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Temporal Deixis in Soft News

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ABSTRACT

The present master's thesis is concerned with grammatical tense and deixis in online soft news. It aims at investigating the variations of verbal tense in individual structural segments on two levels of soft news online discourse, with particular focus on temporal deixis as a means of constructing an illusion of shared temporal context with intended articles' recipients. Online news is considered in this work as consisting of two levels; a Facebook preview being the first level connected via a hyperlink to the second level, which is a corresponding full-length article published on newspaper's official web pages. Analyses conducted within this thesis investigate the usage of deictic/non-deictic tense, as well as incidence of the double tense shift pattern, from the points of view of pragmatics, news discourse analysis, and systemic functional linguistics.

KEY WORDS

Temporal deixis, soft news, online news, grammatical tense, double tense shift pattern, pragmatics, media discourse, metafunctions.

ANOTACE

Tato magisterská práce se zabývá slovesným časem a deixí v novinových člancích žánru „soft news“ publikovaných online. Předmětem zkoumání jsou variace použití slovesného času v jednotlivých strukturálních částech článku za pomoci dvouúrovňového přístupu k mediálním online textům. Výzkum je zaměřen na časovou deixi jakožto nástroje pro vytvoření zdánlivě sdíleného časoprostoru s příjemci textu za účelem zvýšení interpersonální dimenze diskurzu. Články publikované na internetu jsou v této práci chápány jako sestávající ze dvou úrovní; „náhled článku na Facebooku“ (zde nazvaný „Facebook preview“) tvoří první úroveň a je pomocí hyperlinku propojen s úrovní druhou, čímž je myšlen celý originální článek publikovaný na oficiálních webových stránkách daného zpravodajského periodika. Vlastní zkoumají použití slovesného času jako prostředku k vyjádření deixe, a dále také výskyt „modelu dvojitého posunu slovesného času“ (tzv. „double tense shift pattern“) z pohledu pragmatiky, analýzy diskurzu a systémové funkční lingvistiky.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Časová deixe, soft news, internetové zpravodajství, slovesný čas, double tense shift pattern, pragmatika, jazyk médií, metafunkce.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FBP	Facebook preview
H1	Headline on Facebook preview
H2	Headline on article web page
S1	Subhead on Facebook preview
S2	Subhead on article web page
BC	Body copy
HN	Hard news
SN	Soft news
CT	Coding time
ET	Event time
RT	Receiving time
G.	The Guardian
I.	The Independent
T.	The Telegraph

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1 Outline of the research

1.1 Introduction

The turn of the millennium has seen a global boom in the online sphere of human endeavor. It should come as no surprise that the enormous number of opportunities which is afforded by the Internet are daily being seized by news institutions worldwide. Online media have both facilitated and upgraded the news delivery and its reception. On the one hand, online news enables a constant access to its recipients. On the other hand, the same holds true for the news institutions themselves. What is more, online newspapers do not have to wait until the next day as is the case with their print counterpart; they can easily update any news at any time they desire. The constant flux of online news is, in fact, one of its principal characteristics (Lewis 2003). Digital journalism also greatly benefits from its multimodal possibilities. The inclusion of photographs, videos, recordings, or gifs¹ has become a standard for online news (Fenton 2012). What is of crucial importance for the present research is the possibility of embedding hyperlinks, thanks to which a news article becomes more interconnected with other web pages inside and outside the newspaper's domain than ever before.

All these technological advancements have not only influenced the creation of news articles but have also proved to have a significant impact on the relationship between newspapers and news recipients. It has been repeatedly argued in scholarly research that news has become considerably more interactive by nature (Deuze 1999; Aitchison and Lewis 2003; Crystal 2004; Chovanec 2014; Molnár 2017). There is no doubt that audience-oriented, interactive and personalized news stories are more attractive for readers than those that are not. Chovanec (2014) ascribes the high interactivity of online news to certain pragmatic reasons of the newspapers. In the present work, I shall follow his assertion that there are pragmatic motivations behind the ways news articles are formulated, especially as far as the verbal tense is concerned.

In the process of news creation, journalists have to make decisions as to the means of encoding temporality. It will be argued that the choice of grammatical tense in news texts is a crucial pragmatic phenomenon with immense implications on the articles'

¹ GIF is defined by *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* as "the abbreviation for 'Graphic Interchange Format' (a type of computer file that contains images and is used especially to make them appear to move)" at <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/gif?q=gif>.

recipients since the verbal tense is a grammatical means of encoding temporal deixis. Temporal deixis is what connects the interlocutors in a discourse and, because it is subjected to the encoder's choice, it is viewed as a subjective phenomenon applied with certain interpersonal goals (Levinson 1983; Green 2006).

The present thesis focuses on the encoding of verbal tense in online soft news stories and predominantly deals with shifts the grammatical tense undergoes between the individual textual segments of news articles. In a recent publication on temporality in news, Chovanec (2014) maintains that the patterns of tense shifts are pragmatically motivated by the newspapers' intent to create an illusion of shared temporal space with their recipients, by which the mutual interpersonal relations are strengthened. More importantly, the author describes *a double tense shift pattern*—a model of tense shifts which operate in a canonical hard news story. This concept is borrowed for the purposes of the present research and its application is tested on a corpus of online soft news articles.

The purpose of this thesis is to use a corpus of news stories to investigate how temporality is being encoded in verbs in individual textual segments of news articles, and whether these tense shifts also operate in soft news stories. While much research has been conducted on the workings and characteristics of hard news (cf. e.g. Bell 1991; van Dijk 1988; Cotter 2010; Bednarek and Caple 2012; Busà 2014; Bednarek 2016), the genre of soft news has been largely overlooked. I am of the opinion that soft news plays an important role in the world of news and deserves more scholarly attention. The present work therefore aims to, at least partially, fill in this niche in linguistic research. The first research question the analyses within this thesis will attempt to answer is thus the following:

1. *How does the double tense shift pattern operate in online soft news?*

The hypertextual nature of online news ranks among its defining characteristics and as such is of much interest to the present thesis. To be able to read an online article, readers must first either visit the newspaper's homepage and click on the article's preview (which is the default procedure) or go to another website which would contain a hyperlink leading to the respective article. On that account, online news can be said to be comprised of two "levels." This view is based on Chovanec (2014) who considers a newspaper's homepage as the "first level" and the full-length article itself the "second level" of news texts. This work also adopts a two-level approach. The second level will remain the same as the one of Chovanec, i.e. the whole article published on the official newspaper's

webpages. For the purposes of the present work, Facebook news posts have been chosen to form the first level of online news texts.

Newspaper institutions successfully keep pace with the ever-evolving digital world. At present, newspapers not only benefit from the technological advancements made available on their websites, they have also established a strong position on social networking websites which have been assigned vital importance in the last decade. In fact, most larger newspaper institutions have established their own accounts on various social media platforms where they daily post the latest news. I maintain that Facebook pages constitute a vital source of news, and since little information is known to this day about the encoding of temporality in the news texts on Facebook news posts, a considerable part of the present thesis will be devoted to this issue. Again, the Facebook news post is treated here as the first level of online news texts. After clicking on a news post, the reader is instantly redirected via a hyperlink to the second level, i.e. the whole respective article published on the newspaper's official website. Throughout the thesis, the Facebook post is designated as a "Facebook preview" (abbreviated as "FBP"), for it functions as a teaser for the actual article.

With regard to the aforementioned double tense shift pattern observable in full-length online hard news stories, it has been stated that the first part of the present research aims to investigate whether this pattern is also applied in online soft news stories. The remainder of the thesis is concerned with Facebook previews as "gates" to the full-length articles. Before any tense analysis can be carried out, it is essential to fully comprehend how Facebook previews are structurally organized, how the individual textual segments are composed and, finally, what the general nature of a typical Facebook preview is. Only after getting acquainted with its characteristics and context of occurrence can any tense application pattern be understood and interpreted. Consequently, the second principal aim of this thesis is to determine the characteristic features of Facebook previews and the corresponding research question is thus as follows:

2. *What are the characteristics of a soft news Facebook preview with respect to its structure, formation methods and its general nature?*

More specifically, one of the objectives is to study and describe the organization of the structural segments of news stories published on the selected newspapers' Facebook pages, forming the Facebook preview. Another objective is to analyze the methods

applied during the creation of the individual segments and to ascertain how these methods are connected to their counterparts in the full-length articles.

The description of the Facebook preview's characteristics provides background to the last analysis conducted within the present thesis. Last but not least, this work aims to investigate the methods of encoding temporality in such Facebook previews whose full-length counterparts apply the double tense shift pattern. The objective is to find and describe any regularities concerning tense encoding that arise during the analysis. The third, and last, research question is therefore as follows:

3. *How is temporality encoded in the Facebook previews of those online soft news articles which apply the double tense shift pattern?*

To sum up, the present thesis is concerned with the tense variability within the individual textual segments of soft news articles published on online websites and on the hypertextually linked official newspapers' Facebook pages. What remains to be explained is the approach adopted while conducting the research which is the content of the following chapter.

1.2 Methodological framework

This chapter introduces the theoretical approaches which have been borrowed to pursue the aims and facilitate the interpretation of the findings of the present thesis. The approach adopted in this work draws on pragmatics and discourse analysis—linguistic traditions whose areas of interest considerably overlap. Additionally, the functional approach of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) was also a helpful source for building the theoretical foundations of the present work. Finally, Chapter 4 complements the theoretical basis with the discussion of online journalism and Facebook as an influential social media platform.

1.2.1 Pragmatic approach

The focal point of the research conducted within the present thesis is the concept of *temporal deixis* or, precisely speaking, the ways temporality is encoded in the individual structural segments of an online news story and in turn how grammatical tense is shifted in the individual segments by the newspapers to construct an illusion of shared temporal context with their readers. The phenomenon of deixis is a context-dependent, and thus pragmatic, linguistic category as it “concerns the ways in which languages encode or

grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance” (Levinson 1983, 54). By the application of pragmatic analysis, it will be argued that newspaper discourse constructs not a one-way but rather a mutual relationship between the newspaper and their audience, as there is a specific manifestation of language interaction between the two interlocutors. The pragmatic approach adopted here comes under the European, as opposed to the Anglo-American, conception of pragmatics as it puts focus on the social dimension of language. In contrast to the Anglo-American tradition, which focuses rather on the concepts of inference and cognition, the focal point of the European conception of pragmatics lies in the understanding of human communication and interaction in various contexts (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010). The approach taken here thus considers the “facets of interaction between social actors that rely upon (and in turn influence) the dynamics of relationships between people and that looks at how those relationships are reflected in the language choices they make” (Chovanec 2014, 16).

1.2.1.1 Temporality in news texts

The temporal complexity of news texts studied in this work draws on the recent research by Chovanec (2014) who likewise took a pragmatic approach to his analysis of grammatical tense in hard news stories. He argues that the patterns of tense shifts are pragmatically motivated by the newspapers’ needs to create a shared temporal space with their recipients. Furthermore, Chovanec describes a pattern of encoding tense into the individual structural segments of a hard news story, called *the double tense shift pattern*. The analysis conducted within this thesis borrows this pattern with the aim to ascertain to what extent it could be applied to online soft news stories.

1.2.2 News discourse analysis

Another research area the theories of which are made use of in the present thesis is discourse analysis. Among the early researches largely contributing to the study of news discourse belong that of Bell (1991) and van Dijk (1988). Their studies mainly serve here as guides for the description of the structural layout of news stories. This thesis also bases some of its interpretations on later studies, particularly those of Bednarek and Caple (2012) but also of Bax (2011), who moreover provides theoretical foundations

for the concept of genre. This is helpful, for instance, during the demarcation of the genre of soft news.

1.2.3 Functional understanding of language use

The approach adopted in the present thesis not only concentrates on the social dimension of language use with the focus put on the users (i.e. the newspaper and the readers), but also on the functional dimension. This understanding is based on M. A. K. Halliday's view that language has a "meaning potential" and it is up to the users which function they give it in a specific communicative situation (Halliday 1978). His approach became known as "systemic functional linguistics" (Halliday 1985) and views communication as a set of choices available at the paradigmatic axis made by the interlocutors at the moment of utterance. Language use is seen as a purposeful activity and, using Halliday's terminology, is said to have three different "meta-functions" (1985): *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual*. Applying Halliday's theory to the context of this work, the ideational function of a news story would be its content and its meaning, while the textual function, realized by the construction of a cohesive and well-arranged text in accordance with its genre conventions, would help readers to orient themselves in the news story. The interpersonal function is important for the understanding of deixis, since it views language as interaction. This work deals with the concept of temporal deixis and tense shifts in news articles' segments with the aim to construe a shared temporal space with the audience. Indeed, this is a manifestation of the interpersonal function of language use in the context of the news story genre (cf. Chovanec 2014, 16).

1.3 Hypotheses

The aims of this thesis have been outlined in the introduction. In summary, the purpose is to investigate the tense variability within the structural segments of soft news on the two online levels. Having introduced the approach adopted in this research, let me propose three hypotheses concerning the three research questions, based on previous scholarly research.

Hypothesis 1

It is argued in Chapter 1.2 that the genre of soft news cannot be strictly separated from the genre of hard news as they share some fundamental characteristics. Therefore,

the hypothesis is that the double tense shift pattern observable in hard news (Chovanec 2014) will also be found to operate in the soft news articles assembled to form the corpus.

Hypothesis 2

Soft news is generally more personal by nature and its style tends to be more flexible and colorful than that of hard news (Bell 1991; Herbert 2000; Busà 2014). These features are likely to be found in the corpus of online articles, which are much more interactive than print media (Deuze 1999, 377). As far as the overall nature of the Facebook preview is concerned, the hypothesis is that the soft news characteristics will be reflected in the FBP, on account of the informal and highly interactive nature of social media, which are, in fact, based on the social interactions between their users (Page et al. 2014, 5). In other words, it is postulated that the characteristics of soft news will be in harmony with the nature of the FBP.

Hypothesis 3

As far as temporality in Facebook previews is concerned, it is hypothesized that the first shift of the double tense shift pattern will be found to take place in the soft news posts. This shift concerns the change of the simple present tense in the headline into the present perfect in the lead (*non-deictic simple present* → *semi-deictic present perfect*). The hypothesis is based on the research conducted by Chovanec (2014) who maintains that the first of the two tense shifts within the verb phrase has a specific pragmatic motivation. The author claims that it serves as a means of creating “a shared deictic discourse space” with the news’ readers by which, in fact, the newspaper enacts relationships with them. Moreover, the present simple and perfect tenses enhance the impression of the news’ recency and relevance (275). Since Facebook is a social media platform of which recency, up-to-dateness, and interactivity are some of its key principles, it is assumed that the pragmatic motivation for constructing of the impression of a shared temporal context would be applied as well.

1.4 Corpus material

The analysis conducted as a part of the present thesis is based on a set of articles assembled from three British news institutions which professionally operate online and publish news both on their regularly updated web pages and Facebook pages. The selected news institutions are: *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*.

A corpus was compiled from their Facebook posts and their corresponding full-length website articles. These particular institutions were chosen for the purposes of this work since they have established their Facebook pages to a professional extent and enjoy wide usage (as will be proved later in **Chapter 3.3.1**).

The second important reason is that they each operate three independent Facebook pages devoted to soft news areas of: *Culture and Entertainment*, *Science and Technology*, and *Travel* (the scope of soft news will be delimited in **Chapter 1.2**). Nevertheless, it is impossible to always precisely determine whether an article belongs to the genre of soft news or hard news. To eliminate such errors in the present research, the articles excerpted for analysis were not subjected to a personal opinion about their categorization. A different procedure was applied—instead of collecting the articles from the newspapers' main Facebook pages, they were collected from the above mentioned subsidiary pages which are named according to the areas of interest typical of the soft news genre.

The corpus comprises of the total number of 225 articles, 75 of which belong to each newspaper organization. Those 75 articles consist of 25 articles from each of the three individual soft news areas.

The sampled articles were posted on the newspapers' Facebook and web pages during a six-month time span—from May to October 2017. There was no premeditated purpose for choosing this particular time span. The research begun in October 2017 and until a sufficient number of Facebook posts meeting all the pre-established criteria was assembled, I kept searching in the newspapers' Facebook pages history. For the completion of the corpus, the research went as far as May 2017.

1.4.1 Selected soft news areas

For the sake of completeness, let me comment on the soft news areas from which the articles were assembled. It was stated above that these areas are *Culture and Entertainment*, *Science and Technology*, and *Travel*. Since each of the selected newspaper institutions operates in an idiosyncratic way, it would be rather fortuitous if they all had established the same subsidiary pages. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Therefore, in one instance, two subsidiary pages were joined together for the purposes of my analysis and their articles were grouped into one category. This case concerns *The Guardian* which does not have a single Facebook page for *Science and Technology*, so the pages *Guardian Science* and *Guardian Technology* are considered together. As far

as *The Independent* is concerned, the newspaper does not have its own page devoted to science. Therefore, all the articles from the correspondent group were collected from their *Independent Tech* page. These two minor problems arose due to the fact that *The Telegraph* has a page called *Telegraph Science and Tech*, addressing the news from both areas on a single page. Also, the page dealing with culture news is named *Telegraph Entertainment*. Everything described is summarized in **Table 1**.²

Soft news area	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Independent</i>	<i>The Telegraph</i>	No. of articles
<i>Culture and Entertainment</i>	Guardian Culture	Independent Culture	Telegraph Entertainment	75
<i>Science and Technology</i>	Guardian Science + Guardian Technology	Independent Tech	Telegraph Science and Tech	75
<i>Travel</i>	Guardian Travel	Independent Travel	Telegraph Travel	75
Total	75	75	75	225

Table 1: Facebook pages used for corpus

1.4.2 Criteria for data collection

A list of criteria was compiled prior to the data sampling. The departure point for the data collection were posts on Facebook pages of the selected newspapers. The Facebook posts included in the corpus had to meet all the following criteria:

- The post must provide a direct link to the respective article published on the official news organization’s website.
- The post must include a headline which is placed above an accompanying photograph together with a lead placed below the photograph.
- The post must be an original, meaning that it is not a “shared” post from another Facebook page.

² Social media undoubtedly constitute a fast-evolving sphere of the online world. This can be substantiated by the fact that one Facebook page which served as a source of corpus articles has been renamed while the present thesis has not yet been finished. The Facebook group *Telegraph Science and Tech* was given a new name in March 2018. The page is now named *Telegraph Technology Intelligence* and, according to the information on the page, it still reports on science and technology news. Because this change happened after the data collection, the former name will be used to refer to this Facebook page. For more information about the renaming, see: <https://corporate.telegraph.co.uk/2018/03/19/the-telegraph-announces-technology-intelligence-a-large-scale-investment-in-the-greatest-story-of-our-time/>.

Facebook posts exhibiting some of the following characteristics could not be included in the corpus (reasons for their exclusion are explained in the following chapter):

- Posts containing a heteroglossic headline or lead.
- Posts including a video or a gif instead of a photograph.
- Posts directing to an article in the form of an “in pictures” reportage.
- Posts directing to an article in the form of a review.
- Posts directing to an article in the form of an interview.
- Posts directing to an essay-like article in the form of a personal story or a mere description.
- Posts directing to an article in the form of a ranking, a list or a chart, such as “10 best...”, “... ranked from the worst to best...”, etc.
- Posts that despite having the lead below the photograph have only a link to the respective website above the photograph, instead of a proper headline.
- Posts directing to an article that patently is not news.
- Posts which were “shared” from another Facebook page.

1.4.2.1 Excluded posts

- Posts containing a heteroglossic headline or lead

Some headlines are formed by means of an external accessed voice which contrasts with the authorial voice of the newspaper (Chovanec 2014, 21). Such headlines/leads, exemplified by **Figure 1**, are called heteroglossic (Bakhtin 1934) and were not included



Figure 1: A post with a heteroglossic lead

into the corpus. The inclusion of another, external voice in a headline/lead would disrupt the analysis of verbal tense because the point of view would be shifted and so would be the deictic centers (Chovanec 2014, 22).

- Posts including a video or a gif instead of a photograph.

Facebook posts that instead of an accompanying photograph have a video or a gif could not be included in the corpus because, more often than not, there is some text included in them, such as in **Figure 2**. Such text usually fulfills the function of the headline or lead (or even the body copy in some longer videos) which is, consequently, omitted from the post. Also, such posts do not sometimes have a corresponding article on the newspaper's webpage or at least the Facebook post does not redirect its readers to it by clicking on the video or gif, i.e. there is no hyperlink.



Figure 2: A post including a video

- Posts directing to an article in the form of an “in pictures” reportage.

Firstly, such posts frequently have the same structure—there is no verb in the lead below the illustrative photograph, see **Figure 4**. Secondly, and more importantly, very often there is no more text in the main article on the webpage as the article's focus is on the photographs themselves rather than the text.

- Posts directing to an article in the form of a review.

Reviews tend to be written from the perspective of the article's author, i.e. in the first person (such as the post illustrated by **Figure 3**). The reporters present their own

experience and feelings about a place or event. Even though the present thesis deals with soft news, such articles are not considered as news here and were therefore excluded from the corpus.



Figure 4: An “in pictures” reportage



Figure 3: A review article

- Posts directing to an article in the form of an interview.

Articles in the form of an interview were not included in the corpus, the reason for which does not need to be explained in great depths. An article consisting of mere questions and answers would not contribute to this analysis. See an example of such a post in **Figure 5**.



Figure 5: An article as an interview

- Posts directing to an essay-like article in the form of a personal story or a mere description.

Exemplified by **Figure 6**, essay-like articles that describe a personal story could not be included in the corpus. Such articles are rather personal narratives than news and are thus of no value for this work.



Figure 6: A personal experience article

- Posts directing to an article in the form of a ranking, a list or a chart, such as “10 best...”, “50 reasons for...”, “... ranked from the worst to best...”, etc.

Articles that are composed of lists, rankings or charts were also excluded from the corpus. Again, such articles do not include a news story relevant for this research. **Figure 7** represents such an article.



Figure 7: A ranking article

- Posts directing to an article that patently is not news.

Articles in the form of quizzes, news organization’s promotions, advertisements, “how to” tips (such as **Figure 8**) and the like were excluded as well, for they are not the sort of soft news that this research deals with.

- Posts which were “shared” from another Facebook page.

Reposted or “shared” posts (see **Figure 9** for illustration) were not included in the corpus, since the aim was to collect only soft news from the news organization’s subsidiary pages and the original post usually comes from their main Facebook page where also hard news are posted.



Figure 8: A “how to” article



Figure 9: An article shared from the newspaper’s homepage

1.4.3 Collecting the data

In case a Facebook post met all the established criteria, it was collected to create the corpus. The Facebook posts were saved by means of a screenshot tool, enabling to select the desired area and crop out the rest of the screen. Both the social endorsement cues and the comment section were cropped out since they are of no relevance for this research. By clicking on the Facebook posts, the user is directed by a hyperlink to the news organization's website where the whole respective articles can be found, which were also saved in the form of screen captures. Mere copying of the texts could disintegrate the original pattern of the news story organization which could harm the subsequent analysis. Preserving the articles ensured having access to them in case they would get deleted from the web. The next step was to copy the headlines, leads and the subheads (if present) from the FBPs and the newspaper's websites and identify the verbs (verb phrases) which were repeated, or reformulated, in the individual segments. Then, a corresponding verb was identified in the body copy, and, as the last step, all these verbs were put in bold to facilitate the subsequent analyses.³

³ All the data forming the corpus are stored on the enclosed CD.

2 Defining the genre

As it was noted in the introductory chapter, an abundance of research has been done into the genre of hard news, whereas the soft news genre has remained rather overshadowed. Since the present work aims to contribute to the compensation for this imbalance conducting a research focused on soft news, it only seems felicitous to clearly determine what soft news is. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to the definition of the soft news genre.

Defining the genre is, however, slightly problematic for no clear-cut distinction between soft news (henceforth SN) and hard news (henceforth HN) has been made yet. Scholars and researchers have defined the two genres with respect to criteria that were relevant for their concrete areas of investigation. In the following paragraphs, different views on distinctions between the two categories were put together to create a clear conception of what HN and SN are and how they are understood in the present work.

