some extent, written texts; Grice's maxims, as confirmed by the available related literature, can be used as an evaluative techniques to judge the "successfulness" of a communicative context, whether written or spoken, and, even, to make sure the message has been passed and received meaningfully among the participants of the communicative continuum. These proposed linguistic roles and communicative functions, which are proposed to be valued by Grice's model, and as also stated by the available related literature, are built upon the presupposition that the maxims of the Grice's model (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) are commonly enhanced, throughout the communication process, especially by the participants; this presupposition, which has relatively been supported by the available related research, and as far as the researcher has found, does not constitute a solid understanding towards Grice's principle of cooperation as the op-

posite can be true; in other words, participants, especially the sender of the message, tend to violate the maxims of Grice's principle of cooperation (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) so as to guarantee a higher magnitude of the pragmatic meaning; confirmatively, [Ayunon \(2018\)](#), cited in [Thomas \(2014\)](#) "criticized the work of Grice for three misinterpretations: viewing human nature optimistically, proposing a series of rules for effective conversation and believing that his suggested maxims would always be taken into consideration." [Taillard \(2004\)](#), cited in [Ayunon \(2018\)](#) "also attacked Grice's claim that people normally cooperate and follow the maxims and mentioned that human communication rests on a tension between the goals of communicators and audiences." [Sarangi and Slembrouck \(1992\)](#), cited in [Ayunon \(2018\)](#) "also criticized the Gricean claim for the normality of cooperation. They suggested that Grice's framework should be extended to include societal factors such as the social position of the communicators." Moreover, [Hadi \(2013\)](#), cited in [Ayunon \(2018\)](#) "concluded that Grice's theory is inflexible because it does not consider the fact that human communication is a complicated, diverse and rich phenomenon. It disregards the situations where the goal of the speaker is to miscommunicate. [Hadi \(2013\)](#), cited in [Ayunon \(2018\)](#) also adds that "Grice's theory is flawed because of several reasons. First, it is too biased towards cooperation. Grice neglected the fact that there are instances when the purpose of speakers is to intentionally miscommunicate. Second, his theory is fundamentally asocial for failing to explain how people actually communicate concerning sophisticated social contexts."

As an outcome, as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, it can be stated that violating the maxims of Grice's principle of cooperation should be more investigated, deeply approached, and attentively considered by research to yield a profound understanding, a wider scope of applicability, and a corresponding linguistic model that can highly be exploited and enhanced, especially within written texts; subsequently, as far as the researcher has found, some adequate literature has started to foreground the proposal that Grice's principle of cooperation is normally violated not obeyed; affirmatively, [Buddharat, Ambele & Boonsuk \(2016\)](#) "Elicited how violation occurs within each maxim of the Grice's principle of cooperation:

- **Quantity violation characteristics:**

Q1: If the speaker does circumlocution or not to the point.

Q2: If the speaker is uninformative.

Q3: If the speaker talks too short.

Q4: If the speaker talks too much.

Q5: If the speaker repeats certain words.

- **Quality violation characteristics:**

QL1: If the speaker lies or says something that is believed to be false.

QL2: If the speaker does irony or makes ironic and sarcastic statement.

QL3: If the speaker denies something.

QL4: If the speaker distorts information.

- **Relevance violation characteristics:**

R1: If the speaker makes the conversation unmatched with the topic.

R2: If the speaker changes conversation topic abruptly.

R3: If the speaker avoids talking about something.

R4: If the speaker hides something or hides a fact.

R5: If the speaker does the wrong causality.

- **Manner violation characteristics:**

M1: If the speaker uses ambiguous language.

M2: If the speaker exaggerates thing.

M3: If the speaker uses slang in front of people who do not understand it.

M4: If the speaker's voice is not loud enough.”