2.1 Soft news

First, it is necessary to understand SN in relation to its counterpart. Maria G. Busà (2014, 36–37) defines HN as being the predominant news stories category of a newspaper's cover, reporting on recent events or near-future events. HN is said to mainly deal with negative and even disastrous events, or major events concerning the whole country, for instance from economic, political, military or legal spheres. As Allan Bell (Bell 1998, 103) asserts, HN should answer the fundamental questions about an event—*who, what, why, when, where* and *how*. Moreover, the structure of a HN story is governed by the so called *inverted pyramid* principle, according to which the disclosed information does not necessarily need to follow the real chronological order. Instead, the most relevant information is revealed as early as possible, followed later by additional, less significant details (Bell 1991; Bax 2011; Bednarek and Caple 2012).⁴ In a very recent study, Bednarek and Caple (2017) summarized the classifications of HN

⁴ The process of editing an article involves, to some extent, cutting irrelevant or unnecessary information due to lack of space. In order for an editor to be able to cut the article “from the bottom,” the most relevant and important information must be revealed as early in the article as possible. Therefore, the information flow cannot follow the usual sequence of moving from the known to new information (Bax 2011, 143–4).

by different authors and defined the genre as “time-bound,” “negative,” and “destabilizing” (23).

Busà (2014, 37) acknowledges that SN is as important as HN but differentiates it from HN as not happening overnight. Rather, she notes, SN tends to be more timeless, in the sense that they are not necessarily immediate events. Its main concern is that of “human interest” (37). These might include articles about entertainment, culture, lifestyle, sports, and the like. Since such news does not report on immediate or life-threatening events which would mainly require bare facts, SN allows the reporter, Busà (2014) points out, to include both their own personal and public opinions or reactions to the news. According to Bell (1991, 14), the style of SN is more flexible than the style of HN which entails greater usage of aesthetic devices. Herbert (2000, 161) supports this view by maintaining that SN stories are “treated more colorfully.” Summarizing views of different scholars, Bednarek and Caple (2017) state that SN is “timeless,” “positive,” and “stabilizing” (23).

Sometimes, SN is regarded as more subjective and appealing to larger audience in contrast to objective HN (Clausen 2012, 132). Both categories are, however, regarded as significant. While HN is an important source of information about local and worldwide events, SN provides people with entertainment and “general knowledge” (Busà, 37).

This chapter has delimited the understanding of SN adopted in the present research. The corpus was compiled from SN articles which were published on the official newspapers’ websites and Facebook pages. The chapter to follow is concerned with news published online and provides a general outlook on the significance that social networking sites have for journalism.

3 Online journalism

Journalism is without question a perpetually evolving area of human endeavor. Over the past few decades, journalists have been conforming to the immense development of the digital world with no great difficulties. News companies have quickly become aware of the potential of news on the Internet and are successfully adapting to the technological innovations offered by web developers. Taking this into consideration, it is interesting that although online journalism has established its strong position in the news world, it has still not wiped out the traditional print journalism. In fact, print newspapers still hold their prestige. A multimedia expert Jennifer Alejandro maintains in her paper *Journalism in the Age of Social Media* (2010, 20) that the medium of traditional print newspapers stills exists for it represents a somewhat “authoritative” source of news. However, an abundant number of people, she explains, finds the print medium “additional” to finding news online.

The Internet affords an innumerable number of opportunities for journalism, and these are, of course, being fully utilized every day. Traditional newspaper companies have now their own web pages. *The Telegraph*, the first British newspaper to launch its own website, has been online since November 1994,⁵ and reached over 1 million subscribers already in 1999 (Deuze 1999, 376). *The Guardian* and *The Independent* have been online since 1999,⁶ and what is worth mentioning is that *The Independent* has even abandoned its tradition of print newspapers and decided to operate solely online as of March 2016.⁷ Brand new news companies with no print tradition have also emerged. What is more, many of them have created their own accounts on various popular social media sites (news on social media sites will be discussed in Chapter 3.2). It has already been approximately 15 years since online platforms “have come to be viewed as essential for newspapers – national, regional and local – and for all major broadcasters and news agencies” (Fenton 2012, 557).

⁵ See the “About us” section at: <https://corporate.telegraph.co.uk/about-us>.

⁶ See *The Guardian*’s timeline at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/theguardian/about/?ref=page_internal; and *The Independent*’s timeline at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheIndependentOnline/about/?ref=page_internal.

⁷ The Independent. 2016. “The Independent Becomes The First National Newspaper To Embrace A Global, Digital-Only Future.” Accessed 10. 1. 2018. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/press/the-independent-becomes-the-first-national-newspaper-to-embrace-a-global-digital-only-future-a6869736.html>

The aim of this chapter is to discuss reasons for the growing importance of online media discourse as well as social media platforms since social networks have changed the structures and communicative dynamics of human interaction (Seargeant and Tagg 2014, 2). I share the opinion with Page et al. (2014, 26) who assert that social media offer a vast potential for linguistic research and that this area deserves more attention: “Much mainstream linguistic research has largely ignored social media to date. This may have something to do with social media being a relatively recent phenomenon.” This was, in fact, one of the incentives for focusing the present research on news published on Facebook pages. The reasons for choosing Facebook from all the social networking sites are explained later on in this very chapter.

3.1 Digital news

What are, then, the opportunities that the Internet offers to news companies? Probably the greatest advantage is their incessant public access. Anyone can reach the company’s website 24/7. The content is not fixed once it is written but can be altered and updated at any time, which enables the journalists to eliminate possible errors, typos or unclarity. The news is in constant flux. Whether this is an advantage for the news companies is debatable,⁸ but a very important difference from print newspapers is that digital news tends to be free of charge (Deuze 1999, 374). All those aspects combined make it truly advantageous for the consumer to reach for news online.

There are other technological advantages available to online news stories which would be impossible on paper. The character of the news story has become more complex due to its multimodal possibilities. Natalie Fenton, an expert on media and communications, stresses “the complexity of its [online news’] content in volume and variety as well as its accessibility and convergence across previously distinct media” (2012, 558). While in print news the text can only be accompanied by photographs, news stories on the Internet have a wider potential. Videos, audio recordings and photo galleries are normally added to accompany the news. What has turned out to be an excellent tool in the online world is a hyperlink. Web users can click on hyperlinks which redirect them to other websites, allowing them to seek more information about their area of interest with minimal effort of their own.

⁸ There are other means of gaining profit, such as displaying advertisements.

What truly draws the newspaper consumers to the computer screen are the consequences of the above mentioned technical amenities. Online news makes a reader's experience much more interactive. In fact, "the interactive element seems to be of essential importance" as online journalists seek to "make the reader/user part of the news experience" (Deuze 1999, 377). Readers can express their opinions in an "opinion section" below the article, participate in a discussion, send an email to the person responsible for the news article, and so on. Since the characteristic feature of online news is that of being more oriented towards the audience, it follows that the nature of the news and its production have considerably changed (Fenton 2012, 564). In broader terms, "awareness of audience" and reliance on interactivity could be said to constitute *the* essential traits of the Internet (Crystal 2004, 18).

Another consequence of the technologies adopted in online journalism is "personalization" or "individualization" (Deuze 1999, 378). It is common for online news institutions to offer their readers an option of so called "push content delivery" where they can select their preferred type of news to be displayed on the screen automatically. Another way is to display hyperlinks to archives where the user can choose from thematically categorized content. Each individual is therefore offered the possibility of choice of what they would like to read about.

Since online journalism puts much focus on the audience and their participation, one can find online news much more entertaining than its printed counterpart. Even more interactive than news on the newspaper's websites is news published on social media platforms, which is discussed in the following chapter.

3.2 Social media and news

Based on what was discussed in the previous chapter, it could be claimed that being part of the online world is very advantageous, if not even necessary, for news institutions. The principal feature of news is, naturally, to report about *new* events in the world. Therefore, it is essential for news institutions to keep pace with the technological advances in the digital world. With the increasing popularity of social media websites, it is not enough to have one's own web pages anymore. To address an even wider audience,

news institutions were forced to create their own accounts on social media platforms. As the author of *2016 Nielsen Social Media Report*⁹ puts it (Casey 2017, 2):

Social media is one of the biggest opportunities that companies across industries have to connect directly to consumers. And it turns out that social media users can be pretty receptive—especially heavy users, who spend over 3 hours per day on social media.

Social media are defined as “Internet-based sites and services that promote social interaction between participants” (Page et al. 2014, 5). What was said about the online world in general is even more true about social media. On social media platforms, the activity of the audience is of prime importance and individualization is more visible than anywhere else. Users create their own “personal space” within a social media platform to their liking and are enabled to interact with whomever they like as well. The main purpose of being a social media user is to connect with other members of a given platform and “share information with each other: this can be information about the member’s activities or feelings, about breaking news, gossip or other discourse genres such as jokes” (13).

In 2010, an analysis on the workings of Twitter was carried out in Korea.¹⁰ Jennifer Alejandro interviewed the researchers and writes in her paper (2010) that “the role of traditional news media is played by traditional news accounts in Twitter. Moreover, based on their [the researchers’] findings, these news accounts are more powerful than traditional news media” (18). Twitter is another social media platform widely used by news institutions. While Twitter, of course, differs from Facebook in many ways,¹¹ the two social media sites have the same function when it comes to making news open to public. There are two reasons for Alejandro’s assertion that the social media accounts are more powerful than those by traditional media. Firstly, it is the user’s motivation to read the news on a social platform. There, he or she actively selects their own news sources. Secondly, it is the form of the news itself—the user reads a very short news story and can

⁹ “Nielsen is a global measurement and data analytics company that provides the most complete and trusted view available of consumers and markets worldwide.”—quote taken from the company’s official pages: <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/about-us.html>.

¹⁰ The analysis was carried out by researchers from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology’s Department of Computer Science, available online at: <http://an.kaist.ac.kr/~haewoon/papers/2010-www-twitter.pdf>.

¹¹ Facebook and Twitter take different approaches to the privacy of one’s personal account. While you need a mutual agreement on Facebook to “friend” or “follow” another user, you need no such approval on Twitter. Their positions on one’s “visibility” to others and “access” to others are the major differences (Boyd and Ellison 2007, 213). Another significant difference is that Twitter limits to 140 characters per tweet, while Facebook has no character limit per status.

then “retweet” it (i.e. make it available to their “followers”) (18). In my opinion, these two points can be extended to Facebook. On Facebook, the users can too “like” or “follow” only their preferred news sources, and they are also presented the news in a short message (a “post”) which can be “shared” either on their “timeline” (their personal account’s homepage), or in a message to their “friends.” In other words, they can, just as well as on Twitter, participate in a social interaction in a single click, impossible for the print medium. It can thus be argued that news on Facebook is, at least in those ways, more powerful than traditional print news.

Another reason for choosing Facebook for the present work is that the focus here is put on the genre of soft news. While Facebook is generally viewed as a source of entertainment, i.e. as not only a source of hard news, but of soft news as well, Twitter is viewed as being much more concerned with breaking news and its “great strength is providing as-it-happens coverage and commentary on live events” (Mitchell et al., 2).

3.3 Facebook as the most successful social media platform

Of all the social media platforms that exist up to date, Facebook has been chosen for the purposes of the present work. Founded in 2004, it has become a social network with the most users in the world¹² and has been ranked the second most successful website in terms of traffic in the world (being beaten only by Google). The average visit duration is almost 14 minutes and an average user goes through almost 13 different pages per one visit.¹³ In December 2017, Facebook had approximately 1.4 billion daily active users and approximately 2.13 billion monthly active users.¹⁴

Facebook is predominantly a social network site which allows people, after creating a personal account, not only to interact with other users but also to create groups, pages, events or advertisements, and to join public groups and “follow” (i.e. be shown and read the content of) other pages. To quote from the Facebook’s “Newsroom”:¹⁵

Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

¹² For more information, see the BBC News graphic “Visualizing the Internet” accessible at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/8562801.stm>.

¹³ The information was extracted from a statistical research available at <https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites>.

¹⁴ For more information, see <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info>.

¹⁵ The quote was taken from <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info>.

Summing up, the potential to “discover what’s going on in the world” is the exact aspect of Facebook exploited in the present thesis. Having accounted for the motivations of the news institutions’ strategic choice to create their own Facebook pages, the following chapter deals with the news posted on this platform.

3.3.1 *The role of news on Facebook*

This chapter is concerned with how Facebook has become an integral and inseparable part of news reporting. Despite this trend, the chapter discusses Facebook users’ stance toward news on Facebook, as to what extent it can be regarded as a sufficient source of news. Drawing on previous research, the view adopted in this thesis is that of Facebook news posts being a preview or a “gate” to the full respective news stories. Let us begin with some information regarding the three newspapers which have been chosen to form the corpus.

The newspapers selected for this research are all British, broadsheet (not tabloid), and fully utilizing Facebook for presenting news. **Figure 10** ranks the most popular newspapers on this social media platform by the number of fans as of June 2016.¹⁶ As far as British newspapers are concerned, the most popular one is *The Guardian*, *The Independent* is second and *The Telegraph* third (excluding *Daily Mail* tabloid

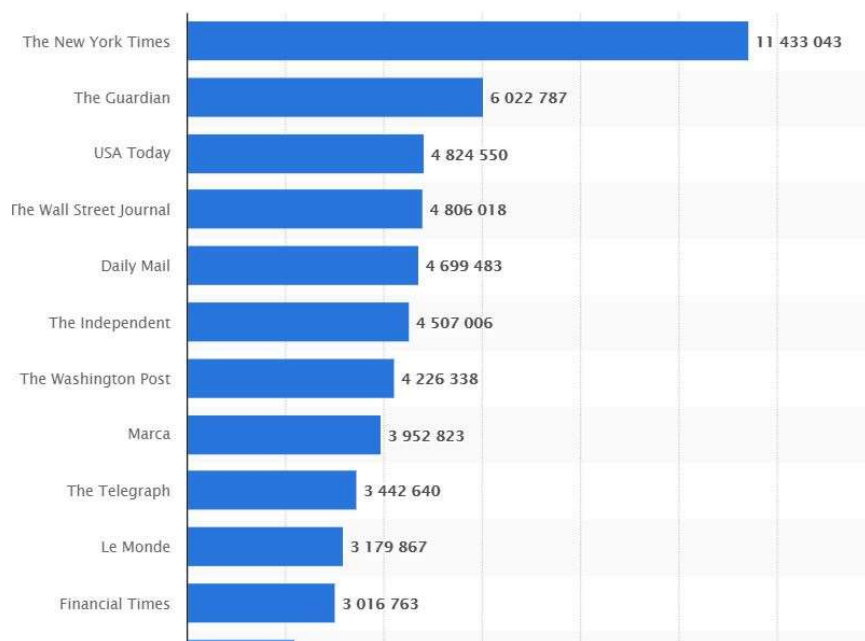


Figure 10: Most popular newspapers on Facebook as of June 2016, ranked by number of Facebook fans

¹⁶ Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272924/popularity-of-newspapers-on-facebook>.

newspaper which would be ranked second). 19 months later, by January 2018, the numbers have changed for the benefit of *The Independent* which can boast with over 8 million fans, being almost twice as many as in 2016.¹⁷ *The Guardian* is closely behind with almost 7.9 million fans, while *The Telegraph* stays last with roughly 4.2 million fans.¹⁸ Having compared those numbers, the growing importance that Facebook plays in the news deliverance is indisputable.

During the last five years, there were two surveys conducted on the role that news plays on Facebook, and after a comparison of their results, there can be no doubt that news on Facebook are gaining wider and wider popularity. The first survey (Mitchell et al. 2013) found out that about 47 % of American users were using Facebook news pages as a source of information in 2013. Only two years later, in 2015, another research on the same topic proved that the share of Facebook users reading news on this social media platform had raised to 63 % (Mitchell et al. 2015, 2). Although the surveys were based solely on users in the USA, in the view of the fact that Americans are Facebook's second largest subscribers with about 230 million users (as of January 2018),¹⁹ the rapid growth of Facebook news posts importance must not stay overlooked.

In addition to that, a large portion of users are exposed to news on Facebook by chance, via their friends who deliberately follow some news pages and decide to "share" a news post on their timeline (Glynn, Huge and Hoffman 2012, 114). An interesting finding of a very recent study (Karnowski et al. 2017) was that the users' intention of reading such randomly encountered news posts does not stem mainly from the social bonds among him/her and the friend sharing the post, but from his/her own interest in the particular topic or his/her prior knowledge of some information regarding the topic.

It is a commonplace practice for journalists working for Facebook to write a news story about an event that has already been reported on by other online platforms or other media. They are then bound to report on that story in a gripping, and preferably new, way so that it still attracts as much readers as possible. What is more, reporters are forced to speed up the process of gathering all the newsworthy information and creating the story,

¹⁷ One of the reasons of such steep increase in popularity might be the fact that the owners of *The Independent* decided to become an online-only newspaper in 2006, discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3.

¹⁸ The numbers were taken from the official Facebook pages of the respective newspaper institutions in January 2018.

¹⁹ The biggest Facebook subscriber by country is currently India with their 250 million users, while the UK has around 44 million users. Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users>.

for there is much competition regarding immediacy among the newspapers on the Internet: “Journalists are forced to accelerate the traditional journalistic process because people now want real time information” (Alejandro 2010, 9). This is especially true for so called “breaking news.” With the emergence of “smart” devices, such as smart phones or tablets, people got quickly used to receiving information anytime and anywhere they wish.²⁰ This work, however, focuses on the genre of soft news which is of different character than typical “breaking news.” Nevertheless, the point about creating a news story in preferably as attractive a way as possible, is valid for soft news as well.

It is the newspaper’s objective to make users attracted to the news story and, consequently, to make them click on the hyperlink, which would redirect them to the full-length original article published on the company’s websites, with the goal of increasing profits from advertising (Glynn, Huges and Hoffman 2012, 113). Facebook posts on users’ news feeds,²¹ in fact, offer only a couple of sentences about the event in question. Researches were made in order to find out how often such “step” happens. Put differently, they studied whether followers of news pages really click on the news story they encounter and read the entire article, or at least seek some more information that is not being offered by the Facebook news post (Mitchell et al. 2015; Müller, Schneiders and Schäfer 2016; Lee, Lindsey and Kim 2017).

One such study on behavior on social media news discovered that “individuals who have the impression that Facebook provides them with a sufficient amount of information about what is going on in the world more strongly tend to regard Facebook as a good substitute for other news sources” and might feel that they do not need to search through another news source (Müller, Schneiders and Schäfer 2016, 438). Besides that, the authors warn that an excessive exposure to Facebook news posts may lead to an “illusion of knowledge” while, in reality, such users only have a superficial awareness of the happenings in the world (438–39). Only a small percentage of users (around 4 %), however, consider Facebook news as the most important source of information, i.e. as substitutes for other news sources. These results are rather favorable for news institutions

²⁰ If interested in exact numbers regarding the time spent on social platforms and on which concrete devices, see the *2016 Nielsen Social Media Report* (Casey 2017), available in a PDF format at: <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2017-reports/2016-nielsen-social-media-report.pdf>.

²¹ This is how Facebook’s help center describes *news feed*: “News Feed is the constantly updating list of stories in the middle of your home page. News Feed includes status updates, photos, videos, links, app activity and likes from people, Pages and groups that you follow on Facebook.” Source: <https://www.facebook.com/help/327131014036297/>.

since the rest of the users do not consider news on Facebook sufficient and would thus either click on the provided hyperlinks to read full-length articles from the newspapers' websites (which is the newspapers' objective), or search for news elsewhere (Mitchell at al. 2015, 12; Müller, Schneiders and Schäfer 2016, 438).

In this chapter I have argued that Facebook has fully integrated into the sphere of news reporting and that its services are being searched for by more and more users. What is important, past research has shown that only a small percentage of users reading news on Facebook consider this platform a sufficient medium for news coverage, from which it follows that others presumably seek more news elsewhere, in the ideal case on the respective newspaper's webpages. The objectives of the present work cannot be pursued without determining the terminology associated with the structures of online news articles and Facebook news posts. The following chapter thus addresses this topic.

4 News article structure

Before delving into the matter of tense and deixis of online soft news articles which is the primary focus of the present thesis, it is necessary to familiarize ourselves with the terminology relating to the structure of a news article, as the terms will be utilized throughout the rest of this thesis. First, the structure of online articles will be described, which will be followed by the breakdown of the structure of Facebook news posts. The online news' characteristic of hypertextuality is also touched upon. Most importantly, however, the chapter is concluded with the description of the double textual level of online news having a profound effect on the formulation of news in the constituent structural segments.

4.1 Structure of a news story

Traditionally, news articles are described as being composed of the following three main components: *the headline*, *the lead* and *the body copy* (Bell 1991). Different scholars designate these article parts differently, but these terms will be used in this work.²² These main segments are separated textually and are easily recognizable thanks to the differences in font, indentation and content. There is yet another textual segment which will take part in the subsequent analysis, namely *the subhead*. Let us attend to the individual components in the order of their usual reading, i.e. from the top down. Special attention is paid to headlines for they are considered the starting point for the *double tense shift pattern* (Chovanec 2014), a crucial theoretical basis for my own analysis.

4.1.1 Headline and headlines

Newspaper headlines constitute such a distinctive type of text that they are considered to have a separate register (Chovanec 2014, 118). The register of newspaper headlines is so widely recognized that people, in fact, have a feeling of “familiarity” while reading them (Aitchison 2006, 16). Therefore, they expect them to look a certain way and are able to decode them easily, based on previous experience. Being the most graphically eye-catching and condensed part of the written text, it has been classified as the most

²² *The lead* is sometimes designated *the intro*, for example by Bednarek and Caple (2012). The body copy is also called *the story proper* by Busà (2014), *the body* or *the lead development* by Bednarek and Caple (2012), for instance.

important textual segment of the news story and as such has received much professional attention (cf. e.g. Bell 1991; Aitchison 2006; Bednarek and Caple 2012; Busà 2014).

To emphasize the importance of an article's headline, Bell (1991, 186) and Busà (2014, 80) point out that it is actually the last segment to be written in the process of a news story creation. On the other hand, it is the very first segment a reader ordinarily reads upon the article's encounter. It depends on the properties of each headline whether the reader finds it interesting and worthwhile to read the rest of the story or not. It frequently happens that people only sift through the newspapers and read the sole headlines but do not continue to read the respective articles (Dor 2003).

Journalists have always been aware of the headline's uniqueness and potential as they have been experimenting with its form for centuries. In 2000, a study was carried out by Kristina Schneider who investigated the headlines of English newspapers from a historical perspective. She discovered, for instance, that during the two past centuries, the length of an average headline was markedly changing (45–65). Firstly, there was a steady increase in the number of words per headline, but that changed in the 1930s when the number began to decrease. This could be, as Schneider argues, due to the potential growing significance of another segment of the news story—the lead. Schneider asserts that at the time of the research, i.e. in the year 2000, the average length was over 7 words per headline (65).²³

As far as linguistics is concerned, it has been studied from the perspectives of grammar, lexis, as well as semantics, pragmatics and other (cf. for instance Bell 1991; van Dijk 1988; Bednarek and Caple 2012; Crystal and Davy 2016). Some authors even adopt opposing standpoints towards the very function of headlines. Van Dijk (1988, 36), for instance, supports the traditional view that headlines “apparently act as summaries of the news text” whereas for Dor (2003, 720), whose approach is based on the theory of relevance, the semantic function is not enough and asserts that

... the headline is neither a semantic summary of the story nor a pragmatic attracting-device for the reader, but a communicative device whose function is to produce the optimal level of affinity between the content of the story and the reader's context of interpretation, in order to render the story optimally relevant for the reader.

Such a view therefore suggests that the newspaper's effort to create a headline to accompany the news is not only motivated by the need to provide an eye-catching

²³ Jean Aitchison was also interested in the changing headline conventions in her paper (2006).

summary of the news story informing the reader about the article's content. It is there for pragmatic reasons as well because there is an attempt on the side of the newspaper staff to draw the context of the news story closer for the benefit of the reader. In other words, the journalist/editor aims to "construct a shared discursive space with their readers," as Molnár (2017, 203) sums it up. It is exactly this standpoint that the present thesis adopts for researching the usage of temporality in online news texts. It is the "contact with the readers" which creates a "shared context between the newspaper and the recipients," as Chovanec (2014, 99) notes which is viewed as the core incentive for the selection of a particular tense and temporal expressions while encoding the news story in the headline, and subsequently in the lead and the body copy. This will become apparent in **Chapter 5** and **Chapter 6** where the complexity of temporal deixis is addressed.

4.1.1.1 Headline features

As a consequence of such high interest in the topic, diverse lists of typical features of newspaper headlines, as well as guidelines for journalists were created by professionals in the field. It is important for the present work to be familiar with the basic conventions for the formation (and thus also understanding) of English headlines. The following lists of English headlines conventions were assembled from recent publications dealing with news discourse: Bednarek and Caple (2012), Busà (2014) and Chovanec (2014).

Visual features:

- visually attractive, foregrounding urgency (font size/layout/typography);
- several layers of headlines possible;
- interplay between visual and textual components;
- playing with framing, salience, positioning on the page, etc.

Grammatical features:

- highly condensed, synthetic language;
- omission of function words (such as determiners [especially articles], or auxiliaries);
- use of non-finite passive constructions (ellipsis of finite operators);
- frequent use of nominalizations;
- use of premodified noun phrases (often nouns as premodifiers);

- rare specification of time (rather specifying ‘how’ something happened and sometimes the place or a previous action);
- use of present tense (if a verb is present);
- conventional shift of tenses (past/present perfect → present; future → non-finite verbal group).

Lexical features

- use of strong, intense, emotional, evaluative words (especially monosyllabic);
- use of word or sound play (punning, intertextuality/allusion, alliteration, rhyme), metaphor, idioms, proverbs;
- use of condensed quotations;
- lexical creativity (ad hoc creations, nonce formations).

Needless to say that not every headline has to exhibit all the above-mentioned features. Those features that are picked for a headline are clearly there to serve some function. They are used to attract the reader’s attention, i.e. to perform an interpersonal function, they also serve an informative function as they ordinarily summarize or abstract the article, their purpose is also to be as newsworthy as possible, and, last but not least, they can sometimes take a stand on the rest of the news story (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 110).

It has been argued above that a headline is considered to constitute a separate textual segment and even to have its own register. Having said that, I would like to stress that the approach to headlines taken in this work is holistic—i.e. a headline is regarded here as a part of the whole. While some linguists are of the opinion that headlines should be treated separately from the rest of the text and that they constitute “autonomous meaningful constructions” (Ifantidou 2009, 702), they will be treated here as important components of news stories.

4.1.2 Subhead

Although subhead is not considered a main structural segment of a news story because it is often omitted, it might play some part in my analysis of verbal tenses since its occurrence in online articles is higher than in print (Chovanec 2014). Chovanec (2014, 64–5) maintains that while it serves the same function as the lead—the summarizing function—it differs from the lead in that it tends to focus on only some newsworthy aspect

of the story. Moreover, subheads tend to have an incomplete syntactic structure and may lack a period (or another punctuation mark) at the end.

4.1.3 Lead

The second main structural segment of an article is the lead. Like the headline, the functions of the lead are to attract the reader, present new information in a kind of summary fashion, construe newsworthiness, and structurally divide the news story (Cotter 2010, 152; Bednarek and Caple 2012, 97). Syntactically, they are rather short—normally they are formed by a single sentence and are not longer than a paragraph. Cotter (151) emphasizes the fact that the lead is, actually, the most important part of the article, as “everything follows from the lead.” Not only does the rest of the story (the body copy) follow, but the headline is conventionally formed from the lead—at least as far as hard news is concerned.

There are some idiosyncrasies for leads in hard news stories and soft news stories. Typically, leads for hard news could be classified as “Direct leads” or “Summary leads,” as they immediately disclose (at least some of) the most newsworthy information, i.e. the “five W’s and an H:” *who, when, where, what, why* and *how* (Bell 1991, 175). The lexis is rather simple and clear and, on the whole, the message is brief and direct (Busà 2014, 88). On the other hand, soft news articles might feature a so called “Delayed lead” which, of course, also involves the newsworthy information. However, delayed leads can be longer than one paragraph and “temporarily withhold the relation of the facts” (89), in Busà’s words (my emphasis):

[T]hey introduce the story through an anecdote, a significant detail, an emblem, which sets the scene or evokes a mood. The aim is to create a sense of suspense or anticipated surprise. For this reason, delayed leads are most often used on *softer news stories* that are *peculiar, bizarre, amusing or moving*. After the delayed lead, the story continues with the so-called nut paragraph(s), providing more information in decreasing order of importance as in the Inverted Pyramid.

This is further supported by Cotter (2010, 152) who asserts that another function, peculiar to soft news leads, is to “set the tone (or key) of the story.” Moreover, they are said to have more freedom in terms of style which, as it has been argued in **Chapter 2**, is desired in soft news.

4.1.4 Body copy

The body copy is the last main segment and takes up the most space on the (web) page, as it further develops the news story and contains all the other relevant information

(including more context and background information, direct quotes, etc.) (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 98).

4.2 Structure of a website article

News stories which are published online on a news organization's website normally have all the three main parts described above. Of course, there can be additional structural segments, such as the subhead, attribution, some visual elements (photographs, videos, graphs, ...), but also hypertextual segments—i.e. links which forward the reader elsewhere on the newspaper's domain (Chovanec 2014, 226).

Unless readers know the exact internet address of the article they desire to read, they must somehow “get” to the article's page. Chovanec (2014) considers the official homepage of a given newspaper institution to be a new “level” of online news texts. Ideally, the reader is first expected to visit the homepage—first level. Then s/he clicks on the desired article's preview which contains a hyperlink and only after this step does the reader get to the original full-text article—second level. The article “preview” on the homepage conventionally contains a headline and a lead. The full-length article contains a headline and a lead too. Therefore, there is a strong cohesion between these two levels, as the author explains: “The existence of two independent, though hypertextually linked, levels that contain two parallel pairs of textual segments (headlines and leads) inevitably impacts the nature of cohesion across the segments” (226). To avoid repetition, the headline and the lead on the homepage usually differ from those of the main article (they can focus on a different newsworthy information, for instance) (228). For my analysis, I do not use the official homepage previews as the first level of online news texts. Instead, Facebook posts were selected to serve such a function. The following subchapter is devoted to the description of their structure.

4.3 Structure of a Facebook article

Drawing on Chovanec (2014) who presents the idea of the homepage preview as a separate level of online news, I propose a new level based on similar grounds—*the Facebook preview*. Due to the ever-increasing vogue for social media sites, newspaper institutions substantially benefit from posting news on their social media pages. It has become customary for millions of people to obtain news while being logged in in their personal accounts. In these fast-moving times, people appreciate any time-saving gadget. On Facebook, there is literally all they “like” in one place.

In case a Facebook user wishes to read some news, they can simply go to a newspaper's Facebook page where they are offered news posts which I will call here Facebook previews (henceforth FBP). Just like the online preview on a newspaper's homepage serves as the first level of online news rhetoric, the FBP, I argue, serves the same function and will therefore be considered here as the starting point of the reader's news decoding process. After finding a FBP interesting and worth reading, the user clicks on the post, which contains a hyperlink, and is immediately redirected to the corresponding full-length article on the newspaper's official website.

A typical FBP consists of the following textual segments (see):

- 1 – name of the publishing page
- 2 – date and time of publishing
- 3 – options menu
- 4 – lead
- 5 – accompanying photograph/picture/video/gif
- 6 – headline
- 7 – subhead
- 8 – social endorsement cues
- 9 – comment section



Figure 11: Structure of a Facebook preview

The exact publishing time and date is always displayed below the name of the publishing page. By clicking on the menu in the upper right corner, the user can choose from several options (e.g. save the link, hide the post, snooze the page for 30 days, give feedback on the post, and other). Interestingly, the lead usually appears above an accompanying feature, not below, as is the convention in the full-length articles. The accompanying feature can be either a photograph documenting the news story, a picture or a gif relating to the news story, a video capturing the news story, or there can be no such feature at all. The headline is normally placed below the feature and is written in larger font. In some cases, a post can include a subhead which would be placed right below the headline. Below the news post is the section which is not distinctive of news posts but of all Facebook posts. These are the “social endorsement cues” (Müller, Schneiders and Schäfer 2016, 432) where the user can either evaluate the post by clicking on the “like” button, type a “comment” on the post, or “share” the post. In case of a comment, it would appear in the lowest section among the rest of the comments of other users. The headline always includes a hyperlink directing to the relevant article published on the newspaper’s webpages. Normally, the headline is accompanied by other structural elements and so the hyperlinked part is usually composed of the headline, the accompanying feature and, if present, a subhead, as is illustrated by the dotted frame in .

4.4 Double textual level of online news

Having described the structures of a FBP and an online news article separately, let us now consider these two textual levels together, since the FBP is connected to the online article not only technically by means of a hyperlink, but also semantically, as the FBP functions as a “gate” to the full news story.

What is of crucial importance for the present work is the transition from the FBP to the full-length article and the textual transformation that takes place inside the constituent textual segments. In other words, the headline and the lead (and/or the subhead) on a FBP tends to be formulated differently from the corresponding segments on the website.²⁴ The motivation for the content reformulation is most probably to “[avoid] repetition and [add] further relevant/newsworthy information as well as the newspaper’s evaluative perspective on a story” (Chovanec 2014, 62). **Figure 12**

²⁴ Chovanec (2014) observes a similar relationship between a homepage article preview and the full-length article.

illustrates the individual textual segments of online news and how the two levels are related.

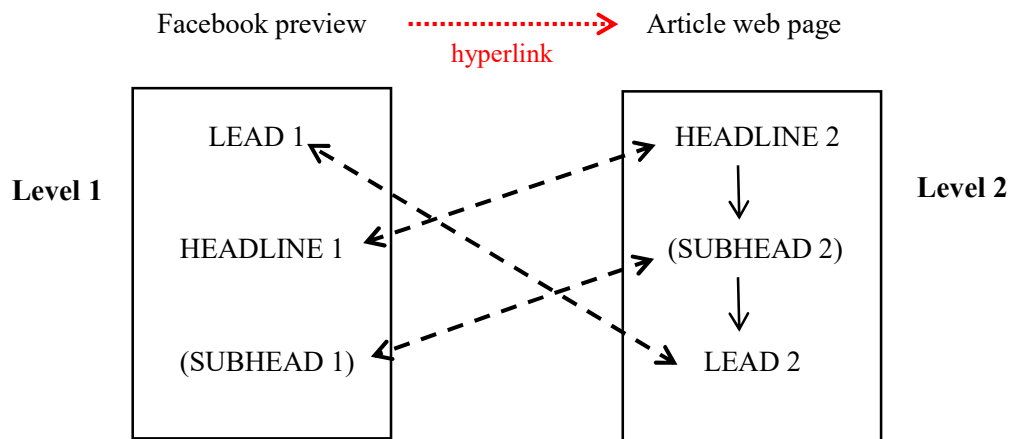


Figure 12: Textual segments on the two levels of online news

Figure 12 shows both textual levels, the preview on Facebook and the article on the respective website. The structural segments of the FBP are marked with the number 1 since they are encountered first by readers (henceforth H1 will stand for headline 1, L1 for lead 1, and S1 for subhead 1). Only upon clicking on the inherent hyperlink are readers presented with the article on the newspaper’s web page, whose segments are marked with number 2 (henceforth H2 will stand for headline 2, L1 for lead 2, and S2 for subhead 2). The dashed arrows indicate the relationships between the textual parts in the FBP and the corresponding parts on the web page. The figure makes it clearly noticeable that the segments are distributed differently with respect to the page layout on each textual level. While the full article is normally structured in a “top-down” manner, in accordance with the aforementioned *inverted pyramid* principle (cf. e.g. Bell 1991), the FBP favors different order. The full arrows in the article web page indicate the usual or ideal succession of the news decoding process. Notice that no arrows were put in the internal structure of the FBP. The reason for that is the fact it is not unequivocal what the usual succession is. To avoid subjective interpretation, research would have to be conducted (possibly by means of a survey) prior to stating whether readers first pay attention to the headline or the lead on FBP. While the headline is rendered more eye-catching thanks to larger font, the lead is the uppermost textual segment relating to the news on the FBP.

For the sake of clarification, **Figure 13**²⁵ graphically illustrates, on an article from the corpus, the dual encounter of headlines and leads/subheads during the process of reading a news article.

	Facebook preview (level 1)	Article web page (level 2)
Headline	Monarch given 24-hour extension to its license to sell package holidays	Monarch's future hanging in the balance as midnight deadline looms
Lead/Subhead	British low-cost airline and holiday company in process of renewing its Air Travel Organiser's Licence	British low-cost airline and holiday company holding emergency talks with Atol
Body copy	<i>(not applicable)</i>	Monarch's Air Travel Organisers' Licence (Atol) expired at midnight on Saturday, but the CAA granted the company a lifeline by allowing it to sell Atol-protected holidays for another 24 hours.

Figure 13: The double headline and lead pattern in online news

The article in **Figure 13** clearly exemplifies the textual transformation that very often takes place within the individual segments (except for the body copy which is unique to the article web page). Notice that the headline and lead/subhead on the FBP are formulated differently from those on the official website. The lead and subhead are put on the same line because when there is only one of them on the FBP it is often difficult to distinguish which one it is since they share the main summarizing function (Chovanec 2014, 64). It only becomes evident when both segments are present. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present research, the double headline and lead pattern is of the utmost importance.

It has been argued that the reason for the textual transformation between the two levels is most probably the effort on the part of the newspaper to achieve a feeling of diversity and to avoid mechanical repetition. Of course, each newspaper operates differently and each thematic section might be edited by diverse editors, i.e. the published

²⁵ Article source: *Guardian Travel*; 30. 9. 2017.

articles might be formulated in a different way as well. For those reasons, my corpus is comprised of three different newspapers and of three different soft news genres. It is one of the aims of this thesis to ascertain how the described transition influences the temporal encoding of the reported event. As a matter of fact, not only syntax is changed during the transition, but also, and more importantly, the verbal tense tends to be reformulated. This statement is based on Chovanec (2014) who has proved such practice by his research on temporal deixis in (print and online) hard news stories. The concept of deixis is essential for the analysis carried out in this thesis and is thus addressed in the next chapter.

5 Deixis

Once again, this thesis deals with the ways temporality is encoded in online SN stories and in order to fully comprehend the effects of individual tenses when applied to verbs in news headlines, it is necessary to become acquainted with the concept of deixis which is the focus of this chapter.

Special attention will be paid to the workings of temporal deixis as it constitutes the focal point of the present research. It is worth noting that the usage of temporal deictic expressions is not only common for the reporting mode of discourse, but it is one of its crucial defining characteristics (Smith 2003, 29–30; Bax 2011, 90–2).

5.1 Pragmatic approach to deixis

When dealing with news texts, one cannot regard them as finished independent units once they are written. The context they take part in, it will be argued, simply cannot be ignored. It is the very nature of news stories to *report on* something, to *point out* a newsworthy event happening to someone, taking place somewhere, at some time. This is where the concept of deixis comes to the fore.

The term *deixis* is of Greek origin and roughly means “‘pointing’ via language” (Yule 1996, 9). According to Stephen Levinson, “deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance” (1983, 54). While it is clearly a domain of pragmatics, it presents, however, an area of interest for semanticists as well, since deixis is “deeply grammaticalized” in the majority of natural languages (55). The most important thing concerning deixis, Levinson argues, is that an utterance is “anchored”, via deixis, to various aspects of the context that surrounds the utterance, i.e. it is context-dependent for its interpretation (55–59). In other words, crucial for understanding deixis in an utterance is the “encoding of the spatiotemporal context and subjective experience of the encoder” (Green 2006, 415). Linguistic forms that are employed to fulfill such functions are called *deictic expressions* (Yule 1996, 9).

Linguists have divided deictic expressions into several categories according to the area they are used to indicate. There are three basic categories of: *person deixis* which is used to indicate people involved in the speech event (e.g. “him”), *place* or *spatial deixis*

indicating locations involved (e.g. “there”), and *time* or *temporal deixis* (e.g. “now”) which will be discussed in greater depths in the following chapter (Yule 1996; Levinson 2006). Some authors, for instance Levinson (2006), also distinguish the categories of *discourse deixis* indicating different parts of a discourse (e.g. “in the next chapter”) and *social deixis* indicating social relationship between the participants (e.g. “Sir”) (118–121).

5.2 Temporal deixis

Relating the theory to the present research, the “utterance” would be a written newspaper article and the encoder would be a member of the newspaper’s staff—either a journalist or an editor (or both),²⁶ whose intention is to encode the context of the news straightforwardly and unequivocally, so that the message is clearly and easily understood, if possible, by all its recipients.

Temporal deixis can be expressed in different forms, linguistically or grammatically, with the aim to “articulate a shared context between the participants in a speech event, as well as to define, reinforce and modify their personal relations” (Chovanec 2014, 25). The encoder is able to achieve this *interpersonal dimension* of discourse through a variety of means (Halliday 1978).

One rich linguistic resource are time adverbs, such as: *now, then, soon, recently, tomorrow* (Levinson 1983, 74–5; Yule 1996, 14; Marmaridou 2000, 82), exemplified by a headline from the corpus in (1) below.

- (1) *Facebook now has so many ads it needs to put new ones in Messenger* (H1)
(*Independent Tech*; 12. 7. 2017)

There are also more complex time adverbials consisting of a “deictic modifier” and a non-deictic “measure” noun, such as: *last Tuesday, next Sunday, or this afternoon*. These deictic modifiers (*last, next, this*, but also *the coming, the following, the approaching, the past*, etc.) are, as Yule (1996) remarks, somewhat borrowed from our perception of spacial deixis. People, he argues, tend to perceive future events as moving towards them (e.g. “the coming week”) and past events as moving away from them (e.g. “the past week”) (14). For the correct decoding of such temporal expressions, the addressee needs to be familiar with the time of utterance (see *coding time* below). In example (2) (which

²⁶ Bednarek and Caple (2012, 23) talk about the position of a “subeditor” who is usually responsible for headlines.

is a subhead), a more complex time adverbial *last week* was used to anchor the reported event in time.²⁷

- (2) *Last week, Insecure's Issa Rae responded to fans who claim the show should do more to depict safe sexual practices but the show isn't alone in its portrayal of condom-free action* (S1)

(*Guardian Culture*; 19. 8. 2017)

Having discussed time adverbials as a linguistic resource for expressing temporal deixis, let us address the significant grammatical means. As Levinson (1983, 75; 2006, 114) points out, verbal tense is a crucial factor since that is exactly what provides the deictic anchoring of sentences to the respective context; and, what is more, it is the most pervasive manifestation of temporal deixis—as, of course, each finite verb is tensed. Lyons (1977, 679) even emphasizes the importance of verbal tense together with deictic adverbs by claiming that these are acquired sooner than the notion of non-deictic means of temporal deixis by children learning English.

Again, the concept of deictic and non-deictic tenses is of the utmost importance here since the present work investigates how the process of encoding the temporal context into online news articles is facilitated by the encoder's choice of temporal deictic or non-deictic means, namely by the choice of verbal tense.

5.2.1 Deictic center, coding time, receiving time

Crucial for understanding deictic expressions is Bühler's concept of *origo* (1934). *Origo*, or *deictic center* is understood as the center of reference, which is no one else than the encoder him/herself and the deictic expressions used by the encoder should be understood by the decoder in terms of the encoder's spatiotemporal environment at the time of utterance, i.e. his or her "here" and "now" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1451–53).²⁸ In other words (Lyons 1977, 637, my emphasis):

By deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, *in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee.*

²⁷ The inclusion of time adverbials in headlines will be discussed in Chapter 6.2.6.

²⁸ There are some temporal referential expressions which can be used without the consideration of the speaker's *origo* which means, then, that they are non-deictic (Levinson 1983, 73; Yule 1996, 14). This applies to calendrical reference, that is dates and years (e.g. May 31st, 1993).

As far as temporal deixis is concerned, we must always differentiate between the so-called *coding time* (henceforth CT) and *receiving time* (henceforth RT) (Levinson 1983, 73; Marmaridou 2000, 82). CT is the time of the actual production of the utterance, i.e. the moment of speaking or writing. RT, on the other hand, refers to the time the utterance is received by the addressee which however can, and often does, differ from the CT.

5.2.2 *Deictic center projection*

In a typical face-to-face conversation, it is natural that the deictic center shifts from one participant to the other. Of course, such participants would share both the spacial and temporal contexts. A situation where the CT is identical to the RT is called *deictic simultaneity* (Lyons 1977, 685). However, it is very common that the participants of a communicative act do not share the same context, be it only partially.

In a telephone conversation or in an online chat group, for instance, the participants share the same temporal context as they communicate in “real time,” so the CT and RT coincide. On the other hand, they do not share the same spacial context, that is, they are situationally displaced. In such a case, the interlocutors must accommodate their use of spacial referential expressions (Crystal and Davy 1969, 119).

Taken even further, in case of a written mode such as a print newspaper article, the addresser and the addressee do not share neither of the two extralinguistic contexts. The interlocutors appear in different spacial contexts and, most importantly, the CT of the text differs significantly from the RT. Therefore, the writers need to accommodate both the spatial and temporal frames of reference to get the message across and be clearly understood. A decision has to be made, on the part of the writer, whether he/she should leave the deictic expressions in accordance with his/her CT, i.e. the time of the text production, or whether a *projection* of the deictic center would not be a better solution (Levinson 1983, 73). As a matter of fact, it is possible, with some deictic expressions, for the addresser to switch the deictic center from him/herself to the addressee (or even to another person) and thus relate the deictic center to the recipient and his/her RT (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1453).

Examples (3) and (4) illustrate the two choices. Let us assume that the examples are either text messages or notes left on the kitchen table by the author of the text:

(3) *I am leaving you some cake in the fridge.*

(4) *I left you some cake in the fridge.*

In (3), the writer decided not to project the deictic center onto the reader. The progressive verbal tense *am leaving* indicates that the CT is *now*, i.e. at the time of the writer's creation of the message. On the other hand, (4) constitutes an example of deictic center projection. The verbal tense of the sentence is shifted from the present into the past, as the writer decided to use the past simple form *left* and thus relate the temporal frame to the recipient's RT.

Having explained the general workings of temporal deixis, the following chapter, and the rest of the thesis for that matter, will deal with temporal deixis in news discourse.

6 Temporal deixis in headlines

This thesis studies temporal deixis in news texts from a pragmatic point of view. I share the perspective of Chovanec in his *Pragmatics of Tense and Time in News* (2014) and will attempt to demonstrate on the articles from my corpus that news texts work with the context they appear in and that verbal tense and deixis can largely support the interpersonal dimension of news discourse.

This chapter aims to show that the choice of tense in headlines plays a significant role in the decoding of the reported events and attempts to illustrate (on examples from the corpus of SN stories) how the selected tense does or does not correspond to the genre conventions—i.e. the conventions of HN.

The reason for devoting a whole chapter to temporal deixis in headlines will become clearer later in **Chapter 7** which deals with tense shifts in news texts. Headlines are considered a “starting point” for the shifts and the purpose of this chapter is to explain and demonstrate the motivations and implications of the various tenses which are used in this segment of the news story.

6.1 Deictic projection in news texts

As far as headlines are concerned, one rule of headlines dictates to leave the verb in the present tense (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 101). Because it is a convention, news readers are ready to decode the headline without any troubles. In fact, readers expect this rule to be applied. Being so, the tense of the verb in the headline is not the past tense, even when the article reports on a past-time event. Chovanec (2014, 37) further explains this:

The headline present tense [...] conventionally indicates deictic simultaneity between the centres that revolve around the event time (ET) and the receiving time RT. The coding time CT is not explicitly stated, but it is implicitly present as the intervening frame in which the verbalization of the event is produced.

In pragmatic terms, instead of the deictic past tense, the headline is conventionally written in the non-deictic present tense. In other words, the verb does *not* undergo a temporal projection because there is a pragmatic assumption of shared temporal context, which is called *deictic simultaneity* (39). This is exemplified in (5), a headline from the corpus, where the verb is put into the present simple tense, while the article evidently reports on a past event. Even such a verb as *to die* with its semantics clearly implying a finished

process, the verb can still operate in the present tense under these circumstances. As a result, an intentional deictic simultaneity is formed which enhances the interpersonal dimension of discourse (Chovanec 2014, 38), that is, the newspaper interacts with the intended recipients by negotiating a relationship with them (Martin and Rose 2008, 24).