The above mentioned paradigm of [Buddharat, Ambele, & Boonsuk \(2016\)](#) casts the violation characteristics of Grice's maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner); this paradigm carries a special importance to the proposal of this study, in the sense that the investigative scope of this study correlates thematically with this paradigm; the argument of this study is based on the premise that the pragmatic functions of news headlines are highly connected with violating those maxims of Grice, and not abiding by them.

#### 5.4. Epitome

To some up, the previous review of the available related literature has revealed that news headlines, as miniature texts, play multiple functions that should meet some parallels and considerations; the semantic weave of the news headlines must also meet these parallels and considerations and, then, serve the ultimate functions of news headlines. Traditionally, the semantic weave of the news headlines have to serve both an economic parallel, and the availability of limited space within the printing matrix of a given newspaper; in this traditional sense, the “successfulness” of a given news headline is measured against how many readers were attracted and convinced to read the related news story, and, eventually, how many copies of a given newspaper were sold. This means that there has been a great interest in the linguistic structure of news headlines as only very skilful editors, who are normally tasked to write news headlines, who are proficient enough to make choices and selections of the most impactful semantic weave of a given news headline to achieve the intended traditional functions and goals of news headlines; the language of news headlines is normally condensed and semantically distilled due to the fact that a quite limited space is commonly available for news headlines; moreover, news headlines, as proved by the previous review of the available related literature, are mostly preferred by the potential readers who normally tend to quickly glance the headlines in newspapers public -stands, or elsewhere. Accordingly, news headlines must be capable of grabbing the reader's attention, marketing the news story, and, eventually, the newspaper as well; this, in turn, reinforces the supposition that the main traditional functions of news headlines mostly goes in an economic orbit.

The previous review, of the available related literature, has also revealed a communicative and pragmatic functions performed by news headlines, other than that economic function which has intensively been highlighted so far; news headlines, and in addition to the traditional economic function, do normally carry a charged and impactful pragmatic communicative capacities; these pragmatic functions have been approached by a small number of studies of the previous review; in addition, the previous review of the available related literature has not anchored those pragmatic functions of news headlines to a well-established linguistic model that is capable of uncovering these pragmatic functions, and, on the other hand, capable of calibrating the communicative magnitude and weight of these functions. Accordingly, as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, Grice's cooperative principle can be a satisfying linguistic model that can more confirm the existence of the pragmatic spheres of the news headlines, and, by the same token, can calibrate the communicative magnitude and weight of these functions.

## **6. Discussion**

### **6.1. Theoretical Background Reference**

The previous theoretical background concluded that the linguistic knit of the news headline must abide by the important parallel of keeping it—the news headline—as much attractive, eye-catching, attention-grabbing, and curiosity-boosting as maximally possible; limited space availability is another parallel, which covertly plays an important role while producing news headlines, and which dedicates both the linguistic and visual realities of a given news headline; the message intended to be communicated is another critical parallel which decides the syntagmatic domain of the news headline; the selection of specific linguistic elements and the style followed by the writer of the news headline can pragmatically empower the capacity and the gravity of meaning concealed within this “trapping” linguistic knit. Abiding by such parallels entails that news headline, in reference to the news story, connotatively or denotatively, should, for example, maximize readers' expectations, arouse their cognitive involvement, activate their information processing mechanism, boost their curiosity, produce strong emotional effects, give readers a feeling of simultaneity in regard to the events of the news story, frame the conceptual boundaries of the whole news story, urge readers to read more of the news story, and, as a result, be motivated to buy the newspaper; these strategies are used to market the news story through “convincing” the readers to read and then buy such a news story. Correspondingly, the semantic weave and the style of the news headline can achieve, directly or indirectly, enormous impacts and effects on the readers' behavioral and cognitive tendencies: without the careful selection of words, phrases, and how they are strung, it can be hard enough to communicate a relevant and impactful message. Consequently, a research need emerges to set the boundaries of this semantic compositionality enhanced within the news headlines and the pragmatic impacts they entail; correspondingly, the following section of this discussion will highlight the conditional relationship between the semantic compositionality and its proposed pragmatic impacts on potential readers:

## 6.2. Semantic Compositionality and the Pragmatic Impacts

The first aim of this study was to investigate and document as many examples as possible of the semantic compositionality of the news headlines and the pragmatic functions it yields; the semantic compositionality, of news headlines, which is normally enriched by visual effects, color schemes, and font entities is very capable of framing the magnitude of the pragmatic functions that, in turn, can mold the cognitive and behavioral tendencies of the potential reader; in other words, the explicit and implicit goals of the news headlines can be achieved through a carefully orchestrated semantic weave which is normally coated by other effects such as visual, color, and font entities; as a result, as far as the proposal of this study is concerned, it is very significant to present a considerable sample of examples of the semantic compositionality and the pragmatic functions it entails.

The following **Table 2** reveals a wide range of semantic compositionality and the proposed pragmatic functions that these forms can generate; this semantic compositionality and the intended pragmatic functions of the news headlines have been documented in scattered sets throughout the available related literature; this scattered rendering, as far as the researcher of this study believes, may not be able to allow a formidable scope of understanding in regard to those semantic and pragmatic functions of the news headlines; responsively, the researcher of this study scrutinized the available related literature in order to investigate those semantic features of the news headlines and their—semantic features—pragmatic capacities, excavate as many examples as possible within the body of the available literature, and then tabulate all those semantic and pragmatic examples in a unified cast; this tabulated cast, as proposed by this study, allows a wider scope of comprehensibility and a deeper dip of understanding that provide a documented evidence that the semantic weave of news headlines is not only propelled by the economic and limited space parallels, as mentioned in the previous section, but also by an important pragmatic role that the writer of the news headline, covertly or overtly, fuses within the semantic weave of the news headline; moreover, it should be stated that **Table 2** renders a wide range of the semantic compositionality and their proposed pragmatic functions coined with discretionary explanations by the researcher of this study which are also based on the common findings of the available related literature; the importance of **Table 2** lies in the fact that: first, it allows a relative comprehensive understanding about news headlines semantic compositionality and the pragmatic gravity it entails; second, it provides a considerable evidence that the pragmatic function, of news headlines, is a central propeller which also dictates the semantic compositionality; accordingly, it is significant to give sample practical examples that show how is the causality between semantics and pragmatics functions within the formats of new headlines:

As far as the researcher has found, **Table 2** stands for a very rare endeavor which has yielded a tabulated manifestation of as many examples, of the semantic