(5) *Science fiction author Brian Aldiss **dies** aged 92* (H1)

(*Guardian culture*; 21. 8. 2017)

On the other hand, there is usually no occurrence of the present tense in an article's subsequent textual segments. From the headline downwards, the news story moves to the past. By using the past tense, the newspaper positions the event into the readers' RT. It is thus clear that the ET and CT are different from the RT. Compare (5) with (6) below, where the same verb is put into the simple past tense in the BC of the very same article and which thereby exemplifies the *deictic center projection*:

(6) *Aldiss's agent, Curtis Brown, and his son, Tim Aldiss, have announced that the author, artist, poet and memoirist **died** at home in Oxford in the early hours of 19 August.* (BC)

The present tense form *dies* was changed into the past form *died*. This is a clear example of the deictic center projection, as the journalist shifts the deictic center from him/herself to the reader for whom, at the time of decoding the news, the event will have taken place in the past. In other words, the temporal location of the event was placed into the readers' anticipated RT. The temporal anchorage is, moreover, strengthened by the inclusion of a time adverbial with a calendrical reference: *in the early hours of 19 August*, which grammatically requires the verb to be in the past tense.

It has been argued in this subchapter that the concept of deictic center is of critical importance for the understanding of temporal deixis and for the correct decoding of the deictic temporal placement. Having described what the projection of the deictic center does in news discourse, let us move on to the discussion of the different tenses which are, be it conventionally or not, used in headlines.

6.2 Headlines and temporality

Temporality in English news articles, it has been stated earlier, can be expressed by the choice of verbal tense and by the inclusion of time adverbials specifying the time of an event's happening. This paradigmatic choice is also a pragmatic one, since the author

of the text relies on the readers to infer the meaning and the ways “situations are related to each other and to times” (Smith 2003, 92). In the following subchapters, the usage of verbal tense in headlines will be discussed. The aim is to demonstrate how the SN articles from the corpus comply with or differ from the conventional rules of the HN story genre with respect to the selected tenses in headlines. It is important to be aware of the fact that the headlines in my corpus come from soft news Facebook previews and their corresponding full-length online articles. One of the subchapters is concerned with the inclusion/exclusion of adverbials of time in headlines as they directly affect the choice of tense.

6.2.1 *Headline simple present*

The present tense is usually described as the “fundamental”, “default” or “unmarked” tense in the English language (Bell 1991; Chovanec 2005; 2014; Declerck 2006; Bednarek and Caple 2012). Being an unmarked tense means that it is considered the most simple tense in the English tense system regarding both the form and the semantics. Since it is typical for newspaper discourse to pare down the text that is forming the headlines as much as possible (as discussed above in Chapter 4.1.1.1), newspaper headlines are frequently given as instantiations of the present simple being conventionally used in a written text (Declerck 2006, 180); which has, in turn, become the convention or “grammar” of English headlines (Chovanec 2003, 84).

Of course, as newspapers report on what has already happened, the headlines actually refer to a past-time event. Therefore, the simple present tends to be used *non-deictically* to refer to a time which is not simultaneous with the CT or RT, i.e. to the past (Chovanec 2014, 125).²⁹ An example of such usage was provided above in (5). The rationale for the usage of the present tense instead of the past tense is the fact that the present form of the verb establishes a feeling of recency in the reader, as well as relevance, which are important factors in rendering the headline newsworthy (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 88). On top of that, newspapers inform about very recent events (could be even only hours old) and the readers are aware of it, therefore, they accept the present tense for reporting on past events just as easily as the past tense (88; Quirk et al. 1985, 182).

Chovanec, who wrote a paper (2003) on the reasons for the usage of the present tense in headlines to refer to events from the past, emphasizes the fact that since

²⁹ News referring to future will be discussed later, in Chapter 6.2.4.

the present tense became a convention for creating headlines, it is now understood and perceived as the “unmarked” tense for reporting on past events. On the other hand, on account of such a convention, using the past tense in headlines is considered to be “marked”, unlike in everyday conversation (84). He accounts for the convention by Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics approach (cf. Halliday 1985) which views communication as a set of choices available at the paradigmatic axis made by the interlocutors at the moment of utterance. Drawing on Halliday’s metafunctions, Chovanec argues that the convention in hand “is regulated by the interpersonal function, as the shift of tenses results in a shift of deictic centres as if to the time of the event, thus bridging the gap between the event and the reader” (85).

6.2.1.1 *Deictic use of the headline simple present*

It is important to note that there appear headlines which do not have to conform to the headlines convention of using the present simple to refer to a past time event. Some news can still be relevant at the time of their reading because the present tense might, in fact, refer to the present time. Thus, the events referred to in the news in CT would still be relevant in the RT. In such a case, the usage of the present tense would not be *non-deictic* but *deictic* (Chovanec 2014, 127). According to Quirk et al. (1985, 179–181), three types of such a present tense usage can be differentiated. First, there is the so-called *state present*, second, the *habitual present*, and third, the *instantaneous present*.

When the *state present* is used, there is no specific time reference intended. It is used for “general timeless statements, or so-called ‘eternal truths,’” mostly by means of stative verbs, to refer to states that are true at both the CT and RT (179–180). Examples (7)–(9) from the corpus demonstrate such a usage:

- (7) *Something in the local water **makes** Vietnam’s cao lau noodles special* (H1)
(*Guardian Culture*; 17. 9. 2017)
- (8) *Why **are** people so convinced Elvis is still alive?* (H1)
(*Independent Culture*; 16. 8. 2017)
- (9) *Is there such a thing as a good novel by a politician?* (H1)
(*Telegraph Entertainment*; 27. 8. 2017)

Neither of the above examples specify the time of the news happening, as they were relevant both at the time of coding the news and at the time of their reception by the audience. It could be said that these headlines report on somewhat timeless states.

The *habitual present* is also used to “imply an inherently unrestricted time span” (179). Unlike the *state present* which tends to be constructed via a stative verb, the *habitual present* is predominantly formed by a dynamic verb. Moreover, it does not refer to a state of events but to “a sequence of events, repeated over the period in question” (179). The repetition can be specified by adding a frequency adverbial, such as *every year*. As far as newspaper headlines are concerned, Chovanec (2014, 128) remarks upon the fact that the *habitual present* is uncommon. If they do occur, he points out, they are rather “border-line cases” that would be difficult to differentiate with the *state present* (128). The rare usage is most probably due to the unattractiveness of news reporting on repeated events. In comparison to reports on a singular event, they are considered much less newsworthy (Bell 1991). In my corpus of SN articles some cases of *habitual present*, albeit not prototypical, were identified. These are illustrated below as examples (10) and (11).

(10) *What on earth **happens** to lost luggage?* (H1)

(Telegraph Travel; 22. 8. 2017)

(11) *This tropical paradise **is** the least visited place on earth* (H1)

(Independent Travel; 23. 8. 2017)

Both headlines refer to something that has been happening repeatedly. In case of example (10), the content of the article is about the proceedings at the airport “if the airline loses your bag”—i.e. the article reports on something which has happened countless times and can happen to any reader. The headline in (11) belongs to an article informing about a tourism organization report according to which “Tuvalu was the least visited place on the planet in 2016. It welcomed 2,000 tourists over 12 months, despite having a warm tropical climate and low crime.” It thus reports on the number of visits made to the archipelago in the time span of one year, i.e. on a repeated action.

The third type, the *instantaneous present* is used to refer to a single event “begun and completed approximately at the moment of speech,” therefore at the CT (Quirk et al. 1985, 181). This type of the present tense is, however, used mostly in special situations, since the action is being already completed at the time of coding. These are: commentaries (e.g. sports commentaries), demonstrations and other self-commentaries, special exclamatory sentences with adverbials at the beginning, and performative verbs (181). It is impossible in most cases, as Leech (2007, 7) points out, for the event to take place at

the exact time of the utterance which mentions it; therefore, he talks about “subjective simultaneity” and not “objective.”

Having said that, Chovanec (2014, 129) maintains that “objective simultaneity” can and does occur in some headlines of online news articles. This is for the most part the case of live coverage, where the word “live” (often in capitals “LIVE”) even appears in the headline, and which report on ongoing events happening in real time. Such headlines would contain the verb in the present simple tense and have the meaning of the *instantaneous present*. However, “live news” were not included in my corpus since this work focuses on the area of soft news which hardly ever bring coverage on this type of news.³⁰ Nevertheless, there appeared some instantiations of *instantaneous present* in my data set. In examples (12), (13) and (14) the verbs refer to ongoing events which are taking place in real time.

(12) *Weak pound **melts** the British dream of a place in the sun* (H1)

(*Guardian Travel*; 28. 8. 2017)

(13) *New malware **threatens** to send your pictures, internet history and messages to your friends* (H1)

(*Independent Science and Tech*; 13. 7. 2017)

(14) *High winds **cause** planes to circle for three-and-a-half hours above Madeira Airport* (H1)

(*Telegraph Travel*; 25. 7. 2017)

Since one of the characteristics of online news is their potential to report on news almost immediately after its appearance, it is not surprising that the deictic use of simple present was detected in the corpus. There is one more utilization of the simple present in headlines, namely referring to future events or states, which is discussed in the following subchapter.

6.2.1.2 Future reference by the headline simple present

Last but not least, the present simple tense can be used in headlines to refer to future. Appearing in independent clauses, the verbal tense is called both by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 131) and by Leech (2007, 64) the *futurate*. The motive for choosing the simple present rather than the usual “will” is that the future the person refers to in

³⁰ Another reason is that such news, especially on social media platforms, include a video to accompany the article. The video often uses subtitles which substitute the function of the lead, and for this work, the presence of the lead is necessary. This issue will be discussed in more detail in **Chapter 1.4.2**.

the proposition is supposed to be fixed. In other words, one is certain that the future event/state referred to will not change. Therefore, the date or time is known in advance, and so the proposition tends to be complemented by an adverbial of time. The following examples were borrowed from Leech (2007, 64):

(15) *This Friday **is** Abigail's birthday.*

(16) *Next year the United Nations **celebrates** the sixtieth anniversary of its charter.*

In (15), reference is made about a calendrical event, and these are unlikely to change. Example (16) shows a reference to an event, a celebration, which will take place in the future with certainty, as the date of the anniversary is unalterable. In both cases, then, the speaker can be sure about the future and can thus make use of the simple present, instead of “will” in his/her proposition. Notice also the usage of time adverbials “this Friday” and “next year.”

The simple present with future reference might also be found in a subordinate clause, especially if it is a conditional (17) or a temporal (18) clause. Examples were retrieved from Quirk et al. (1985, 182):

(17) *He'll do it if you **pay** him.*

(18) *I'll let you know as soon as I **hear** from her.*

Newspaper articles do sometimes inform about future events. In fact, reference to events taking place in the future was not at all rare in the articles which make up the corpus.

Out of the 225 FBP headlines (= H1s) 15 headlines contain a present tense verb with future reference. An example of the present tense in H1 referring to future is supplied below. The fact that the headline in (19) refers to future is further specified in the respective BC by using the auxiliary *will*: *The Bridge season 4 **will** premiere on New Year's Day...*

(19) *The Bridge **returns** with a grisly, gripping final series trailer (H1)*

(Telegraph Entertainment; 17. 8. 2017)

But because the present simple tense is already being considered a customary feature of headlines—used to refer to a past time event—the form of the verb for expressing futurity is usually of *be to* (Chovanec 2014, 140). Leech (2007, 70) supports this claim by saying that “*am/is/are to* with the interpretation ‘plan for the future’ is

characteristic of newspaper reports, and in headlines, the construction is abbreviated to *to + infinitive* through the ellipsis of the form of the verb *to be*.”

Such usage was not uncommon in the corpus. 16 headlines exhibit the ellipsis of the auxiliary *be* from the construction *be to + infinitive*. Out of all the ellipses detected in the corpus, the ellipsis in question constitutes approximately one third (31%), as illustrated by **Table 2**.

Ellipsis	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Independent</i>	<i>The Telegraph</i>	No.	%
Ellipsis of <i>be to</i> - future reference	5	4	7	16	31%
Passive voice	10	7	8	25	49%
Ellipsis of copula <i>be</i>	6	0	1	7	14%
Progressive aspect	1	2	0	3	6%
Total	22	13	16	51	100%

Table 2: Ellipsis in H1s

Example (20) demonstrates the ellipsis of the semi-modal *be to* used for future reference. The reason for any ellipsis in headlines is economical—the editor simply strives for as short a headline as possible. For the sake of clarity, the ellipsed verb form was added and put in square brackets. In the BC, the future tense is constructed by the usage of the auxiliary *will*: ... *it will cut back on 3D screenings in the hope of attracting more customers*.

(20) *IMAX [is] to show less films in 3D* (H1)

(*Independent Culture*; 27. 7. 2017)

6.2.2 Present perfect

One of the rules of headlines, it has been argued, is to render the headline as short as possible. This is due to the space constraints of print newspapers. Putting the verb in a headline into the present perfect tense is quite infrequent, according to Chovanec (2014, 154). He postulates that the low frequency of the present perfect in headlines might stem from the analytical structure of this tense, which is longer than the conventional present tense form, and therefore undesirable.

From time to time, however, the perfective aspect does occur in headlines. Of course, there must be a reasonable cause for it. Following traditional grammar, Quirk et al. (1985) assert that “the present perfective signifies past time ‘with current relevance’” (190). Similarly, Leech (2007, 35) supports this claim by saying that the present perfect differs from the simple past tense in that it concerns “past involving the present.” He then further explains that “(a) it may involve a time period lasting up to the present, and (b) it may have results persisting at the present time” (35).

Taking this into consideration, headlines might make use of the temporal specification of the present perfect. Despite the fact that its general low occurrence in newspaper headlines proved to be true also for my corpus of online SN articles, some instantiations were present. There were exactly 8 instances of present perfect usage in H1s, 4 in single-clause H1s and 4 in complex-clause H1s. The headline in (21) illustrates such usage.

- (21) *The script for next week's Game of Thrones **has leaked** again* (H1)
(*Independent Culture*; 8. 8. 2017)

Another case is when a headline reports on a situation that has changed and by putting the verb into the present perfect, the contrast between the past and the present is made visible (Chovanec 2014, 155). This is exemplified by example headline (22).

- (22) *Feather furore: T.rex **may not have been** fluffy after all, skin study suggests* (H1)
(*Guardian Science*; 8. 6. 2017)

As far as deixis is concerned, the present perfect is said to operate *semi-deictically* (Chovanec 2014) for it constitutes a middle ground between the non-deictic simple present and deictic simple past. From the functional point of view, by emphasizing the current relevance while encoding a past event, the tense satisfies both the ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions (220). Although the occurrence of this tense in headlines is rather low, the present perfect gains greater importance in another textual segment of an article, namely the lead. This will be discussed in **Chapter 7.2** where we deal with tense shifts.³¹

³¹ The present perfect tense of the verb can appear in headlines which include an external voice, making the headline “heteroglossic” (Chovanec 2014, 156). For the sake of newsworthiness, the journalist/editor might opt for a quote in the headline where the present perfect might be used. The present corpus, however, excluded heteroglossic headlines, as they are rather a complex phenomenon and would require more attention and space.

6.2.3 *Past simple*

As much as it might seem logical to write the headline on a past event in the past tense, such a usage is found “marked” since the “unmarked,” or conventional, tense is the present simple in English headlines (Declerck 2006). As stated earlier, the non-deictic simple present creates an impression of shared temporal context between the paper and the reader. The past simple makes no such pragmatic connection. The past simple tense operates *deictically* for it places the event into the past without providing any links to the present, i.e. the deictic center is projected into the RT (Chovanec 2014, 37). Yet, we cannot rule out the possibility of encountering headlines with a past tense verb. The occurrence, though however rare, will be accounted for in the following paragraphs. It will be demonstrated that the past simple tense can function in a headline on diverse levels.

First, counter to the simple present, it can stress the non-recency of the news, or can support a piece of news with more background information which is non-recent (Chovanec 2014, 158; 2005, 92). The semantics of the past simple involves a perceived “gap” between the completed past event and the present moment. Moreover, the exact time of the event is usually known (Quirk et al., 183), so the newspaper might decide to include an adverbial of time to indicate the actual time of the reported non-recent event.

For print daily newspapers, it is one of the priorities not to induce a feeling of a “time gap” in their readers, as they report on the happenings of the previous day. For online newspapers, it is even more apparent since they strive to bring news which are as recent as possible, i.e. they report not only on what happened the day before (usually an event happening during late evening or night) but also, and more importantly, on what happens that particular day. However, it is possible, as Chovanec points out (2014, 161), that the newspaper learns about an event that took place several (or at least one) days ago, and the present tense of a clearly non-recent event would not be the best choice for the journalist.

An example of a piece of news reporting on an event which happened the previous week is given in (23). The verb in H1 is in the past tense clearly stating that the information leak happened sometime in the past, while the verb in L1 is in the present tense rendering the news topical. Moreover, the progressive aspect together with the time adverbial *now* in L1 are reassuring the reader that the news is of current relevance. After the reader clicks on the FBP and is redirected onto the whole article, s/he immediately

learns about the time of the leak from S2. Therefore, the reason for the past tense in H1 becomes clear—the incident had happened 2 years ago but was only exposed one week before the news release.

(23) *Sweden accidentally **leaked** details of almost all of its citizens* (H1)

*Now it's **getting** worse* (L1)

*The leak **happened** in 2015, but only **emerged** last week* (S2)

(Independent Tech; 26. 7. 2017)

Similarly, the H1 in (24) reports on an incident that happened 6 days before the news release. Again, the past tense indicates to the readers that the news would most probably not be about an event happening that day, or the previous day. Later in the BC it is explained that the incident happened on July 22, while the news was released on July 28.

(24) *Plane nearly **ran out** of fuel after pilots **forgot** to bring up landing gear* (H1)

(Telegraph Travel; 28. 7. 2017)

Alternatively, it might as well happen that the newspaper finds out about an additional, not yet covered, aspect of a story which is not recent. Hence, the journalist might justifiably opt for the past simple tense as a better choice for the verb. The headline in (25) would be the case. The article reports on an additional aspect of Katy Perry's social medial failure, namely the cause of her challenge's lack of success. The L2 of the article reminds the readers of this challenge that was started by the singer in May and that it *bombed*. The rest of the article is concerned with the causes behind it. Therefore, the news is not reporting on a new event but rather provides additional information on an event which happened in the past. Hence the newspaper chose to put the verb in the headline in the past tense (both in H1 and in H2).

(25) *Appétit for destruction: why Katy Perry's viral challenge **left** a bad taste* (H1)

(Guardian Culture; 19. 8. 2017)

Related to the previous cases of past tense usage is also the following one. Two verbs may appear in one headline; one in the present tense signifying a recent event, and the other one in the past tense. The latter would be there to capture a secondary event in the past simple tense. As such, it would serve the function of providing background to the crucial event that is being reported on. Chovanec (2014, 165–71) proposes that in this case the past tense serves as “a grammatical device for the management of information flow within the headline.” The verbal tense is said to be an indicator of a hierarchy

amongst the individual elements of the story. The reader, then, can easily identify the relative importance of the mentioned events. The simple past when used in a headline can be therefore understood as a tool for the organization of the newspaper discourse; i.e., in Halliday's terms, it can have a textual metafunction (ibid. 165–66; Halliday 1985). This is exemplified by a H1 in (26). The news reports on a delay in the production of *Mission: Impossible 6* which is expressed by the present tense (with an ellipsis of the copula *is*) in the main clause of H1. The headline further specifies the secondary event, i.e. the cause of the halt, in the past tense.

(26) *Film [is] on hold after Tom Cruise broke ankle jumping between buildings* (H1)
(*Telegraph Entertainment*; 17. 8. 2017)

Another usage concerns more, interrelated, articles. A newspaper can decide to adjoin to the main article, which brings all the relevant information, other articles, which would be additional and considered less important than the main one. These are called “satellite articles” (Chovanec 2014, 174) and even though they are published separately, such articles can play a significant role as parts of a network, for the articles are interrelated. The past tense would here imply the hierarchical subordination in terms of importance. Ungerer (2000) calls attention to the trend of modern media which often publish the news in the described manner. A modern media newspaper sometimes does not reveal all the information at once in a single main article but distributes it into several minor ones. Online newspapers tend to have a subsection at the bottom of their web page where these additional articles are to be obtained. Relating this to the focus of the present thesis, the subsections on the selected news institutions' web pages are called “Related topics” (*The Telegraph*), “Related stories” (*The Guardian*), and “More about” (*The Independent*). By clicking on any of the hyperlinks, the reader is immediately redirected to the correlate articles. The method applied for the collection of the articles to my corpus was, however, different. For that reason, no example of such past tense usage can be supplied from the corpus.

There is yet another rationale for the simple past in headlines—namely, using it as an indication of some external voice which does not belong to anyone of the newspaper staff (Chovanec 2014, 159–61). This “non-authorial accessed voice” is clearly distinguishable in the headline, as it tends to be marked by means of punctuation—either by quotation marks for direct speech, or for example a colon introducing the external utterance. As the research of the present thesis excludes heteroglossia from the corpus,

I will not elaborate on this area any further. Having said that, I acknowledge that it is a complex issue which has a vital impact on the tense usage in headlines and would definitely deserve more attention and space in some other research on soft news.³²

Since we are dealing here with two textual levels of online articles, one more incentive for the past tense usage needs to be addressed. In some cases from the corpus, the past tense would appear in the FBP, i.e. in H1, while in the online article's H2 the tense would be different. Because the readers might go through up to 6 condensed textual segments (H1, L1, S1, H2, L2, S2) before reaching the BC, the newspaper might decide for a variation of tenses in the individual segments (which will be discussed in greater depth in **Chapter 8** and **Chapter 9**). Chovanec (2014, 226) acknowledges that each newspaper might have its own strategies regarding this issue—some might even prefer repetition. The newspaper in (27), for example, decided for the variation strategy. While H2 conforms to the headlines rule of putting the verb in the simple present tense, the verb in H1 on Facebook was put into the simple past.

- (27) *The BBC's highest-paid star just **lost** half a million listeners* (H1)
*Chris Evans: BBC's highest paid star **loses** half a million Radio 2 listeners* (H2)
(Independent Culture; 3. 8. 2017)

An interesting discrepancy with the tense usage relating to the time adverbial *just* was detected in the corpus. In three cases, the verb in H1 was put into the past tense, even though the time adverbial *just* was used. According to traditional grammar (Quirk et al. 1985, 194), a sentence containing the adverbial *just* normally cooccurs with the present perfect tense. In three of the headlines from the corpus, however, the simple past was selected instead. One of the cases was the previously mentioned example (27), the other two are supplied in (28) and (29) below:

- (28) *Richard Branson just **lost** control of Virgin Atlantic* (H1)
*Virgin Atlantic **sells** 31 per cent stake to Air France* (H2)
(Independent Travel; 27. 7. 2017)
- (29) *Europe's biggest beachside pool just **opened** and it looks amazing* (H1)
*Biggest beachside swimming pool in Europe **opens** in Greece* (H2)
(Independent Travel; 20. 7. 2017)

³² For more information on heteroglossia in headlines, see Chovanec (2014).

Notice that in all the three H2s in (27), (28) and (29) the verb is in the simple present, in correspondence with headlines. If the reason for changing the verbal tense in H1s was to avoid repetition, I find the choice of the past tense rather surprising, for the present perfect tense, which would correspond to the time adverbial *just*, would induce the connotation of recency which is undoubtedly a desirable quality in newspaper reporting.³³

6.2.4 *Future*

Let us now consider those headlines which report on events or states which have not yet happened but are planned to happen in the future. Newspapers might inform on an upcoming event, can comment on, or predict the future advancement or results of something newsworthy. Futurity in headlines can not only be expressed by means of several grammatical constructions but also lexically.

It is often the case that futurity in English headlines is rendered by leaving the verb in the present tense. The usage of *futurate* was discussed above and so was the employment of the semi-modal *be to*, which are characteristic of newspaper headlines. Therefore, they deserve to be mentioned here again.

Perhaps the obvious choice would be to use the auxiliary *will*. Nonetheless, the opposite is true. Chovanec (2014, 146) highlights the fact that “[t]he relatively rare occurrence of the *will*-future in headlines is one of the most noticeable features of headlines.” It can be accounted for with two main reasons. Firstly, as is the case with the present perfect tense, the analytical structure of *will*-future goes against the spatial requirements of headlines. Shorter forms are rather used. Secondly, the lexical form *will* has another semantic level, namely of a modal expressing volition. *Will* for indicating the future is most commonly used in headlines which convey an external accessed voice (147).

There were only 3 cases of *will*-future usage detected in H1s in the corpus. Regarding the first case (30), the article does not actually refer to a future event but rather speculates on whether the famous Asimov’s laws would work if they were to be implemented in real world: *But this quick fix wouldn’t work for something like a self-*

³³ One explanation might be the influence of American English on British English. According to Quirk et al. (1985, 194) such usage is typical for American English. They give an example: *I just **came** back* which tends to be preferred in American English to *I **have** just **come** back*.

driving car that might have to move to avoid a collision, or a care robot that might need to catch an old person if they fall.

(30) *Asimov's famous three laws **won't** actually **stop** robots harming humans* (H1)

(Independent Tech; 20. 7. 2017)

Another incidence of *will*-future was the headline in (31). While the first clause has a verb in the present progressive tense stressing the current relevance, the second clause with *will be* has a clear purpose of relating the news to the future. By the second clause, the newspaper expresses concern about the future consequences of the event reported in the first clause.

(31) *Ryanair **is squeezing** more passengers on its new planes – but **will there be** room for your bag?* (H1)

(Telegraph Travel; 26. 7. 2017)

The last example of *will* in headlines is supplied below as example (32). Here, the newspaper is directly addressing its readers by using the personal and possessive pronouns *you* and *your*. Having adopted such a personal attitude, the newspaper comments on the quality of a new film by expressing its prediction about the readers' reactions to the film. This headline clearly expresses a subjective opinion and its subjective and personal nature is further enhanced by L1 which is written in the same fashion.

(32) *This mesmerising film **will make** you want to quit your job and **move** to Siberia* (H1)

You'll want to swap the city for the steppes after watching this (L1)

(Telegraph Travel; 9. 8. 2017)

Another means of expressing future in headlines are modal auxiliaries, such as for example *may* or *could*. Modals can express “epistemic modality” (also called “intrinsic”) in headlines which would concern “statements about the universe, and constraints of likelihood on their truth and falsehood. It includes ‘practical possibility’ (*may*) and ‘logical necessity’ (*must, have to*),” according to Leech (2007, 84). Alternatively, they can express the so called “root modality” (also called “extrinsic” or “deontic”) which denotes “constraint and lack of constraint in situations (typically situations involving human behaviour) in our universe of experience: it includes ‘permission’, ‘obligation’, ‘theoretical possibility’ and ‘requirement’” (84). As newspapers tend to strive for neutrality, the usage of modals (especially those of root modality) is typically connected

to some other, newspaper-external voice (Chovanec 2014, 149–150), and such articles were not included in our corpus.

Yet, there were some instances of such usage found in the corpus. The headline in (33) below is an example of expressing futurity via the modal *could*. The headline expresses a theoretical possibility of the USA to buy planes from a bankrupt Russian airline. This is later made clear in the body copy.

(33) *New Air Force One planes **could come** from bankrupt Russian airline* (H1)

*The US Air Force **is understood to be** in talks with Boeing about buying two Boeing 747s, which were mothballed after the Russian airline Transaero went bust in 2015.* (BC)

(Telegraph Travel; 4. 8. 2017)

Last but not least, there are lexical means of expressing future that can be applied in headlines. These are, for instance, verbs which denote the beginning or continuation of an action, such as *start, begin, launch, set out, set off, set to, open*, etc. (Chovanec 2014, 152–3). While they typically take the present simple tense, they refer to the near future. The headlines in (34) and (35) from the corpus represent examples of such a usage.

(34) *Airbus **launches** the world's first 'convertible' private jet* (H1)

*When in flight, passengers who look overhead **will have** an unimpeded view of the sky above.* (BC)

(Telegraph Travel; 7. 7. 2017)

(35) *Dubrovnik **plans** drastic tourist limits to save World Heritage status* (H1)

*Dubrovnik **will** drastically **cut** the number of visitors allowed into its ancient centre in just two years in an effort to prevent ruinous overcrowding, the mayor has revealed to Telegraph Travel.* (BC)

(Telegraph Travel; 11. 8. 2017)

Notice, that the tense in the respective body copies of the articles shifts from the present simple to the future. By using the auxiliary *will* the newspaper disambiguates the temporal reference, as it always denotes future.

6.2.5 Imperative and infinitive in headlines

A small number of headlines from the corpus were considered separately during the analysis of tenses since they lack tense distinction (Quirk et al. 1985, 827), i.e. are non-finite, and are not typical for headlines. These were cases of imperative verbs and verbs in the infinitive form in either H1 or H2 and were put into the category named “Other.” According to traditional grammar, the imperative and the infinitive share some

characteristics, as both have “a nonfinite form which [...] consists of the base form, and typically expresses nonfactual meaning” (Quirk et al. 1985, 150).

10 cases of imperative clauses were detected among H1s. Below are examples from single-clause headlines:

(36) **Czech out Brno for a cheaper, calmer city break** (H1)

(37) **Bank on summer fun at Paris's Rives de Seine park** (H1)

(*Guardian Travel*; 29. 9. 2017 and 28. 7. 2017)

(38) **Don't even think about travelling by train this Bank Holiday weekend** (H1)

(39) **Meet the youngest ever female commander of a Boeing 777** (H1)

(*Independent Travel*; 24. 8. 2017 and 26. 7. 2017)

The headlines from (36) to (39) nicely illustrate the personal and interactive nature of online soft news. According to Quirk et al. (1985, 149), these are cases of *imperative mood* which, in comparison to *indicative mood*, is a marked mood and are used to “refer to a situation in the immediate or more remote future and are therefore incompatible with time adverbials that refer to a time period in the past or that have habitual reference” (828). Relating the grammar to headlines, it could be said that they refer to immediate future, as their objective is for the readers to be intrigued by them and act according to what they suggest. H1s in (36) and (37) strive to entice people to visit some places, (38) aims to influence the readers’ weekend plans and (39) attempts to make them want to learn about an outstanding person. Despite their different aims, all of them address the readers and attempt to influence their future acts. Such interactivity and orientation towards the readers accords with the characteristics of both SN and online news in general (cf. Bell 1991; Herbert 2000; Busà 2014).

The H1 in example (40) not only includes an imperative verb *take*, but also an infinitive *to get over*. In fact, only 2 headlines from my corpus included an infinitive, the other one is supplied in (41).

(40) **How to get over a broken heart: take two aspirin and stop talking** (H1)

(*Telegraph Science and Tech*; 26.8. 2017)

(41) **How to buy your own airport in Sweden** (H1)

(*Independent Travel*; 25. 8. 2017)

Notice, that both of the above examples begin with *how to*. Unlike such “how-to-articles” which merely provide tips to their readers (and were thus not included in the corpus),

these two articles report on newsworthy events. The first article reports on a scientific research and the second article on a man selling his private airstrip. The question is, why the editors decided to render the headlines in such a way. The clearest interpretation is that SN show a more flexible style in comparison to HN (Bell 1991, 14) and they are generally more colorful and varied (Herbert 2000, 161). Moreover, these were most probably attempts to attract the readers' attention.

6.2.6 Time adverbials in headlines

The current chapter would not be complete without discussing time adverbials in headlines. In the process of creating a headline, journalists must consider not only the verbal tense, but also an inclusion or exclusion of some temporal specification. In case they decide to include an adverbial of time, the tense has to be in accordance with the adverbial's grammatical conventions. Bednarek and Caple (2012, 89) state that of all adverbials which tend to occur in English headlines "specification of time is most common." Contrary to that, Chovanec (2014, 99) asserts that they are "quite infrequent." The aim of this subchapter is to discuss the motivations for including or excluding time adverbials from headlines.

In his corpus of hard news headlines, Chovanec (2014) found only a small number of headlines that would include a time adverbial specifying the temporal frame of the main event. The rest of the found time adverbials were applied in the headlines to specify some additional newsworthy information (99). In my corpus of online soft news stories, the occurrence of time adverbials in headlines was equally low. Considering all the headlines in the corpus, we get a set of 450 headlines (225 H1s + 225 H2s), out of which only 33 (roughly 7,3 %) contained a specification of time relevant to the main event which was being reported on. This low inclusion of temporal specification can be accounted for from several viewpoints.

First, let us consider a pragmatic reason for the lack of time adverbials in headlines. As far as online news is considered, the article's time anchorage is normally provided in the byline by means of calendrical reference. This is similar for Facebook posts which include the publication date and time right below the name of the publisher. In spite of that, the readers expect there to be "a shared temporal framework" between the newspaper and the readers (Chovanec 2014, 100). This assumption of recency stems from the very nature of news which strive for topicality.

There are also structural reasons. Concerning the event that is being reported on, its temporal anchorage tends to be included either in the lead or the body copy because the headline is spatially constrained (Quirk et al. 1985, 845). Incorporating the time adverbial also in the headline would therefore be redundant and contrary to the condensed style requirement of headlines (Molnár 2017, 206).

Unlike adverbials which need not be present in a headline, tense is obligatory for any finite verb. The absence of time adverbials in headlines goes hand in hand with the conventional usage of the simple present tense. In case the temporal location of the event is unimportant, the present tense is the customary choice (Declerck 2006, 191). What is more, the absence of temporal specification results in an assumption of recency (Bell 1995, 320) which, in turn, enhances the headline's news values, namely timeliness (Bednarek and Caple 2017, 97).³⁴ All in all, in case a headline lacks a temporal specification for the reported event, the simple present tense is usually opted for since its pragmatic connotation of recency constructs newsworthiness by making the event appear "timely" (Bednarek and Caple 2017, 98).

Chovanec (2014) points out that there is another rationale behind the absence of time adverbials which is crucial for the present work. Taking the pragmatic point of view, the conventional present tense in headlines is a *non-deictic* usage of the tense. The inclusion of a *deictic* time adverbial in a headline would require rendering the tense of the verb in accordance with the adverbial. While newspapers predominantly report on past time events, they cannot include a *deictic* time adverbial like *yesterday*, *last Monday*, or for example *last night* in the headline and at the same time follow the rule of headlines to use the *non-deictic* simple present tense. On the other hand, "[w]here both are deictic, the verbal tense identifies the time zone in a general manner and an adverbial of time provides a more precise temporal specification," which is discussed below (102).

In case the news does not refer to a past time event but instead refers to an event taking place at the time of publication, adverbials such as *today* or *now* are used together with the present tense so that it is clear that the news does not report on a finished event. Both these time adverbials and this usage of the present tense is *deictic*, so there is no discrepancy in their combination. By including *today* or *now*, the impression of recency

³⁴ Bednarek and Caple (2017, 97) describe timeliness as follows: "The event is discursively constructed as timely in relation to the publication date: as new, recent, ongoing, about to happen, current, or seasonal. [...] Since Timeliness is concerned with temporality, important resources for constructing this news value include temporal references (e.g. time adverbials) and tense and aspect."

is enhanced (Bednarek and Caple 2017, 98) since they construct “the same context of temporal reference between the encoder and the addressee – a context that [...] is established through deictic centre projection” (Chovanec 2014, 58). Consider the following two examples from the corpus:

(42) *Facebook now **has** so many ads it **needs** to put new ones in Messenger* (H1)
(*Independent Tech*; 12. 7. 2017)

(43) *Foreign Office **tells** Britons it **is now** safe to travel to Tunisia* (H1)
(*Independent Travel*; 26. 7. 2017)

Headlines in (42) and (43) include the time adverbial *now* so that it is clear the news concern topical issues with current relevance. The simple present refers both to the CT and the RT. The headline in (44) includes the same adverbial; interestingly though, the present tense verb is in the progressive aspect. The pragmatically shared temporal context created by the present tense was probably not enough for the editor, so s/he decided to stress the immediacy of the news by the progressive aspect. Together with the adverbial *now*, the headline evokes the feeling of an ongoing issue.

(44) *Ads **are now** **invading** people's phone keyboards* (H1)
(*Independent Tech*; 18. 7. 2017)

All in all, by making use of the simple present, the progressive aspect and deictic time adverbials such as *now* or *today*, “the temporal importance of the reported event is stressed” (Luginbühl 2009, 129).

Only one headline from the corpus included an adverbial of time anchoring an event in the past, see (45). The news refers to a decrease in viewer ratings and anchors the time of this event by *during the eclipse*. The news was published on Thursday 24 August 2017 while the eclipse took place on Monday 21 August 2017. The time adverbial thus unequivocally refers to a past time event, corresponding to the simple past tense of the used verb. Pragmatically speaking, the deictic past tense selected to report the news required a time adverbial relating to that past time event. While the editor could have chosen a deictic time adverbial (such as *3 days ago*, or *this/last Monday*), s/he opted for mentioning the precise event, probably because an eclipse occurs very rarely which makes it newsworthy. The precise day is mentioned later in the BC.

(45) *Netflix **saw** a 10% drop in viewers during the eclipse* (H1)
(*Independent Culture*; 24. 8. 2017)

Of course, a headline might include an adverbial with future reference in case the news reports on a future event, state or plan, or when it makes a prediction about something. Such usage was also detected in the corpus and should not be neglected; look at the following three headlines:

(46) *Thomas Cook **could restart** Tunisia package holidays as early as spring 2018* (H2)

(Independent Travel; 27. 7. 2017)

(47) *Britain **[is] to ban** all petrol and diesel vehicle sales by 2040* (H2)

(Independent Tech; 26. 7. 2017)

(48) ***Don't even think** about travelling by train this Bank Holiday weekend* (H1)

(Independent Travel; 24. 8. 2017)

The H2 from July 2017 in (46) refers to the spring of the following year—the time when a British tour operator planned to start selling package holidays to Tunisia once again. The futurity is not only clearly expressed by the underlined time adverbial, but the verb phrase correspondingly expresses a theoretical possibility via the modal *could*. The underlined time adverbial in example (47) refers to long distance future which is supported by the *be to + infinitive* construction used to express futurity. The last example (48) could not have been interpreted otherwise than referring to future, since the news was published on 24 August 2017 which was Thursday and it warned its readers about something happening *this* (i.e. the upcoming) weekend. This is moreover a special case, for the editor decided to use the imperative, directly addressing the readers.

It is important to restate that the incident rate of time adverbials in the headlines from my corpus was very low. Therefore, despite having described several cases where an adverbial was used, these cases were rather infrequent.

6.3 Summary of temporal deixis in headlines

The present chapter was exclusively devoted to one structural segment—the headline—since it is the one segment which introduces and opens up the news story. It has been argued that the selection of a particular tense in a headline can be motivated by an additional factor which is temporal and deictic specification. The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate the following: While the publications which are being cited and used here as theoretical foundations for my research base their assertions predominantly on HN stories, the tense analysis conducted within this thesis concerns solely a SN corpus.

It has been supported by numerous examples from the corpus that the tendencies regarding the tense application observable in HN headlines also manifest themselves in the headlines of SN stories. This chapter has provided evidence that the grammatical tense applied in SN headlines has the same pragmatic and functional reasons and ramifications as those of HN headlines.

What follows in the next chapter are shifts of tense taking place across the individual structural segments of news stories for which the headline serves as the opening element.

7 Tense shifts in online news

Online news texts differ from traditional print news in many respects, as has been already pointed out several times in this thesis. Newspapers are no longer limited by any time limits, as regards publication. The fact that the news does not need a print version has been seized as an opportunity by newspaper institutions. Nowadays, the velocity of news production and publication is considered crucial in online journalism. Therefore, the criterion of recency of coverage is even bigger than in the print counterpart. In fact, online news can be easily updated in case the newspaper decides to fill in some missing information, to correct some false information, and so on. For these reasons, the treatment of temporality could be assumed to be different. As Chovanec (2014, 59) points out, the differences are significant.

The most crucial difference relevant for the present work lies in the hypertextual (and thus intertextual) nature of online news. This quality is related to what was discussed in **Chapter 4.2**. Unless the readers do not have the exact web address (also called URL) of the article they would like to read, they must get to the desired article via a hyperlink—either from the newspaper’s homepage or archive, or via a social media platform, as is Facebook. Upon clicking on the desired news post, which I designate here as the FBP (Facebook preview), the readers are instantly redirected to the full text of the article in question. There, they encounter a headline together with a lead (possibly also a subhead) for the second time, the first time being on the FBP. Consequently, there are two levels of online newspaper discourse for temporality to be realized on.

7.1 Coherence, cohesion and tense

It needs to be stressed again that the two levels, the FBP and the online article, are not standalone units independent of each other. They are interconnected through several means. Firstly, there is the hypertextual link incorporated in the FBP which takes the Facebook users to the newspaper’s website. Secondly, they are related through semantics, grammar, and lexis.

Of course, coherence—the semantic relations construing unity between the two levels—is necessarily inherent, as the FBP functions as a kind of preview, or introduction, to the very same, full-length article.

Cohesion between the two levels is realized quite explicitly. Some amount of information is repeated in the textual segments—that is, the news from the article’s body

copy is extracted into the lead which is further extracted and/or reformulated in the headline. Chovanec (2014) calls this a “double summary pattern” (207). This means that some lexical repetition must be in process. More importantly, however, with regard to the grammar of the used verbs, cohesion is realized through variation of the verbal tense in the respective segments. This topic is thoroughly investigated by Chovanec who moreover claims that the reformulation of the verbal tense across the segments also contributes to overall coherence (205).

As we deal with two levels of online news representation in this work, we need to take into account five crucial textual segments. Therefore, in the following subchapters, attention will be paid not only to temporal deixis inside the online article, but also in the FBP and, most importantly, the relationships between the five textual segments, i.e. *headline 1* and *lead 1* (on the FBP), and *headline 2*, *lead 2*, and the *body copy* (on the webpage).

7.2 Tense shifts

The research conducted by Chovanec in his *Pragmatics of Tense and Time* (2014) is taken as a departure point for the analysis which is carried out in within the present thesis. By analyzing the verbal tense in his corpus of newspaper articles, Chovanec discovered that there is a pattern regarding the occurrence of temporal deixis across the textual segments of not only print but also online news articles. He refers to this as the “double tense shift pattern” which shall be described in the following subchapter.

It is necessary to highlight once more the fact that Chovanec’s corpus was comprised exclusively of hard news stories. One of the purposes of this thesis is to compare the findings concerning verbal tense and deixis by Chovanec with the findings from our corpus. It should be interesting to investigate whether the pattern functions also in online soft news stories. Also, the “extra” level in his analysis is the preview on a newspaper’s online homepage. In this work, the “extra” or the “first” level is a newspaper post on Facebook, a highly successful and influential social media platform. Another purpose of the present subchapter is to look into the temporal relationships between the five textual segments of online news, i.e. to provide an insight into the relationships between the two levels of online discourse.

7.2.1 *Double tense shift pattern*

The double summary pattern has already been mentioned above as evidence for cohesion among the textual segments of an article. What is of the utmost importance for my analysis is the pattern of tense shifts that is in process among the news segments in typical hard news stories designated as *the double tense shift pattern* (Chovanec 2014, 215). This pattern, where the tense of the verb is shifted twice, is exemplified by an article posted by *The Independent* in (49) below.

(49) *Chris Evans: BBC's highest paid star **loses** half a million Radio 2 listeners* (H2)

*The BBC Radio 2 breakfast show presented by Chris Evans **has lost** almost half a million listeners in the past year, it has been revealed.* (L2)

*Figures show that the DJ - who was named the BBC's highest paid star just a few weeks ago - **lost** 370,000 listeners between the first and second quarter of 2017.*
(BC)

(Independent Culture; 3. 8. 2017)

The three segments in (49) are the three main textual segments of news stories (of course, only an excerpt from the BC is presented here). Notice the repetition of the verb phrase in bold. In the article's headline, the verb "loses" is in the present simple tense. In the lead, "has lost" is a verb phrase in the present perfect tense. Finally, in the body copy, the verb "lost" is in the past simple tense. In other words, the main event expressed via the present tense in the headline is re-expressed in the lead via the present perfect, which is re-expressed again via the past tense in the body copy (Chovanec 2014, 215). The non-deictic present simple and the semi-deictic present perfect tenses are employed to stress the recency of the news, i.e. to secure the news' newsworthiness. Readers are to learn more information about the main event from the body copy. Correspondingly, the main event is set into the time of its actual happening sometime in the past by the deictic past tense of the verb, complemented by a time adverbial (*between the first and second quarter of 2017*).

What is more, the lexical component allowing the double tense shift pattern does not need to be identical throughout the individual segments as in (49). The verb undertaking the tense transformation is often reformulated to avoid repetition, see example (50).

(50) *Scientists **identify** 40 genes that shed new light on biology of intelligence (H2)*

*A major study into the genetics of human intelligence **has given** scientists their richest insight yet into the biology that underpins our cognitive skills. (L2)*

*The research on 60,000 adults and 20,000 children **uncovered** 40 new genes that play a role in intelligence, ... (BC)*

(Guardian Science; 22. 5. 2017)

The two shifts of tenses are thus *simple present* → *present perfect* → *simple past* (Chovanec 2014, 216). For further clarification, the double tense shift pattern is schematically demonstrated in **Figure 14** below.³⁵

News text segment	Conventional tense	Example
headline	present tense	<i>loses</i>
↓	↓	↓
lead	present perfect tense	<i>has lost</i>
↓	↓	↓
body copy	past tense	<i>lost</i>

Figure 14: The double tense shift pattern

Again, this pattern was described by Chovanec (2014) who dealt with a corpus of HN stories. However, the given examples (49) and (50) were extracted from the corpus of SN stories that has been compiled for the purposes of the present analysis. The article in (49) was posted both on the Facebook pages of *The Independent* called *Independent Culture* and on the newspaper’s web pages under the bookmark “Culture.” Similarly, the article in (50) was published on the Facebook pages of *Guardian Science* and on the official web pages as one of “Genetics” topics which comes under the “Science” bookmark. It has been clearly demonstrated that the double tense shift pattern can and *does* operate in SN articles as well.

One of the aims of the present work is to investigate to what extent the double tense shift pattern is employed in the creation of online SN stories. Another purpose is to analyze any deviations from this pattern and, in case they are numerous, to find other possible patterns and provide descriptions of them. The analyses are carried out in Chapters 8 and 9.

³⁵ The structure of the table was borrowed from Chovanec (2014, 217), examples come from my example article in (49).

7.2.2 *Two levels online*

Since there are two levels of news texts presentation considered here, it is interesting to observe the tense shifts in both of them, not only in the online full-length article. Another aim of this thesis is thus to analyze the temporality in the FBP. As it is considered a “gate” to the main article, information from the main article is not only abstracted into the lead and headline on its web page, but also on its Facebook page. It is assumed that the headline and lead on the FBP (H1 and L1) will not always be mere copies of the headline and lead on the web page (H2 and L2) since, as Chovanec points out (2014, 274), it would lead to the feeling of redundancy or lack of variation on the part of the reader which is undesirable for the newspaper.

Following Chovanec (2014) who discovered that, despite some variations, “the tense shift pattern actually appears twice in online news” (274), the aim here is to ascertain whether such finding could be applied also to online SN with the “extra” textual level being a FBP. It has been argued earlier that the tense shifts within the verb phrase are pragmatically motivated by the interpersonal function because newspapers strive to create a feeling of a “shared deictic discourse space” (275). It has been hypothesized that such motivation is valid for FBPs as well since Facebook is a social media platform whose primary principles are that of creating and maintaining relationships, building a community, bringing the world closer together and being up to date, all at one single shared online space.³⁶

³⁶ For more information on Facebook principles, see: <https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info>.

8 Temporality in online soft news stories

The previous chapter gave an illustration of the double tense shift pattern. Despite being an idealized pattern for HN stories (Chovanec 2014), it was demonstrated that it also operates in SN articles. The aim of this chapter is to address the question: *How does the double tense shift pattern operate in online soft news?*—which is the first research question formulated prior to the present analysis. In this chapter, I attempt to answer the question by presenting the results of the corpus analysis which was carried out as a part of this thesis (see **Appendix I**).