**Table 2.** The semantic compositionality of the headline and the proposed pragmatic functions.

| <b>Semantic compositionality of Headlines:</b>  | <b>Proposed pragmatic functions.</b>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes use of words and phrases rather than long complete sentences:</li> </ul>   | To Pass a distilled message within the available space [Manipulate the scope of the message].  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elide certain elements:</li> <li>• Ellipsis:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Content ellipsis: omit those words and expressions revealing the same ideas and concepts or better the same meaning;</li> <li>b) Structural ellipsis to shed all the grammatical words. i.e. words of low informational value and retain all the lexical ones:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ellipsis of determiners:</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) Abbreviated structures:</li> </ol> </li> </ul> | <p>To shorten the headline and make it more condensed [paving the way for a framed pragmatic impact].</p> <p>With few short wording, the headlines writers have to deliver the message with most valuable and relevant [in reference to the writers of the headline] information [that is proposed to frame the whole story]</p> <p>Can give sense of generality [that the topic is directed to give the sense it affects all people] to greater extent than determiners can do.</p> <p>To achieve specific communicative goals.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Semantic compositionality of news headlines] is special and has its own syntactic, lexical, rhetorical characteristics:</li> </ul>  | All serve in creating brevity, attractiveness and clarity [as perceived by the writers of headlines].  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepositions:</li> </ul>   | To establish relation [as perceived by the writer of the news headline].   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piling up information in an extended noun phrase:</li> </ul>   | To achieve semantic density [that can frame the pragmatic effect].   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employing a wide range of structures and sentence types that directly address the reader:</li> </ul>   | To simulate closeness—to connote synthetic [artificial] personalization.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make use of short words, loan words, nominalization and noun phrases:</li> </ul>   | To make them more eye-catching and attractive [orienting the intended message].  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headlines always keep the main verb and leave the auxiliary:</li> </ul>  | Main verbs are primary reference to the topic of the news; every day communication omits the main verb, but keep the auxiliary in subsequent reference since the main action expressed by the lexical verb is already known.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Present Simple tense, and</li> <li>• present tense is the most common:</li> </ul>  | Gives a reader the feeling of simultaneity of events.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of quotations and direct speech:</li> </ul>  | Evade responsibility.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign words and emotional lexis are often used:</li> </ul>   | [foreign words can maximize the ambiguity level of the headline; as a result, this a ambiguity can arise the curiosity drive of the readers, but, on the other hand, the researchers believes that the use of foreign words can be risky in the sense that they –foreign words can yield the opposite effect and discourage the reader to continue reading neither the headline nor the news story].   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tropes; metonymy, metaphor:</li> </ul>   | Plays a crucial role in the cognitive power of the reader.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotionally colored words and phrases:</li> </ul>  | To attract the readers' attention; produce strong emotional effects.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensationalism:</li> </ul>   | Enhancing the worthiness of the news story; attention –grapping technique.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberately break up set expressions or deform special terms:</li> </ul>  | Maximize the reader's curiosity.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active verbs:</li> </ul>   | Give meaning and weight to the headlines; while finite verbs forms are very often omitted.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infinitive is often used instead of future tenses:</li> </ul>  | Giving urgency and immediacy.  |

**Continued**


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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers should be written as numerals:</li> </ul>   | <p>In order to save space.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation should be avoided:</li> </ul>   | <p>Space crunch can be justified.<br/>Unnecessary use of a comma or a semi colon may lead to giving an entirely new angle to the message; creates misinterpretation.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sign of exclamation:</li> </ul>   | <p>Used to generate interest.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the question mark:</li> </ul>   | <p>Implies speculation or doubt.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comma is used instead of “and”:</li> </ul>  | <p>Indicate addition.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• question headlines have to be replaced by direct sentences:</li> </ul>  | <p>As questions refer to uncertainty; if the topic is interesting enough, question headlines might be used.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbreviations: different ways of shortening words like initials, acronym, clipping and blending:</li> </ul>         | <p>Are quick ways to tell a lot; abbreviations allow the scope to guess or involve oneself in de constructing the full form; a best technique to make headlines attractive.<br/>Because they save space on page and they also require the readers to stop a little to think of the original word or expression.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use words from the dictionary that are far from the understanding of the common news reading population:</li> </ul> | <p>Making the readers turn back and go to the news article to grab its actual meaning.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed expression; idiomatic usage; deliberate modification of these items:</li> </ul>                               | <p>Cashing in on readymade communicative meaning chunks, triggering extra communicative potential by creatively varying what is thought of as invariable forms.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration:</li> </ul>  | <p>To make headlines sound poetic, eye-grabbing, and memorable.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of puns or alliteration:</li> </ul>   | <p>for the sake of humorous effect</p>  |
| <p>The use of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex riddles:</li> <li>• Juxtapositions:</li> </ul>  | <p>Maximize readers’ expectations; a rousing mental involvement; boosting curiosity.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tricky words that bore very little relevance or no relevance to the news story:</li> </ul>                          | <p>Making the news story interesting but also to get the reader wondering what it could mean and thus adding ambiguity to the news.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using simple, short, precise and appropriate words:</li> </ul>  | <p>Conveying both connotative and denotative meaning to the readers.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural heritage (Bible, classical world, culture):</li> </ul>   | <p>Source domain and referencing.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personify the name of countries:</li> </ul>   | <p>Order to project the result as the consequence of country’s action as a whole. Save space in the news headlines by allowing the attribution of action to single individual agents. In addition, personification blurred and disguised the role of actual people responsible for the actions described.</p>       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cataphoric structure.</li> </ul>  | <p>Attract the attention and arouse the readers’ curiosity [Foregrounding noun phrase and then framing the readers’ cognitive stand].</p>   |