It is evident from the previous discussion that headlines function as the starting point for the double tense shift pattern. For this reason, the headlines of full-length articles (= H2s) from the corpus were first analyzed. The object of the analysis was the grammatical tense used in the text of H2s. Before such an analysis could have been carried out, however, one step was necessary—namely determining whether the H2s included a verbal element or not. In case a headline did not have a tensed or a non-finite verb, it was of no use for the present research, as it is concerned with temporal deixis and tense shifts. Therefore, if such a headline was encountered in the corpus, it was marked “nominal.” Contrary to that, all the other headlines containing a verb were marked “clausal.” See **Table 3** for the distribution of clausal and nominal H2s in the corpus of online SN articles.

	No.	%
Nominal	2	1%
Clausal - single	78	35%
Clausal - complex	145	64%
Total	225	100%

Table 3: Clausal vs nominal H2s

As **Table 3** shows, there were only two cases of nominal H2s detected in the corpus and example (51) provides one of them for illustration. For there was no verb incorporated in the headline, it was excluded from the analysis of verbal tense.

(51) *Samsung Galaxy Note 8 hands-on review: Slick and beautiful but with one very big problem (H2)*

(Independent Tech; 23. 8. 2017)

Let us now attend to the opposite of non-verbal headlines, that is, clausal headlines which constitute the focal point in this analysis and which, as **Table 3** demonstrates, formed 99 % of all H2s in the corpus. A clarification of which kinds of H2s were included in this set is pertinent. Firstly, as clausal were considered such headlines which had a finite (i.e. tensed) verb—such headlines constitute the ideal cases for tense analysis. Secondly, non-finite headlines were also included. One of the cases were evident ellipses of auxiliaries since these are cases where a finite verb can unequivocally be inserted (Chovanec 2014, 112). Other cases of non-finite headlines were H2s in the infinitive or imperative forms. The examples in **Table 4** clarify the classification.³⁷ To sum up, the clausal category was assembled from verbal headlines, regardless of whether the verb was tensed or not (i.e. both finite and non-finite).

Structure	Verbal element	Example
Single	Finite verb	<i>Angelina Jolie comes under fire for new film's 'cruel' Cambodian orphan casting game</i>
	Ellipsis	<i>Jeremy Clarkson [is] admitted to hospital with pneumonia during family holiday in Majorca</i>
Complex	Infinitive + imperative	<i>How to get over a broken heart: take two aspirin and stop talking</i>
	Finite + non-finite	<i>British tourists lose £500m a year paying unnecessary card charges abroad</i>
	Finite + nominal	<i>UK draws record overseas tourists after pound's Brexit plunge</i>

Table 4: Exemplified classification of clausal H2s

Table 3 and **Table 4** moreover indicate that the clausal category was divided into two subcategories. These are named “single” and “complex” and stand for, as their names suggest, the syntactic structure of the headlines—they were thus either single clauses or complex sentences. It follows that H2s which contained a verbal clause even in a syntactically subordinate position were classified as clausal as well. The complete distribution of syntactic structures in H2s is summarized below in **Table 5**.

³⁷ All example H2s were borrowed from articles forming the corpus. The dates of publication are the following and in the same order as in the table: *The Independent* 29. 7., 6. 8. 2017, *The Telegraph* 26. 8. 2017, *The Independent* 25. 7. 2017, *The Guardian* 22. 9. 2017.

	<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
2x Clause	15	12	21	48	33%
3x Clause	0	2	1	3	2%
4x Clause	0	1	0	1	1%
Nominal/ellipted/other + clause	27	21	16	64	44%
2 x Nominal/ellipted/other + clause	0	4	2	6	4%
Nominal/ellipted/other + 2x clause	6	6	2	14	10%
2x Nominal/ellipted/other	2	4	3	9	6%
Total	50	50	45	145	100%

Table 5: Syntactic structure in clausal-complex H2s

Having divided the headlines according to their verbal/non-verbal nature and their syntactic structure, the next step in the analysis was the identification of the present tense. To be able to observe whether the double tense shift pattern operates in any systematic way in online SN articles, all H2 containing a verb in the simple present needed to be sorted out. This is because the non-deictic simple present in headlines makes the first shift toward the semi-deictic present perfect in the lead available, followed by the second shift to the deictic simple past in the body copy. As **Table 6** shows, 200 H2s (out of 225) containing a present tense verb were detected in the corpus. The number includes such headlines which contained a simple present tense verb in a single clause structure, a present tense verb in a complex structure, and finally such verb phrases with ellipted operators which were also clear present tense cases.

Structure	<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.
Simple present	14	21	19	54
Complex	34	32	37	103
Ellipsis	16	14	13	43
Total	64	67	69	200

Table 6: Present tense in H2s

According to **Table 6**, the number of H2s which included the present tense was 200, which amounts to 89 % of all H2s in the corpus. Thereby, 89 % of the corpus articles could theoretically exercise the double tense shift pattern. There are, however, other complications which is the content of the following subchapter.

8.1 Double tense shift pattern in online soft news

To find out to what extent the theoretical assumption stated above—that 89 % of the online SN articles could follow the double tense shift pattern—is true, another step in the analysis would be to determine the tense in the corresponding L2s. Before doing that, however, one sub-step was essential. It was argued in **Chapter 6.2** that not all cases of the present tense in headlines are necessarily non-deictic, as not all news articles are bound to report on events that have happened in the past. It was thus necessary to separate such news stories from the desired cases of the conventional non-deictic simple present with reference to a past-time event. It must be also stressed at this point that in case a H2 was of a complex-clause structure, only the verbal element that was taking part in the transformation (i.e. which was cyclically repeated) in the individual structural segments of the news story was subjected to analysis.³⁸ The results of this sub-step are presented in **Table 7**.³⁹

	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Independent</i>	<i>The Telegraph</i>	Total
No. of present tense H2s	64	67	69	200
No. minus irrelevant cases	38	46	46	130
%	59%	69%	67%	65%

Table 7: Proportion of the non-deictic present tense in H2s

Table 7 demonstrates that out of the full number of H2s containing a present tense verb (200), only 130 cases contained a present tense verb with reference to a past-time event, i.e. they were non-deictic. In other words, 65 % of H2s having a present tense verb were subjected to further analysis as potential initiators of the double tense shift pattern.⁴⁰

After the desired H2s were assembled, their corresponding leads (L2s) were analyzed for the present perfect tense occurrence as the next step, which would confirm the first shift in the double tense shift pattern (i.e. *simple present* → *present perfect*). It emerged that in 55 % of cases, the tense in L2s was the present perfect, in 22 % the past

³⁸ If more clarification needed, see again examples (49) and (50).

³⁹ The second line in **Table 7** “No. minus irrelevant cases” excludes from all the present tense H2s (the first line) such cases where the present tense was not used to refer to the past, and in cases where the present tense verb was part of a complex-sentence and this verb was not subjected to the tense transformation, i.e. there would be another verb present in the H2 undergoing the tense transformation process.

⁴⁰ For full analysis of the present tense proportion in H2s, see **Appendix I**.

tense and in the remaining 24 % it was the present tense, see **Table 8** and the corresponding graph for illustration.

Tense	No.	%
Present perfect	71	55
Past	28	22
Present	31	24
Total	130	100

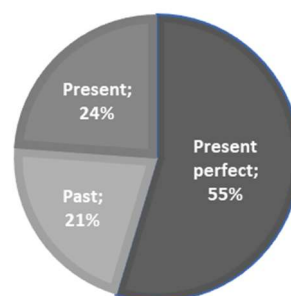


Table 8: Tense proportion in L2s

To find out to what extent the second shift (i.e. *present perfect* → *simple past*) was present, the tense of the corresponding verbs in the respective body copies (BC) was further analyzed. The shift from the present perfect tense in L2s to the various tenses in the BCs is summarized in **Table 9**. It is apparent from the first line of the table that the proportion of the past tense in the BCs amounted to 3/4 of all cases, i.e. 75 %. Nearly the rest of the verbs in the BCs were in the present tense (24 %) and only one case had a present perfect verb which, however, later shifted to the past tense. The following subchapter provides summary to the findings.

Tense	No.	%
Present perfect + past	53	75
Present perfect + present	17	24
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past	1	1
Total	71	100

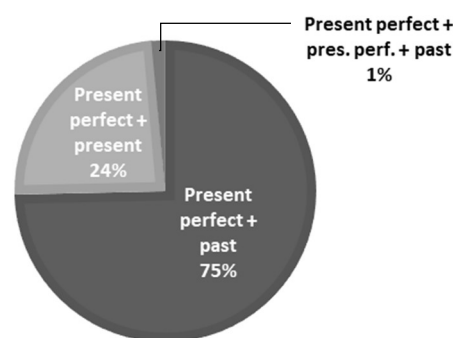


Table 9: The second shift in online soft news (L2 → BC)

8.1.1 Summary of the double tense shift pattern in online soft news

A summary of the detected data is now pertinent. The analysis of the temporal relations in the individual segments of online SN articles from the corpus has been carried out. The analysis was focused on the grammatical tense of such verbal elements which were cyclically repeated in the three textual segments: the H2, L2, and BC. The objective of this analysis was to ascertain to what extent the double tense shift pattern, which is the ideal pattern in hard news stories (Chovanec 2014), operates in soft news published

online. The pattern was illustrated above by **Figure 14**. Related to that is **Table 10** which demonstrates the actual findings.

News text segment	Conventional tense	No.
H2	present tense	130
↓	↓	↓
L2	present perfect tense	71
↓	↓	↓
BC	past tense	53

Table 10: The double tense shift pattern in online soft news

The data provided in the previous subchapter and the summary provided by **Table 10** answer the first research question of the present thesis. The results of the double tense shift analysis show that out of the 225 corpus articles, 130 had a headline meeting all the tense shift requirements. Out of these H2s, 71 of their corresponding leads showed the present perfect tense; and further, out of these L2s, 53 of their corresponding body copies had the verb in the past tense. In summary, 53 of the corpus articles met all the tense requirements and thus can be classified as instances of the double tense shift pattern. Taking into consideration the whole corpus of online SN stories, the occurrence amounts to 24 %, that is, nearly 1/4 of all articles.

The fact that the pattern which can be canonically found in HN stories (Chovanec 2014) operates in SN stories as well can be accounted for by several arguments. First of all, despite the distinction between soft and hard news which I have attempted to maintain here, both genres belong to the same group of news discourse. Indeed, in spite of their different qualities (enumerated in **Chapter 2**), they undeniably share some of the journalistic approaches, as they both belong to the reporting genre.

Second of all, it has been argued that the pragmatic motivation for rendering headlines in the non-deictic present tense lies in the newspaper's intention to construct an illusion of a shared temporal context with their audience. By doing so, the news value of relevance is enhanced, and so is newsworthiness of the article in question (Chovanec 2014, 220). It was also claimed that SN tends to be more timeless as it often reports on a non-immediate event (Busà 2014, 37). The analysis has proved that approximately 58 % of the SN articles from the corpus (130 out of 225) reported on an immediate event, leaving it 42 % of cases concurring with Busà's assertion. However, there would be no

reason for the 130 cases not to attempt to construct the same shared temporal context, as it is often the case with HN stories—and so they do.

Furthermore, a functional perspective must be added to the interpretation. With respect to the Halliday's metafunctions (1985), the desire of creating a shared temporal space with the readers is in an instance of how the interpersonal metafunction can operate. The ideational metafunction is, of course, hidden in the message of the news stories, which was not subjected to analysis in this work. More importantly, however, the cyclic presentation of the same information in the individual structural segments functions cohesively, and thus enhances the textual metafunction of the news story. The systematic variation of tense, which functions on the basis of cohesive ties, can be thus seen as a tool for the organization of the news discourse (Chovanec 2014, 219).

In conclusion, the hypothesis regarding the first research question has been validated. Having analyzed the double tense shift pattern in online soft news stories with the subsequent attempt to account for its occurrence, let us proceed to the "first level" of online news stories which is inseparably connected to this "second level," serving the function of a preview to the articles.

9 Facebook preview as the first level of online news discourse

Facebook preview, or what has been designated as FBP throughout the thesis, constitutes an essential part in the tense analysis. The FBP has been herein viewed as a “gate” to the articles published on the official web pages and as such has been treated as the “first level” of online news discourse. The FBP is one of the possible mediators allowing readers to get to the “second level” online—i.e. to read the full-length articles. Unlike a preview on the newspaper’s homepage which is transient and thus no longer traceable after its replacement by more up-to-date news, the FBP is permanent and later traceable in the “Posts” section via a search engine inherent to all Facebook pages.

Having acknowledged its function and importance, let us now address the issue of its very own characteristics. With regard to the second research question, this chapter is concerned with determining the structural specifics and formation methods of a soft news FBP. The chapter also discusses the differences which the structural segments of a FBP show in comparison to the segments in an online article and, last but not least, attempts to account for the findings taking pragmatic and functional points of view.

9.1 Facebook preview characteristics

While carrying out the analysis of temporal encoding in online news, a number of features characteristic of FBPs have arisen. They were sorted out into two subchapters which will discuss the structure of a FBP and its nature, respectively.

9.1.1 Structure and formation methods

A typical FBP is composed of several structural segments. Since these were described in **Chapter 4.3**, let me only stress one feature which is peculiar to FBPs. Unlike a typical news story published on a newspaper’s website, the position of the H1 and the L1/S1 is reversed with respect to the page layout. More specifically, the L1/S1 is usually the uppermost textual segment as it most frequently appears above an accompanying feature (typically a photograph). By contrast, the H1 is habitually put below the accompanying feature, albeit it tends to be written in a larger font. The usual top-down reading sequence is hereby disrupted. This is related to the textual metafunction which, in case of the FBP, challenges readers to accommodate their experience with the conventional news story structure (inverted pyramid) to the layout of Facebook posts.

However, for a common Facebook user, I argue that this challenge soon ceases and the user soon recognizes the structure peculiar to Facebook posts and expects the same layout in all future posts s/he encounters.

Another issue concerns the production of H1s. An analysis regarding the formation processes of the H1s from the corpus has been carried out. The H1s were categorized into three groups according to the formation method applied. The first group includes H1s which were either brand new, meaning that they would completely differ from H2s; or they were composed in a new way, meaning that despite being based on the H2, their syntax and the overall composition would be substantially different from that of the corresponding H2. An example of such a H1 is supplied below:

(52) *Don't even think about travelling by train this Bank Holiday weekend* (H1)

Bank holiday travel update: UK set for train chaos as key rail stations close for works (H2)

(Independent Travel; 24. 8. 2017)

The headlines in (52) exemplify the newspaper's creativity, as the H1 is formulated in a distinct way when compared to the H2. While the H2 is composed of a nominal segment and a complex sentence (formed by an operator ellipsis and the simple present tense), the H1 is a simple clause including an imperative form of the verb, directly addressing the audience. Thus, the headlines differ on several levels and the H1 was put into the first category.

The second group is comprised of H1s which were basically modified H2s. Such H1s would either add more information than provided by the H2 (53), extract some information from the H2 (54), change the point of view (55), or supply a synonym for some lexical unit from the H2 (56). Consider the following examples illustrating these alternatives respectively:

(53) *Airbnb select to offer loans and advice to hosts under new scheme* (H1)

Airbnb to offer loans and advice to hosts under new scheme (H2)

(Guardian Travel; 14. 10. 2017)

(54) *Chris Pratt and Anna Faris have announced they are separating* (H1)

Chris Pratt and Anna Faris have announced they are separating after 8 years of marriage (H2)

(Telegraph Entertainment; 7. 8. 2017)

(55) *Mark Zuckerberg attacked Elon Musk's apocalyptic AI warnings. The Tesla boss had a scathing response* (H1)

Elon Musk says Mark Zuckerberg's understanding of a threat is 'limited' (H2)

(*Independent Tech*; 26. 7. 2017)

(56) *Holby City actor Joe McFadden latest contestant announced for Strictly Come Dancing 2017* (H1)

Holby City actor Joe McFadden sixth contestant announced for Strictly Come Dancing 2017 (H2)

(*Telegraph Entertainment*; 12. 8. 2017)

The third group consists of H1s whose text was copied from the H2, i.e. no modifications were done to the H2 (no illustrative example for this case is needed). For exact figures and the ratio of the methods the H1s from the corpus were formed, see **Table 11.**⁴¹

H1		G.	I.	T.	No.	%
H1 ≠ H2	New	3	34	4	41	18
	Modified	4	31	17	52	23
H1 = H2	Copied	68	10	54	132	59
Total		75	75	75	225	100

Table 11: The H1 formation methods on FBPs

The figures show that the pervasive H1 formation method was duplication, since out of the 225 H1s, 132 were copied from H2s, which amounts to more than a half (59 % exactly). Modification proved to be the second most frequent method with the 23 % ratio. Formation of new headlines turned out to be the least common method, being used in only 18 % of cases. The low occurrence of novel H1s can be accounted for by the fact that it undoubtedly takes extra time to reformulate a headline and as newspapers strive for immediacy, it is faster to simply “share” an article on their Facebook pages. Adopting a different point of view on this matter, however, the numbers are rather positive as far as innovation in H1s is concerned. By adding up the “new” and “modified” H1s, we get 41 % of H1s which are not mere copies of their corresponding H2s but which, at least to some extent, were changed. These changes are most likely done for the benefit of

⁴¹ G. = *The Guardian*, I. = *The Independent*, T. = *The Telegraph*.

the audience, so that they would not have to go through the same texts twice before getting to the body copy.

Turning to the second most important textual segment in FBPs, the lead, some interesting findings concerning the formulation methods have arisen during the analysis. In those FBPs where the H1 was *not* an exact copy of the H2 (the 41 % of cases), the L1 was not a copy of the L2 in all the cases. In other words, in case a H1 was altered, the corresponding L1 was always altered as well. Moreover, in those FBPs where the H1 *was* copied from the H2 (the 59 % of cases), the L1 *was* copied only in 5 % of cases, which makes 95 % of altered L1s.

It could be thus concluded that repetition seems an undesirable feature in online soft news reports since even in these cases where a headline was copied from the full-length article, the preferred practice was not to have another repetition in the lead on the FBP. This is one of the manifestations of the ideational metafunction, as it concerns forming of the news' content. Be it either way, changed or copied, the two levels are linked by several means. Logically, they are linked by their hypertextual nature and by the semantic load (ideational metafunction). It has been argued that they are linked also on the textual level (textual metafunction). The efforts on the part of the newspapers to avoid repetition and present news in a distinct way on each of the two levels of online discourse is a manifestation of the interpersonal metafunction, as it is done for the benefit of the intended news recipients.⁴²

9.1.2 Nature

It has been argued that in 41 % of FBPs from the corpus H1s differ from their corresponding H2s. What is more, in the majority of these FBPs, the L1s were altered or changed completely—i.e. in 100 % of cases when $H1 \neq H2$, and in 95 % of cases when $H1 = H2$. Examples (52) – (56) illustrated the character of the possible changes made in the process of a H1 creation. This subchapter is devoted to the nature of FBPs and is thus concerned with the cases where the structural components of FBPs were not mere copies of those from the full-length website articles.

Firstly, the news texts on FBPs proved to be rather personal in nature, or at least in comparison to online articles. Compare, for instance, the H1 and L1 with the H2 and L2 in (57):

⁴² If interested, see Appendix II where the exact figures are provided in tables, complemented by charts illustrating some of the formation methods of the other textual segments.

(57) *There's a huge Facebook security flaw that lets anyone into your account. But one simple tweak fixes it (H1)*

Protecting yourself is easy (L1)

Facebook security hole lets anyone easily break into people's accounts without a password (H2)

A “gaping hole” in Facebook’s account recovery feature lets anyone easily break into an account, says a security researcher. (L2)

(Independent Tech; 20. 7. 2017)

The above example clearly demonstrates the personal nature of FBPs. The segments in the FBP above directly address the audience by incorporating the personal pronouns *your* and *yourself*. Notice, how the indefinite noun phrase *an account* and the noun phrase *people’s accounts* with collective vague reference, was changed into the definite *your account* with clear reference to all the readers. By addressing the audience, the newspaper clearly enhances the interpersonal metafunction, as it attempts to involve its readers in the discourse. Some FBPs gain a more personal appeal by the inclusion of an emoji, as was exercised in the L1 of the FBP in **Figure 15**. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, emojis are:⁴³

[...] any of various small images, symbols, or icons used in text fields in electronic communication (as in text messages, e-mail, and social media) to express the emotional attitude of the writer, convey information succinctly, communicate a message playfully without using words, etc.



Figure 15: Emoji on FBP

⁴³ “Emoji.” Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emoji>.

The emotional emphasis gained by the inclusion of an emoji in a H1 or a L1/S1 thus contributes to the establishment of the personal nature of FBPs, being a clear manifestation of the interpersonal metafunction.

Apart from their personal nature, the news on the FBP also tends to be interactive. The H1s and L1/S1s often make use of interrogative clauses by which (together with the inclusion of second person pronouns) they interact with their audience—another exhibition of the interpersonal metafunction. They can ask for the readers’ opinions as in (58).

(58) *Would a Heathrow congestion charge be a good idea – or just another sly tax?*
(H1)

And would you be prepared to pay it? (L1)

(Telegraph Travel; 12. 7. 2017)

While the H1 was copied from the corresponding H2, this FBP has its very own lead. The L1 is asking the readers for their opinions and, unlike in print news, the news online allow readers to actually provide their opinions in a comment section. On Facebook, the users can easily comment on any post in the comment section below it. The L1 in (58) constitutes a continuation of questions begun by the H1. Alternatively, in some cases, a H1 reports on some event and the journalist/editor might make use of the L1 to ask their readers for their opinions/feelings about the reported event. Such a case is exemplified below in (59). Notice that both a question mark and an exclamation mark were used, adding to the magnitude of the event.

(59) *Passengers terrified of being ‘shot down’ after holiday flight ‘tracked’ by fighter jet* (H1)

Can you imagine this happening on your flight!? (L1)

(Telegraph Travel; 21. 8. 2017)

The FBP’s interactivity can moreover manifest itself through the usage of imperative mood. This was discussed in **Chapter 6.2.5** where it was argued that imperative clauses in newspaper headlines aim to interact with the reader, by addressing them and trying to influence their future acts—again contributing to the interpersonal dimension of discourse. An instantiation of this can be observed in the previously discussed L1 in **Figure 15**. The L1 incites their readers to “tag” their (Facebook) “friends” in the comment section, so that these “friends” (i.e. other Facebook users) would be invited to read the news story as well.

Another characteristic feature of FBPs which proved to be frequently manifested in my corpus of soft news articles, is subjectivity. This claim is based on the high occurrence of evaluative expressions, especially in leads. Consider the L1s in the following examples showing authorial evaluation:

(60) *Chris Pratt and Anna Faris have announced they are separating* (H1)

This is so sad! (L1)

(Telegraph Entertainment; 7. 8. 2017)

(61) *Meet the youngest ever female commander of a Boeing 777* (H1)

Awesome (L1)

(Independent Travel; 26. 7. 2017)

(62) *Victoria's Jenna Coleman prompts engagement rumours with glittering ring* (H1)

Ooh la la! (L1)

(Telegraph Entertainment; 25. 8. 2017)

(63) *Cruise line says Brits must pay for Chinese visa they could get for free* (H1)

Wait, what? (L1)

(Independent Travel; 3. 8. 2017)

While the L1 in (60) negatively evaluates the content of the unfortunate news, the L1 in (61) positively evaluates the news on a woman's success, the L1 in (62) comments on the news about a celebrity's engagement via an interjection expressing surprise or excitement, and, finally, the L1 in (63) expresses discontent with the reported news in a rather conversational manner. The subjective nature of FBPs is also apparent in cases like (64) where, although the H1 was copied from the corresponding H2, the L1 is unique to the FBP and is written in the authorial voice of the newspaper, as it follows from the usage of "exclusive *we*" (Quirk et al. 1985, 341).⁴⁴

(64) *High winds cause planes to circle for three-and-a-half hours above Madeira Airport* (H1)

⁴⁴ According to Quirk et al. (1985, 341), "the terms INCLUSIVE *we* and EXCLUSIVE *we* are sometimes used for 1st person plural pronouns which respectively include and exclude reference to the addressee. They also talk about a subtype of "exclusive *we*" called "collective *we*" and which "indicates a plurality of speakers/writers" (341). If we consider all the newspaper staff who have dealt with the news article as people who are referred to by the *we* in (64), we could probably designate it as a "collective *we*." Nonetheless, what is crucial to the discussion of the FBP's subjective nature is the fact that the pronoun *we* from the L1 is a manifestation of the newspaper's subjective positioning.