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compositionality of news headlines and the intended pragmatic function this compositionality entails, as there has been documented within the body of the available related literature; this study, through **Table 2**, has collected those previously scattered examples, thematically categorized them, and supposedly maximized the scope of comprehensibility of the orienting capacity of news headlines. The sample examples tabulated in **Table 2** and the discretionary explanation, provided by the researcher of this study, mirror a subjective point of

view in regard to the semantic compositionality of news headlines and the pragmatic impacts it entails; in other words, those sample examples have not been explained in accordance with an a knowledge linguist model, but, on the contrary, have been anchored to personal points of view; correspondingly, it can be stated that, while there has been a notable lack of a formidable linguistic model, within the bulk of the available related literature, to ratify the existence of these pragmatic functions of the news headlines, and, then, to calibrate their –pragmatic functions -communicative weight, it is very fitting, as a result, to introduce how violating Grice’s Maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) can function as a linguistic model to calibrate the pragmatic functions of news headlines:

### **6.3. Violating Grice’s Maxims: A Linguistic Model to Calibrate the Pragmatic Functions of News Headlines**

The second aim of this study was to propose the principle of violating Grice’s maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) as a linguistic model to ratify the existence of these pragmatic functions, of news headlines, as a yield to the semantic weave of those news headlines, and to calibrate their communicative weight and magnitude; accordingly, as far as the previous discussion is concerned, and depending on **Table 2** which has tabulated a set of sample examples on the semantic compositionality of the news headlines and the proposed pragmatic functions they entail, the following section presents, through **Table 3**, a set of sample examples of how violating Grice’s maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) can function as a linguistic model that can ratify the existence of these pragmatic functions, explain, in a systematic approach, their scope of effect, and give as many practical examples as there have been, within the available related literature, in regard to the causality between those violated semantic features and the potential pragmatic weight which is supposed to be as a result. Moreover, **Table 3** has set the boundaries of those violated semantic features and the proposed resulted pragmatic effect, after a demanding research endeavor, from the part of the researcher, represented by scrutinizing the available related literature, coined with a discretionary explanations, where the researcher believes as necessary, to reveal the potential pragmatic capacity of news headlines:

The importance of **Table 3**, as the researcher believes, lies in the fact that it can be considered, as far as the researcher has found, a never surpassed research endeavor in form of tabulating as many examples as there has been, within the available related research, in order to shed much light on how violating Grice’s maxims work within news headlines, and how it is possible to create a great orienting pragmatic sphere that can mold the potential readers’ cognition, attitude, behavior, perception, intellect, awareness, and tendency towards the foregrounded components, through a given news headline, of a given news story; however, it should be stated that **Table 3** represents few sample examples that have been investigated, collected, and tabulated, by the researcher of this study,

**Table 3.** Grice's model violation characteristics and the related violated semantic features of the news headlines.

| Maxim: Violation characteristics:  | Violation examples: semantic features of news headlines   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Quantity violation characteristics:</b><br/>           Q1: If the speaker does circumlocution or not to the point.<br/>           Q2: If the speaker is uninformative.<br/>           Q3: If the speaker talks too short.<br/>           Q4: If the speaker talks too much<br/>           Q5: If the speaker repeats certain words.</p>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deliberate use of (omission).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (initials).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (abbreviations).</li> <li>• Piling up information in extended noun phrases.</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (words and phrases rather than long complete sentences).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (Ellipses: content and structural).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (Eliding).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (simple, short, precise and appropriate words).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (initials, acronym, clipping and blending).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (numerals instead of numbers).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration [as they entail repetition]).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of comma instead of “and” [as to indicate addition].</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Quality<br/>           Q1: If the speaker lies or says something that is believed to be false.<br/>           Q2: If the speaker does irony or makes ironic and sarcastic statement.<br/>           Q3: If the speaker denies something.<br/>           Q4: If the speaker distorts information.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deliberate use of (emotionally colored words and phrases).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (sensationalism).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (loan words).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (nominalization and noun phrases).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (quotations and direct speech).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (special language which has its own lexical, syntactical, and rhetorical features).</li> <li>• The deliberate (the deliberate leave of the auxiliary [this leave of auxiliary violates pattern 1, 2, and 3 of the English sentence which means deforming information about the preceding noun of the auxiliary (Stageberg &amp; Goodman, 1981).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (infinitive instead of the future tense).</li> <li>• The deliberate avoidance of (punctuation marks).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (fixed expressions [a group of words that are used together such as ready-made clichés] and idiomatic usage; the deliberate modification of these items).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (puns or alliteration [as they entail humorous and ironic domains]).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (complex riddles and juxtapositions).</li> <li>• The deliberately (personify the name of a country).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (direct sentences instead of questions [entails distorting information]).</li> </ul> |
| <p>Relation<br/>           R1: If the speaker makes the conversation unmatched with the Topic.<br/>           R2: If the speaker changes conversation topic abruptly.<br/>           R3: If the speaker avoids talking about something.<br/>           R4: If the speaker hides something or hides a fact.<br/>           R5: If the speaker does the wrong causality.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deliberate use of (a wide range of structures and sentence types that directly address the reader [as to avoid presenting the topic directly, and to establish an “artificial” personalization]).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (tricky words that bore very little relevance or no relevance to the news story).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of a source domain that includes (cultural heritage, bible, classical world and culture).</li> <li>• The deliberate (use of quotations and direct speech [as to avoid taking responsibility]).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (tropes, metonymy, and metaphor [hiding the theme and argument]).</li> </ul>  |

**Continued**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Manner:</p> <p>M1: If the speaker uses ambiguous language.</p> <p>M2: If the speaker exaggerates thing.</p> <p>M3: If the speaker uses slang in front of people who do not understand it.</p> <p>M4: If the speaker's voice is not loud enough.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abbreviated structures:</li> <li>• Foreign words and emotional lexis.</li> <li>• Deliberately break up set expressions or deform special terms.</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (initials, acronym, clipping and blending).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (words from dictionary that are far from the understanding of the common news reading population).</li> <li>• Avoid using punctuation.</li> <li>• Complex riddles.</li> <li>• The deliberate use of Cataphoric structure.</li> <li>• Juxtapositions.</li> <li>• Use words from the dictionary that are far from the understanding of the common news reading population</li> <li>• Ungrammatical sentences.</li> <li>• The use of complex noun phrases.</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (complex riddles and juxtapositions).</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (initials and acronyms)</li> <li>• The deliberate use of (of exclamation marks [exaggeration])</li> <li>• The deliberate use of a question mark [expanding the ambiguity scope and maximize speculation and doubt]</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

form within very few studies on the topic, to support the proposal of this study; moreover, it should be noted that some examples can logically be attached to more than one “violated” maxim of Grice’s principle, and that this attribution, in **Table 3**, is restrictively based on the arguments of the very little related research.

To sum up, it can be stated that the semantic weave of news headlines is not only propelled by the traditional limited space and economic parallels, but also by a pragmatic sphere that can manipulate and mold the readers’ understanding and behavior towards the story-line of the news story; this proposal lacks a formidable linguistic model that can confirm these pragmatic functions and, then, calibrate their magnitude and weight; accordingly, this study proposed the principle of violating Grice’ maxims to function as that linguistic model.