We're feeling dizzy just thinking about it (L1)

(Telegraph Travel; 3. 8. 2017)

In my opinion, the subjective nature of FBPs is also a manifestation of the interpersonal metafunction since this metafunction, apart from other things, is concerned with the relationships between the participants of the communicative act on several levels—social power, social distance, emotional charge, and emotional stance (Martin 2007). By adopting a subjective stance, the newspaper places itself to a position of power and might thus gain a greater influence over its readers.

9.1.3 Summary of the FBP characteristics

The main characteristics of FBPs, which have arisen during the analysis of tenses and temporal deixis, have been described. Focus was put on its structure, methods of text formation and its overall nature.

As far as the structure is concerned, it has been pointed out that the H1 and L1 are interchanged with respect to the usual top-down (i.e. headline (→ subhead) → lead → body copy) organization of news stories, enhancing the textual metafunction of the genre.

The findings of an analysis concerning the methods of H1 formation on FBPs have been discussed and it was advocated that they demonstrate the ideational metafunction, and, in case they were not copied, also the interpersonal metafunction. The analysis has revealed that in 41 % of the cases, the H1s from the corpus were not copied from the full-length articles but were either modified, or brand new H1s were created. Moreover, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the L1s were also either new or altered. I propose that this is due to the following reason—since the FBP is basically a post on a social media site, it is only natural that it is influenced by social media characteristics. This means that even though online news as such are generally considered more audience-oriented (cf. Bell 1991; Herbert 2000; Busà 2014), in many cases the newspaper decided to accommodate the text of the news on the FBP to the social media space. Indeed, the FBP composition is inseparably connected to its very nature.

It has been put forward that the nature of FBPs is more personal, interactive, conversational and subjective in comparison with articles published on newspapers' web pages, which is in compliance with the general nature of social media (Page et al. 2014), and which enhances the interpersonal dimension of news discourse. All in all, the validity of the postulations made within the second hypothesis were confirmed. The purpose of the next chapter is to investigate the realizations of tense and temporal deixis in FBPs.

10 Tense shifts in Facebook previews

While the preceding chapter was concerned with the characteristics of FBPs, the paragraphs to follow focus on temporality in FBPs. Since the FBP is considered in this work as the first level of online news discourse, it follows that it is inevitably connected to the second level, which the preview is provided to. Temporality in the second level was discussed in **Chapter 8** where the results of the double tense shift pattern analysis were presented. It was found that in 24 % of the corpus articles (i.e. 53 articles), the pattern was applied. These results are of major importance for the assessment of the third research question which was as follows:

How is temporality encoded in the Facebook previews of those online soft news articles which apply the double tense shift pattern?

In order to provide answers to the last research question, the 53 online articles applying the double tense shift pattern were singled out and their FBPs were subjected to further tense analysis. The objective was to ascertain how the choice of tense in FBPs is connected to the double tense shift pattern found online.

The results of the tense analysis show various patterns of tense usage in the individual segments of the FBP (H1, L1 and possibly S1). These variations are discussed in the following subchapters.

10.1 Partial replication

The term *triple tense pattern* borrowed from Chovanec (2014), who studied the pattern in his analysis of online HN stories, is another way to refer to the *double tense shift pattern*, as there are two shifts among three tenses. The online news is treated here the same way as in Chovanec's analysis, as consisting of two levels. Chovanec, however, treats the previews on the official newspaper's homepages as the first level which differ from the FBPs in several substantial respects.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the term was borrowed since a similar pattern was detected within the analyzed dataset.

⁴⁵ For instance, the homepage preview is transient, in comparison to the permanent FBP. The major difference lies, however, in its location. While the homepage preview is placed within the newspaper's website, the FBP is placed within a social media platform which has tremendous implications on its very own nature.

The double tense shift pattern was detected in 53 of our corpus articles. When analyzing the first level together with the second level, Chovanec (2014) discovered that the triple tense pattern still occurred in some cases. The first level, then, “mirrors the double tense shift pattern, though it obviously does so in an incomplete manner” (231). What the author means is that the third tense, the simple past, is missing from the first level for obvious reasons—that is, the body copy is only present in the full-length article. Despite that, the first shift, i.e. *simple present* → *present perfect*, was found to still operate in some cases of the first level representation. This incomplete tense shift pattern in the FBP, together with the complete double tense shift pattern in the second level of online news discourse, was also detected among the 53 above-mentioned cases. **Table 12** below provides an illustration of the tense relationships between the individual textual segments of both levels.

	FBP	Article web page
Headline	Norwegians raise £20,000 to re-erect giant ‘troll’s penis’ (H1)	Rising to the occasion: Norwegians pledge £20,000 to re-erect giant ‘troll’s penis’ (H2)
Lead	Locals have risen to the challenge (L1)	The good people of Norway have raised more than £20,000 to re-erect a phallic geological structure thought to have been destroyed by vandals. (L2)
Body copy	—	As police launched an investigation into the incident, locals launched a crowdfunding campaign to help fund repair works to the Trollpikken. (BC)

Table 12: Partial replication of the double tense shift pattern in the FBP

As **Table 12** demonstrates, the text in the article web page fully realizes the double tense shift pattern:

pledge (non-deictic simple present) → *have raised* (semi-deictic present perfect)
→ *launched* (deictic past simple).

More importantly, the corresponding FBP realizes this pattern too, albeit partially:

raise (non-deictic simple present) → *have risen* (semi-deictic present perfect).

It could be thus claimed that the tense shift in the FBP mirrors, or replicates, the first tense shift applied in the full-length article.

It is worth mentioning that **Table 12** illustrates an ideal case of partial replication. As a matter of fact, the analysis has further shown that the pattern can be complicated by an inclusion of an additional textual level—the subhead. In some cases, the S1 was also in the present perfect tense, just as the L1. In other cases, there was no S1 but there was a S2 containing the present perfect tense. In addition to that, other cases exist since there are numerous ways of forming both the FBP and the full-length article (as discussed in **Chapters 4** and **9.1.1**). The inclusion of a subhead does not, however, disrupt the double tense shift pattern if the triple tense pattern is still preserved. In other words, in case one of the three tenses appears twice in one level, the pattern is not affected by that, as long as the shifts eventually take place (Chovanec 2014, 234).

Overall, the partial replication of the triple tense pattern was detected in 13 % of cases in the dataset. To this percentage were also included such FBPs whose present tense verbs in their H1s were cases of ellipsis (either of the copula *be*, or the passive voice operator *be*, both of which were clear cases of the non-deictic present tense usage).

The replication of the *present tense* → *present perfect tense* shift can be accounted for both pragmatically and by the principles of news discourse. It has been previously maintained that the tense shifts serve an interpersonal function, as Chovanec (2014, 275) puts it: “constructing a shared deictic discourse space with the intended recipients of the news texts.” The present tense in headlines highlights the event’s recency and relevance which, in turn, render the reported event newsworthy (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 88). By the same token, the function of the present perfect tense is to spotlight the change between the recent past and the present state of affairs (Bax 2011, 92). For these reasons, the inclusion of both tenses can be only viewed as a well-motivated strategic choice of the responsible journalist/editor.

10.1.1 Partial replication—skipping the present perfect

In almost 6 % of cases, a peculiar pattern was detected. The H1 contained a present tense verb, while the L1 (or S1, if a L1 was missing or identical with the H1) shifted the verb into the past tense, instead of the present perfect. The present perfect was thus entirely left out. An illustrative case from the corpus is supplied below in **Table 13**.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Article source: *Guardian Culture*; 21. 8. 2017.

	FBP	Article web page
Headline	Science fiction author Brian Aldiss dies aged 92 (H1)	(H2) = H1
Subhead	The prolific writer behind more than 80 books and editor of 40 anthologies died at his Oxford home <u>after celebrating his birthday</u> (S1)	(S2) = S1
Lead	(L1) = H1	Brian Aldiss, the “grand old man” of science fiction whose writing has shaped the genre since he was first published in the 1950s, has died at the age of 92. (L2)
Body copy	—	Aldiss’s agent, Curtis Brown, and his son, Tim Aldiss, have announced that the author, artist, poet and memoirist died at home in Oxford <u>in the early hours of 19 August</u> . (BC)

Table 13: Partial replication—skipping the present perfect in the FBP

Without the present perfect tense, neither of the tense shifts of the double tense shift pattern could apply in the FBP, since the semi-deictic present perfect assumes the middle position between the two shifts and serves as a mediator between the non-deictic simple present and deictic simple past. Therefore, the shift occurring in these 6 % of cases was: *simple present* → *simple past*. To demonstrate this on the illustrative example from **Table 13**, the shift was: *dies* (H1) → *died* (S1) (notice that the text forming the H1 appeared twice on the FBP, being copied in the L1—hence the verb form in the S1 in considered instead of the L1).

The choice of the past tense in news reporting is usually motivated by the inclusion of a time adverbial, anchoring the reported event in its actual time of happening (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 89). While the temporal anchorage rarely appears in headlines, it tends to be included in the remaining structural segments, most commonly in the body copy, but it is not uncommon to encounter it in the lead/subhead too (Quirk et al. 1985, 845). Returning to the example case, there is some temporal specification of the event in the S1, namely *after celebrating his birthday*. Despite the fact that readers might not be familiar with the time of the writer’s birthday, it can still be considered a temporal specification and the past tense would thereby be justified. The BC later further specifies the exact temporal context: *in the early hours of 19 August*.

All in all, the partial replication would thus concern two tenses from the triple tense pattern—the non-deictic present tense in the headline, following the principle of headlines, and the deictic past tense, temporally anchoring the reported event.

10.2 Full replication

In this subchapter, I would like to demonstrate that full replication of the double tense shift pattern is possible, however low the occurrence. With respect to the online articles which followed the double tense shift pattern, in less than 6 % of their corresponding FBPs a full replication of shifts was detected. In such news stories, the double tense shift pattern thus appeared twice, once on each level. For making this possible, the FBPs in question naturally had to include a subhead (S1), allowing each of the three textual segments to apply a different tense from the triple tense pattern. This is schematically illustrated by an example from the corpus in **Figure 16**.⁴⁷

Unlike **Table 12** in the previous chapter, **Figure 16** illustrates the real layout of the FBP, i.e. the H1 is not the topmost structural segment, it is the L1 instead. The relationships between the structural segments of the two levels are demonstrated by the dashed arrows. The full arrows stand for the two shifts essential for the double tense shift pattern. Notice, that the pattern was applied both in the first level (the FBP), and in the second level (article web page).

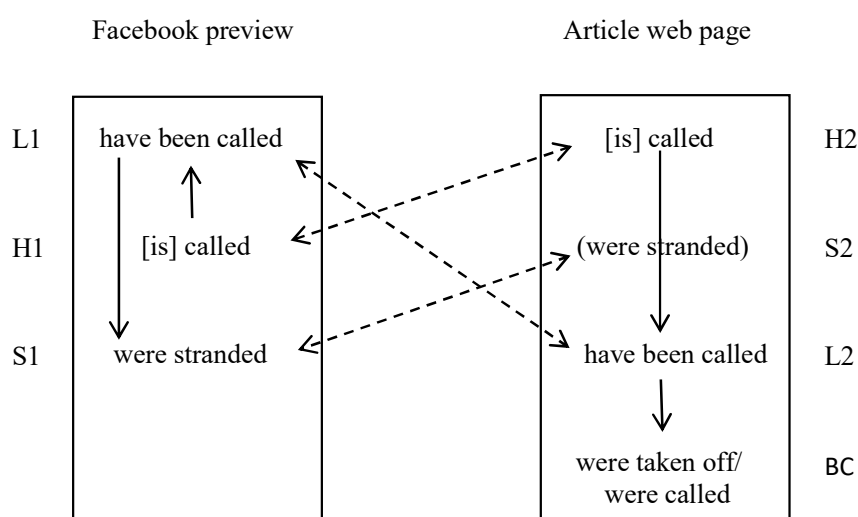


Figure 16: Full replication of the double tense shift pattern in the FBP

⁴⁷ Article source: *Guardian Travel*; 10. 8. 2017.

The full replication of the pattern appeared only in 6 % of FBPs belonging to the 53 articles which showed the pattern in the second level. The low occurrence is most probably due to the attempt to avoid repetitiveness on the part of the newspaper. Taking a pragmatic point of view, the inclusion of the first tense shift would be only beneficial, also if one considers the strategies of news discourse—as was argued in the previous subchapter. However, the shift to the deictic past tense, I argue, is rather counter-productive. While the objective of any newspaper is to create a feeling of immediacy and relevance in the news recipients, putting any of the structural segments (not only the S1 in the above example) into the past tense would immediately create a feeling of non-recency. This is even more undesirable for online news, or news on social media sites for that matter, as they strive to report on the most immediate events, not those happening the day before or earlier (Deuze 1999; Fenton 2012), which the past tense usage would suggest.

10.3 No replication

Let us now address the by far most pervasive method of encoding temporality in the FBPs of online articles which applied the double tense shift pattern. In the majority of cases, there was no replication of either of the two shifts of the double tense shift pattern detected. More specifically, 75 % of the FBPs showed other methods of rendering tense in their structural segments. They will be addressed in the subchapters to follow, in the order from the highest to the lowest in terms of incidence.

10.3.1 Present + present

The analysis brought an interesting finding. In 45 % of the FBPs, the present tense not only occurred in the headline (H1), but also in the lead (L1). There would thus be no possibility of tense shift. On the other hand, it could be postulated that such tense application must have its justification. After closer inspection of the relevant cases, three patterns were observed. The following example demonstrates the first one:

(65) *Foreign Office **tells** Britons it is now safe to travel to Tunisia* (H1)

*But the news **comes** with a warning* (L1)

(Independent Travel; 26. 7. 2017)

The FBP in the above example (65) shows the double usage of the present tense. The first incentive proposed here as motivation for leaving the L1 verb in the present tense instead of shifting it is that the L1 is not used as a summarizing device but, instead, is applied to hint at another newsworthy aspect of the news. The L1 even begins with a coordinating conjunction *but*, connecting the L1 with its H1. The present tense in the L1 is thus non-deictic, just as the present tense in the H1, referring to a past-time event.

The following FBP constitutes an example of the second pattern of double present tense usage:

(66) *Would a Heathrow congestion charge **be** a good idea – or just another sly tax?*
(H1)

*And **would** you **be** prepared to pay it?* (L1)

(Telegraph Travel; 12. 7. 2017)

The FBP in (66), in fact, manifests two of the proposed incentives. While being a continuation of the H1 (beginning with a coordinating conjunction *and*) and contributing with another aspect of the news, the L1 also serves another function—to ask the news recipients for their opinions on the reported matter. Using a deictic present tense, the temporal coding shifts into the RT as the FBP aims to trigger discussion about the effects the reported event might have at the RT.

The last pattern of the double present tense application concerns such cases as the following one:

(67) *Phaeleh **reveals** video for ‘Feel You Fade’ – premiere* (H1)

*The Bristol-based producer **is preparing to release** his new album* (L1)

(Independent Culture; 15. 8. 2017)

While the H1 features a verb in the conventional non-deictic simple present, the present tense verb in the L1 is rendered in the progressive aspect. The L1 both supports the news with a piece of additional newsworthy information and, at the same time, this information refers to the immediate future by the present progressive form of the verb. Following the rules of news discourse, articles reporting on events which are about to happen are considered newsworthy as they possess the news value of timeliness (Bednarek 2016).

In summary, three motivations for the high incidence of the *present* (H1) + *present* (L1) *tense* pattern of verb formulation on FBPs were proposed. From the functional perspective, the first motivation could be viewed as a mediator of both the ideational and textual metafunctions. While the L1 is treated as a space for revealing another

newsworthy piece of information, it also affects the information flow. The second motivation, it is postulated here, serves predominantly the interpersonal metafunction, for the L1 is used to establish contact with the news' recipients by shifting the temporal specification to the RT via a deictic present tense, by which the lead aims to spark a discussion on the future implications of the reported topic. The third incentive for the double usage of present tense is twofold—while the L1 discloses another newsworthy aspect of the news, it concurrently reports on an event happening in the near future by means of the present progressive aspect. Taking the perspective of pragmatics, the whole FBPs could be purposefully rendered in the present tense with the incentive to relate the event to the RT, and thus elevate the impression of recency and relevance.

10.3.2 Present + nominal

Another noteworthy finding regarding the tense in FBPs was observed, namely the pattern *simple present/ellipsis for present* (H1) + *nominal* (L1). This pattern was the second most frequent with its 19% incidence. The verbs in the H1s would be in the present simple tense (example (68)) or would be formed by an ellipsis of the present tense operator (example (69)), whereas the L1s would be nominal (non-verbal). See examples below:

(68) *Victoria's Jenna Coleman **prompts** engagement rumours with glittering ring* (H1)
Ooh la la! (L1)
(Telegraph Entertainment; 25. 8. 2017)

(69) *British tourists **[are] forced** to camp on beach as wildfires ravage France* (H1)
A total nightmare (L1)
(Independent Travel; 26. 7. 2017)

The H1s follow the rules of headlines with their non-deictic present tense verbs stressing topicality, and with the operator ellipsis which is a space-saving device. The L1s are extremely short and apt which is desirable in news discourse (Bednarek and Caple 2012; Busà 2014). Rather than having a summarizing function (textual metafunction) or adding another newsworthy aspect to the news (ideational metafunction), I propose that the leads serve another function in these cases. When discussing the nature of FBPs in **Chapter 9.1.2**, it was argued that the news presentation there tends to be fairly conversational and subjective which is in accordance with the soft news, online news, and social media character (Page et al. 2014; Busà 2014). Such leads, as those in (68) and (69), set the tone of the news and provide subjective evaluation of the newspaper. These

arguments lead to the conclusion that the chief function such nominal L1s serve is the interpersonal metafunction, since they are rather audience-oriented and attempt to influence the recipients' stance toward the reported news.

10.4 Summary of tense shifts in FBPs

Chapter 10 has dealt with the variability of tense within the verb phrases in FBPs. The tense analysis concerned these FBPs constituting the “first level” to the “second level” online articles which were found to apply the double tense shift pattern. Several different methods of rendering the tense in H1s and L2s (and sometimes S2s) were detected.

The first objective of the analysis was to ascertain to what extent the shifts of tense operate in the FBPs. A typical FBP consists of two parts—H1 and L1. Therefore, there was a possibility of one shift taking place between two tenses in the individual textual segments. It was found that the partial replication of the double tense shift pattern, namely *non-deictic simple present* → *semi-deictic present perfect* was applied in 13 % of cases. In another 6 % of the FBPs, a different partial replication was detected, this time, however, the non-deictic present perfect was skipped and replaced with the deictic simple past. It was also demonstrated that full replication of the double tense shift pattern is possible within a FBP, in case all three textual segments are present (i.e. including a S1). This was, however, a rather infrequent case with its 6% incidence. The methods of the double tense shift replication are expressed as a percentage in **Figure 17**.

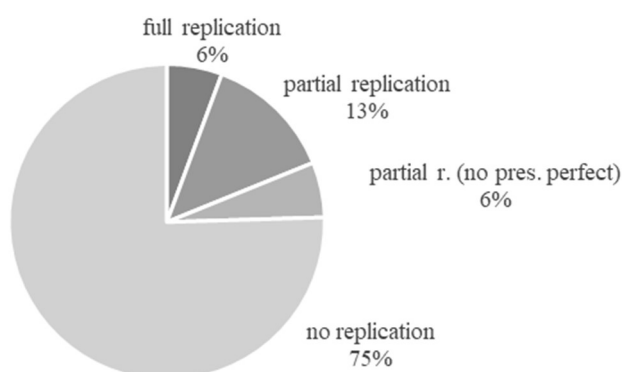


Figure 17: Double tense shift replication in FBPs

The second objective was to find out whether other regularities concerning temporality in FBPs were taking place. It was observed that in the rest of the cases, i.e. in 75 % of cases, the FBPs did not replicate any of the two tense shifts. What proved to be a somewhat customary practice, on the other hand, was a double utilization of the present tense (both in the H1 and the L1) which appeared in 45 % of cases. The next most frequent practice, detected in 19 % of cases, was having a present tense H1 complemented by a nominal (non-verbal) L2. The remaining 12 % of FBPs proved to be comprised of rather isolated instances of tense usage in H1s and L1s, rather than representing some other regularity. The graph in **Figure 18** constitutes a sector of the graph in **Figure 17**, namely the “no replication” sector, and illustrates the percentage of the just discussed methods of rendering temporality in FBPs from the dataset.

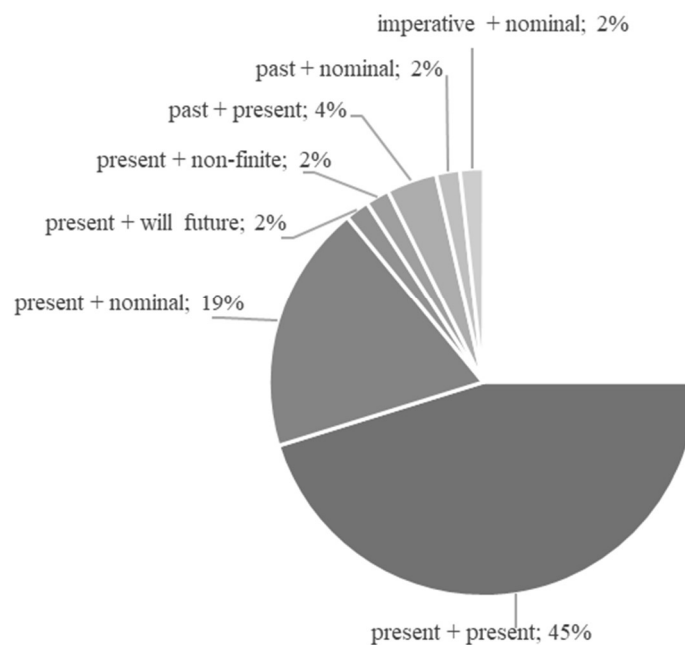


Figure 18: No replication in FBPs

Interpretations for the different methods of tense application in the textual segments of the FBPs were supplied in the individual subchapters. An overall practice, however, seems to be present. It was demonstrated that rather than following the gradual process of placing the news recipients into the actual temporal context of the news, FBPs strive for a different goal. Put differently, the double tense shift pattern employed in the full-length online articles is based on the gradual development of deixis within the varying verb phrase, proceeding from the *non-deictic simple present*, to *semi-deictic present perfect*, and ending at the *deictic simple past*. This deictic development, as has

been explained, is linked to the unveiling of the actual time of the reported event's happening. While the non-deictic present tense serves the purpose of constructing a seeming shared temporal context with the audience, the semi-deictic present perfect adds a current relevance value and, finally, the deictic past tense sets the event in its real time of happening, often accompanied by a time adverbial. Although a partial (and even full) replication is possible, it was applied only in a quarter of the analyzed cases. The prevailing practice was rendering the present tense in the H1 and either leaving the L1 in the present tense as well (45 %) or creating a non-verbal L1 (19 %). It has been argued that these patterns of tense usage are most probably wedded to the very nature of the FBP, as it is set within a social media platform whose goal is novelty and which allows for a certain degree of subjective evaluation (Page et al. 2014), often being employed as a part of L1s. The nature of SN is without doubt also responsible, at least to some extent. SN do not predominantly report on immediate events but on matters of "human interest" (Busà 2014, 37) (in my corpus these were the areas of *Culture and Entertainment*, *Science and Technology*, and *Travel*) which thus entails lower concern for disclosing the actual time of the news' happening. Moreover, the principle of the *inverted pyramid* to reveal the most relevant information as early as possible (Bell 1991) is also not fully followed, as it was demonstrated that the L1s were often used for other purposes than disclosing another newsworthy aspect of the news. Space is then opened for another purpose, namely, focusing on enacting relationships with the audience. In Halliday's (1985) terms, the FBPs are found to be predominantly interpersonally motivated.