## 7. Findings and Conclusion

Findings of this study indicate that news headlines, though they are highly condensed, represent, if systematically approached, a notable linguistic arena that can maximally be exploited; findings of this study assert that the semantic weave of news headlines is not arbitrarily molded, but, on the contrary, the language of news headlines is carefully selected and craftily stringed by prudent experienced editors so as to guarantee a supposed orienting impact on the reader; findings of this study confirm that the semantic weave of news headlines is traditionally dictated by two central related parallels: the economic parallel and the availability of a quite limited space within the printing matrix of a given newspaper; as a result of the orienting force of these two parallels, the functions of news headlines have been confined to give quite brief hints about the news story so as to arouse the curiosity of the potential reader, and to convince her or him to continue reading the news story, and, then, eventually, buy the news paper or the

news piece; this ultimate function of news headlines is always coined with exploiting a very brief and carefully selected language items and patterns, and the enhancement of various cinematic effects such as color scheme and the font of the news headline; findings of this study reveal that the pragmatic functions of news headlines have not adequately been systematically approached or foregrounded throughout the available related literature; this absence of adequate research on the pragmatic functions has resulted in a shaggy understanding and a blurred vision towards news headlines and their pragmatic functions; the findings of this study also indicate that not only the pragmatic functions of news headlines have not been adequately approached by previous related literature, but also that the pragmatic functions have not been anchored to a reliable linguistic model that is capable of calibrating their communicative weight and magnitude. In this regard, the findings of this study confirmed the applicability of Grice's principle of cooperation to news headlines: Grice's maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) are very capable and applicable to reveal the pragmatic communicative sphere that is interwoven within the semantic weave of news headlines; by the same token, findings of this study indicate that Grice's maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) are normally violated, and not obeyed, by the writers of the news headlines. Accordingly, this study concluded that the language of news headlines is not as "innocent" as it may seem to be; this study concluded that the semantic weave of the news headlines is not only dictated by the an economic or space parallels, but, on the contrary, the semantic weave, of news headlines, normally encapsulates a pragmatic charge that can serve and ideological line of a specific person, a group, or even a community; this study concluded that Grice's model, though basically correlates with spoken contexts, can be a unique linguistic tool to value the importance of news headlines as distilled written texts; conclusions of this study indicate that a pre-knowledge of the news reader's variables should be taken into consideration when writing news headlines; conclusions of this study indicate that potential readers of news headlines do not exhibit the same cognitive capabilities, the same comprehensibility levels, the same information processing skills, and the same understanding to the communicative domain represented by a given news headline.

## Recommendations

In reference to its findings and conclusions, and in accordance with the available related literature, this study recommends further studies to investigate, in a contrastive approach, the semantic compositionality of online news-headlines; further studies are needed to investigate the communicative impact of abiding by the maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) of Grice's model in both print and online news headlines; this study recommends that further research is needed to investigate the pragmatic impact of violating the maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) of Grice's model on online news headlines; contrastive studies are recommended to compare the semantic weave of news headlines, print and online, in different languages, let say, Arabic and English; this

study recommends further research to investigate the reading -behavior of the potential readers of online news-headlines; further research is highly needed to investigate the functions of online news-headlines and the characteristics of the “successful” online news-headline; more research is needed to investigate the effect of exploiting news headlines, both print and online, as an English language teaching (ELT) material; this study also recommends more studies to investigate the applicability of Grice’s Model to news stories, either abiding by the maxims of Grice’s model (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance), or, else, violating them; further research is needed to investigate news headlines, print and online, as advance cognitive-organizers that enable a wider scope of comprehension and understanding from the part of the reader or receiver; this study, in addition, recommends that further research is needed to investigate the effect of using Grice’s Maxims (quantity, quality, manner, and relevance) as a model to assess students written paragraphs and essays; this study also recommends that students of journalism, mass media, and mass communication should be equipped with an adequate knowledge about how Grice’s maxims work within spoken and written language.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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