To conclude, the third hypothesis has been validated since it was postulated that the first shift of the double tense shift pattern would occur also in the SN FBPs on account of the newspapers' motive to construct an illusion of a shared deictic discourse space also on the social media platform. However, the findings have shown that the incidence was rather low since other methods of rendering temporality were preferred.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See Appendix III for complete figures.

11 Conclusion

The present master's thesis aimed at investigating temporal deixis in online soft news stories. It was demonstrated that the variations of verbal tense in news are employed for other purposes, not merely for describing a newsworthy event. The work investigated how the choice of deictic/non-deictic tense is influenced by the pragmatic and functional motivations on the part of the newspapers. The conducted analyses revealed that certain tense selection in particular textual segments of a news article can serve a pragmatic function of creating an illusion of concurrent deictic discourse space with the readers. Moreover, this thesis demonstrated that also the tense shifts which were detected between the individual structural segments have pragmatic and functional causations and ramifications, mainly enhancing the interpersonal dimension of news texts. Having summarized the overall accomplishments of the thesis, let me briefly sum up the content and objectives of the individual chapters.

Despite the problematic distinction between the genres of hard and soft news which was discussed in **Chapter 2**, one of the purposes of this thesis was to stress the importance of soft news within the study of news discourse. While the authors of the cited literature predominantly base their studies on the genre of hard news, the analyses conducted within the present research solely investigated the workings of the genre of soft news. It must be emphasized that the majority of assertions concerning temporality in hard news was proven to operate, at least partially, in soft news as well.

The corpus which was designed specifically for the purposes of this thesis was comprised solely of online news stories. **Chapter 3** explained the significance of digital news in today's world, particularly the potential which the hypertextual nature of online news affords, and pointed out the notable influence of social media on news production. The online news discourse was herein treated as consisting of two levels of textual representation—the official newspaper's webpages and the official Facebook pages, strictly speaking the Facebook previews (FBPs). Although news on FBPs is *reposted* from online websites, it was viewed here as the "first level" of online discourse since it forms a "gate" to the "second level" full-length articles to which readers are redirected via a hyperlink. The double textual level, which formed the content of **Chapter 4**, was of crucial importance for the subsequent tense analyses.

Chapters 5 and 6 were concerned with tense and deixis whose understanding was crucial for the subsequent analyses of online soft news stories and their interpretations. The significance of temporality in headlines was stressed since they constitute a somewhat distinct segment of news articles, having its own principles and characteristics called *headlines*. Although the rules of *headlines* are based on hard news, they were supported by examples from the corpus throughout the thesis which, once again, emphasizes the importance of studying the soft news genre. What is more, headlines were argued to be special for another important reason. Not only do they serve as the openings to the rest of the news stories as far as semantics is concerned, they were also demonstrated to form the beginning of the tense shifts taking place between the structural segments, discussed within **Chapter 7**.

Chapters 1–7 largely provided theoretical background much needed to the analyses carried out in the remaining chapters. Based on the previous research in the field, there were three research questions and hypotheses formulated prior to the realization of the analyses.

The aim of the first research question was to investigate the operation of the double tense shift pattern in online soft news. It was hypothesized that the pattern would also be detected in the corpus of soft news stories, notwithstanding the fact that it is an idealized pattern observable in hard news. This hypothesis was proven to be valid in **Chapter 8**, which presented the results of the first analysis. Although the pattern was found to operate in only one quarter of the full-length online soft news articles, I believe that its occurrence is still an interesting finding and it contributes to the underrated study of the soft news genre. The proposed interpretation was based on the assumption of the pragmatic motivation to construct an illusion of shared temporal context with the intended news recipients which is a manifestation of the interpersonal metafunction. Moreover, it was proposed that the cohesive ties which are present between the verb phrases whose tenses vary in the individual textual segments contribute to the development of the textual metafunction.

The second main aim of the present thesis was to determine the characteristics of the FBP which was later instrumental in conducting the tense analysis and interpreting the results. In **Chapter 9**, the second research question was addressed and the FBPs from the corpus were analyzed with respect to their structural specifics, formation methods and general characteristics.

As far as the page layout is concerned, one characteristic feature peculiar to FBPs was observed. The sequence of the individual textual segments is $L1 \rightarrow H1 (\rightarrow S1)$, which stands against the top-down linear sequence (*headline* \rightarrow *subhead* \rightarrow *lead*) conventional for the news genre. The inverted arrangement of the H1 and L1 is compensated for by the more eye-catching H1, which tend to exhibit special visual features in accordance with headlines conventions. For those reasons, it was assumed here that the news recipients first pay heed to the more visually prominent H1. Hence the H1 was treated here as the departure point for possible tense shifts, just as the H2 is the departure point for the double tense shift pattern in full-length articles. It was proposed that the reversed sequence contributes to the textual metafunction of the FBP, as it inevitably influences the information flow of the news.

The FBPs were furthermore analyzed in terms of the applied formation method, with particular focus on the construction of H1s. This concerns the ideational metafunction as it involves (re)structuring of the news' content. There were three formation methods observed: creation of a new H1 ("new"), altering of the corresponding H2 ("modification"), and copying the corresponding H2 ("duplication"). It was discovered that the most prevalent H1 formation method was duplication. Since it is the simplest way to present news on another website, it was postulated that the method of duplication was applied for time-saving reasons. On the other hand, the remaining H1s were not mere copies of the H2s, they were either modified or brand new. It was proposed that the incentive for altering the H2s is associated with the interpersonal metafunction because the reformulation of H1s is most probably done for the benefit of the prospective news recipients.

It was further maintained that the interpersonal dimension is connected to the nature of the FBP itself, for it was discovered that it is very audience-oriented, personal, and interactive. A certain degree of the newspapers' subjective and evaluative comments was observed as well. These characteristics were ascribed to the influence of the general nature of soft news, the online environment, and, more specifically, social media. All things considered, the analysis of the FBP characteristics presented in **Chapter 9** confirmed the validity of the second hypothesis.

The last of the principal aims of the present thesis was to study the encoding of temporality in FBPs which were said to form the "first level" or a "gate" to the full-length "second-level" articles published on the newspapers' official webpages. The analysis in **Chapter 10** was focused on the variability of tense within the verb phrases

in the individual structural segments of such FBPs whose full-length articles applied the double tense shift pattern. Strictly speaking, the purpose was to find out whether some tense shift tended to be applied between the H1s and L1s (and, if present, the S1s), and in case there was no such tendency, the objective was to observe and describe any other regularities regarding the application of verbal tense among the individual segments in FBPs.

It was postulated in the hypothesis that a similar tense shift to the first one of the double tense shift pattern (*non-deictic simple present* → *semi-deictic present perfect*) would be applied in the FBP as well, having the same pragmatic motivation for constructing an impression of an illusionary shared temporal co-presence with the target readers. The results of the last analysis confirmed the hypothesis that the double tense shift pattern would partially be applied in the FBPs. The results showed that *partial replication* of the double tense shift pattern took place in almost one fifth of cases. More importantly, however, the analysis has brought other interesting findings. However infrequent the incidence was, some of the FBPs were found to apply the complete double tense shift pattern (designated as *full replication*). This was, of course, possible only in those FBPs in which the third textual segments, the subheads, were present. In the remainder of the cases, other patterns of tense usage were detected, the most prevalent being the *dual present tense* application and *present tense + nominal* structure. Overall, the results implied that the predominant practice of rendering tense in FBPs is a present tense headline (H1) and a present tense/nominal lead (L1). The low incidence of the past tense contrary to the preferred present tense was again ascribed to pragmatic purposes, as well as to the influence of the nature of both soft news and social media. It was argued that the methods of rendering tense on FBPs are generally largely interpersonally motivated.

The issue of temporality in online soft news is undoubtedly rather complex and offers great potential for further research. The present thesis has tackled the area of temporal deixis and analyzed the grammatical tense used in articles assembled from three largest newspaper institutions on the British market. Due to the space constraints of the master's thesis, the full potential of the results was not fulfilled. It would be definitely worth interpreting the encoding of temporality of the individual newspapers. Likewise, an inclusion of heteroglossia would undoubtedly present worthwhile findings. Last but not least, one more area for further research suggests itself, namely investigating

temporality in hard news Facebook previews which could be, subsequently, compared to the present findings.

Finally, let me attend to the limitations of the research. Since the analysis of tense and temporal deixis in the corpus articles was conducted manually, errors cannot be ruled out. This could involve miscount or erroneous tense/syntactic structure determination. It is also without question that the present research presents only a humble contribution to the field, for the analyzed corpus was not as large-scale as it would be necessary to draw wider conclusions. Nevertheless, I believe that this work offers some novel insights into the nature of online soft news and will serve as inspiration for further research in the field.

RESUMÉ

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo zkoumat použití časové deixe v „soft news“ článcích publikovaných na webových a facebookových stránkách vybraných zpravodajských periodik. Bylo prokázáno, že výběr určitého slovesného času v novinových článcích je motivován i jinými účely, nikoliv pouze za účelem informovat. Práce zkoumala, jak je volba slovesného času jakožto deiktického prostředku ovlivněna pragmatickými a funkčními podněty ze strany zpravodajských periodik. Vlastní analýzy prokázaly, že výběr určitého slovesného času, a jejich případné deixe, v jednotlivých částech článku může sloužit k pragmatické funkci, a sice k vytvoření zdánlivě sdíleného časového rámce diskurzu se čtenáři. Dále bylo demonstrováno, že posuny/změny slovesného času, které mohou probíhat mezi jednotlivými textovými částmi článků, mají určité pragmatické a funkční příčiny a důsledky, zejména zesílení interpersonální dimenze.

Tato práce si kladla za cíl zodpovědět následující výzkumné otázky:

1. *Jakým způsobem se projevuje „model dvojitého posunu slovesného času“ („double tense shift pattern“) v „soft news“ článcích na oficiálních webových stránkách?*
2. *Jaké jsou charakteristické rysy „náhledu článku na Facebooku“ („Facebook preview“/ „FBP“), co se týče jeho struktury, způsobů produkce a obecné povahy?*
3. *Jak je zakódována časová lokalizace do takových „FBPs“, jejichž protějšky publikované na oficiálních webových stránkách využívají „modelu dvojitého posunu slovesného času“?*

Kapitoly 1–7 posloužily k základní deskripci a orientaci v dané problematice. První kapitola se věnovala popisu speciálně sestaveného korpusu pro účely tohoto výzkumu, vysvětlila kritéria pro sběr materiálu a prezentovala metodologický rámec, o nějž se práce opírala při interpretaci výsledků analýz. Pro tuto práci byl vybrán pragmatický přístup, jehož teorie jsou spjaté s teoriemi analýzy diskurzu, a dále bylo využíváno teorií systémové funkční lingvistiky, a to zcela konkrétně klasifikace jazykových metafunkcí M. A. K. Hallidaye (1985).

Druhá kapitola se nejprve věnovala definování „soft news“ jakožto protějšku „hard news“ a poté se snažila poukázat na nedoceněný potenciál, který skýtá výzkum „soft news“ jako žánr. Ve třetí kapitole byl vysvětlen důvod pro výběr příspěvků

na facebookových stránkách coby „první úrovně“ internetového zpravodajství, jehož „druhou úrovní“ se v této práci chápe celý článek zveřejněný na webových stránkách příslušného periodika, což bylo dále předmětem čtvrté kapitoly. Bylo zdůrazněno, že tyto dvě úrovně jsou propojeny nejen pomocí hyperlinku a svým sémantickým obsahem, nýbrž také pomocí kohezních pojítek, jako je právě časová deixe. Problematika deixe byla popsána v páté kapitole, na niž navázala kapitola věnující se výhradně časové deixi v novinových titulcích. Titulkům a slovesným časům v nich použitých byla věnována zvláštní pozornost, jelikož slouží jako jakýsi spouštěč zmíněného „modelu dvojitého posunu slovesného času“. Veškerá teoretická tvrzení byla podložena příklady z korpusu, který sestával výhradně ze „soft news“ článků. Jelikož použitá odborná literatura převážně čerpá ze studií „hard news“, je dále vyzdvížena důležitost studie tohoto typu.

V kapitolách 8–9 jsou prezentovány výsledky dílčích výzkumů. Kapitola 8 se věnovala zodpovězení první výzkumné otázky, tedy posunům slovesného času mezi jednotlivými textovými částmi online soft news. Výsledky potvrdily hypotézu, že se „model dvojitého posunu slovesného času“, který byl prozatím prokázán jen v žánru „hard news“ (Chovanec 2014), bude v korpusových článcích vyskytovat. Navržená interpretace tohoto výsledku byla založena na předpokladu pragmatické motivace na straně zpravodajských periodik vytvořit iluzi sdíleného časoprostoru se čtenáři. Dále bylo vysvětleno, že kromě této interpersonální metafunkce má model za následek upevnění koheze mezi jednotlivými částmi textu, což bylo popsáno jako projev metafunkce textové.

Druhé výzkumné otázce byla věnována kapitola 9, která zkoumala charakteristické rysy první úrovně novinového online diskurzu, označované jako „FBP“. S ohledem na strukturu bylo identifikováno specifikum týkající se uspořádání titulku a perexu, které se ukázalo být v opačném pořadí, než je běžné. Dále byly analyzovány metody produkce, které poukázaly na fakt, že vybraná periodika preferují přestylování původních či formulaci zcela nových textů na „FBP“ před pouhou duplikací textu ze svých webových stránek, a to i přes zjevnou časovou náročnost. Tato praktika byla připsána interpersonální metafunkci, jelikož je s největší pravděpodobností vykonávána ku prospěchu čtenáře. Bylo rovněž prokázáno, že obecná povaha „FBP“ dále přispívá k utváření interpersonální dimenze, neboť dílčí analýza odhalila, že články na „FBP“ jsou značně orientované na čtenáře, mají osobní ráz a interaktivní charakter. Objevila se také značná míra subjektivní evaluace. Takový charakter byl přisuzován do značné míry vlivu kontextu, ve kterém se náhled článku vyskytuje, tj. sociální síť, a také obecné povaze

„soft news“. Druhá hypotéza byla těmito výsledky rovněž potvrzena. Tato dílčí analýza měla mimořádný význam v poslední kapitole, kde byly nabyté poznatky využity při interpretaci výskytu časové deixe na „FBP“.

Poslední kapitola byla zaměřena na analýzu slovesného času a časové deixe v takových „FBPs“, jejichž protějšky publikované na oficiálních webových stránkách využily „modelu dvojitého posunu slovesného času.“ Třetí hypotéza, podle které se měla první ze dvou posunů uskutečnit i v rámci „FBP“, byla taktéž potvrzena. První posun se však nevyskytoval v nijak velké míře. Na druhou stranu byly zaznamenány jiné tendence, které znovu potvrdily interpersonální záměr použitých slovesných časů a jejich případné deixe. Výsledky analýzy poukázaly na fakt, že se zpravodajská periodika snaží pomocí určitých slovesných časů a jejich posunů navodit ve čtenáři pocit aktuálnosti, novosti a relevance. Celkově by se tedy dalo říci, že volba slovesného času v určitých segmentech v „soft news“ jak na webových stránkách, tak v náhledu článku na Facebooku může mít zásadní dopad na to, jak bude periodikum prostřednictvím daného článku spolupracovat se čtenářem, tedy do jaké míry se bude projevovat interpersonální metafunkce.

Problematika časové lokalizace v „soft news“ na internetu je bezesporu velice komplexní a skrývá velký potenciál pro další výzkum. Tato diplomová práce se zabývala časovou deixí a analyzovala slovesný čas v člancích spadajících do žánru „soft news“ shromážděných z internetových a facebookových stránek tří největších britských zpravodajských institucí. Rozsahové omezení magisterské práce mi bohužel nedovolilo plně interpretovat výsledky analýz. Bylo by nepochybně velice zajímavé porovnat kódování časové lokalizace mezi jednotlivými institucemi. Stejně tak by bylo zajímavé studovat případy heteroglosie, které záměrně nebyly zahrnuty do tohoto korpusu, jelikož jejich povaha do výrazně ovlivňuje výběr slovesného času. Nabízí se také provést analýzu „hard news“ na webových stránkách a na „FBP“, jejíž výsledky by mohly být porovnány s výsledky této práce.

Jelikož se nejedná o počítačově zpracovaný výzkum, nelze vyloučit možné nedostatky vlivem lidského faktoru, např. chybné určení slovesného času, syntaktické struktury, či chybný výpočet. Vzhledem k rozsahu této práce nemohou být výsledky nikterak zobecňovány. Tato práce by měla sloužit jako malý příspěvek do studia časové deixe a žánru „soft news“ a zároveň jako inspirace pro další výzkum v této oblasti.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I – Temporality in online SN

The tables in this appendix provide the numerical data to the tense analysis discussed in **Chapter 8**. The following three tables demonstrate the findings of the H2 analysis, as to their syntactic structure and tense proportion.

H2 structure	No.	%
Nominal	2	1%
Clausal - single	78	35%
Clausal - complex	145	64%
Total	225	100%

Table 15: H2s syntactic structure

Tense	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Independent</i>	<i>The Telegraph</i>	No.	%
Present tense	12	16	15	43	55%
Present for future	0	1	4	5	6%
Past tense	1	1	0	2	3%
Present perfect tense	0	0	2	2	3%
Will-future	0	0	0	0	0%
Other	2	0	0	2	3%
Ellipted	9	6	9	24	31%
Total	24	24	30	78	100%

Table 14: Tense proportion in clausal-single H2s

	<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
2x Clause	15	12	21	48	33%
3x Clause	0	2	1	3	2%
4x Clause	0	1	0	1	1%
Nominal/ellipted/other + clause	27	21	16	64	44%
2 x Nominal/ellipted/other + clause	0	4	2	6	4%
Nominal/ellipted/other + 2x clause	6	6	2	14	10%
2x Nominal/ellipted/other	2	4	3	9	6%
Total	50	50	45	145	100%

Table 16: Syntactic structure in clausal-complex H2s

Table 18 and **Table 17** below illustrate the results of the present tense analysis of H2s.

The Guardian

Structure	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Travel</i>	Present used for non-past	Irrelevant verbal element	No. minus irrelevant cases
Simple present	6	3	5	1	0	13
Complex	10	18	6	12	1	21
Ellipsis	4	4	8	11	1	4
Total	20	25	19	24	2	38
	64			26		

The Independent

Structure	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Travel</i>	Present used for non-past	Irrelevant verbal element	No. minus irrelevant cases
Simple present	8	3	10	6	0	15
Complex	10	13	9	8	0	24
Ellipsis	5	4	5	7	0	7
Total	23	20	24	21	0	46
	67			21		

The Telegraph

Structure	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Travel</i>	Present used for non-past	Irrelevant verbal element	No. minus irrelevant cases
Simple present	6	6	7	7	0	12
Complex	12	16	9	8	0	29
Ellipsis	6	0	7	8	0	5
Total	24	22	23	23	0	46
	69			23		

Table 17: Proportion of the present tense in H2s

	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Independent</i>	<i>The Telegraph</i>	Total
No. of present tense H2s	64	67	69	200
No. minus irrelevant cases	38	46	46	130
%	59%	69%	67%	65%

Table 18: Non-deictic present tense in H2s

The following three tables (compiled in one **Table 19**) demonstrate the proportion of tenses detected in those L2 and their BCs whose H2s included a non-deictic present tense, being suitable for the double tense shift pattern.

The Guardian

Tense	Culture	Science	Travel
Present perfect + past	6	9	3
Present perfect + present	1	4	
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past			
Past + past	1	2	2
Past + present perfect + past		1	
Past + present			
Present + present		2	2
Present + present perfect + past		1	
Present + present perfect + present		1	
Present + past			3
	8	20	10
	38		

The Independent

Tense	Culture	Science	Travel
Present perfect + past	10	3	6
Present perfect + present	2	3	2
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past	1		
Past + past		2	4
Past + present perfect + past	1		1
Past + present	1		
Present + present	1	2	2
Present + present perfect + past		1	
Present + present perfect + present			
Present + past	1	1	2
	17	12	17
	46		

The Telegraph

Tense	Culture	Science	Travel
Present perfect + past	8	4	4
Present perfect + present		3	2
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past			
Past + past	7	1	2
Past + present perfect + past			
Past + present	1	1	1
Present + present	1	1	1
Present + present perfect + past		1	
Present + present perfect + present			
Present + past	1	5	2
	18	16	12
	46		

Table 19: Tense in L2s and BCs of H2 with non-deictic present tense

The figures from **Table 19** were further sorted out according to the SN areas in **Table 20** and according to the type of newspaper in **Table 21**. **Table 22** further specifies the exact figures of the second shift incidence in the individual newspapers.

Tense	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Travel</i>	No.	%
Present perfect + past	24	16	13	53	41
Present perfect + present	3	10	4	17	13
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past	1	0	0	1	1
Past + past	8	5	8	21	16
Past + present	2	1	1	4	3
Past + present perfect + past	1	1	1	3	2
Present + past	2	6	7	15	12
Present + present	2	5	5	12	9
Present + present perfect + past	0	3	0	3	2
Present + present perfect + present	0	1	0	1	1
Total	43	48	39	130	100

Table 20: Tense in L2s + BCs according to soft news area

Tense	<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
Present perfect + past	18	19	16	53	41
Present perfect + present	5	7	5	17	13
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past	0	1	0	1	1
Past + past	5	6	10	21	16
Past + present	0	1	3	4	3
Past + present perfect + past	1	2	0	3	2
Present + past	3	4	8	15	12
Present + present	4	5	3	12	9
Present + present perfect + past	1	1	1	3	2
Present + present perfect + present	1	0	0	1	1
Total	38	46	46	130	100

Table 21: Tense in L2s + BCs according to newspaper type

Tense	<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
Present perfect + past	18	19	16	53	75
Present perfect + present	5	7	5	17	24
Present perfect + pres. perf. + past	0	1	0	1	1
Total	23	27	21	71	100

Table 22: The second shift in online SN (L2 → BC)

Appendix II – Formation methods of FBPs

Part I

Table 23 provides the exact count of the methods which were applied in the creation of the H1s and L1s from the corpus, as to whether the segments were copied, modified, or newly created.

H1		<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
H1 ≠ H2	New	3	34	4	41	18%
	Modified	4	31	17	52	23%
H1 = H2	Copied	68	10	54	132	59%
Total		75	75	75	225	100%

H1 = H2		<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
L1 ≠ L2		64	10	52	126	95%
L1 = L2		4	0	2	6	5%
Total		68	10	54	132	100%

H1 ≠ H2		<i>G.</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>T.</i>	No.	%
L1 ≠ L2		7	65	21	93	100%
L1 = L2		0	0	0	0	0%
Total		7	65	21	93	100%

Table 23: H1 and L1 formation methods

Part II

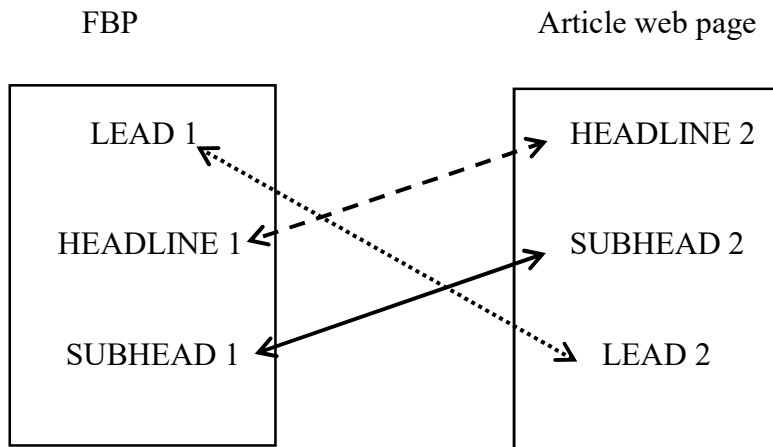
The following charts demonstrate some of the detected formation methods of L1s and S1s and should serve as a mere addition to the formation methods of H1s discussed within **Chapter 9**. It is by no means an exhaustive list of all the methods of formation, the below charts are included here to provide a snapshot of the ways the segments are interconnected on both levels of online news discourse.

Copied H1

H1 = H2

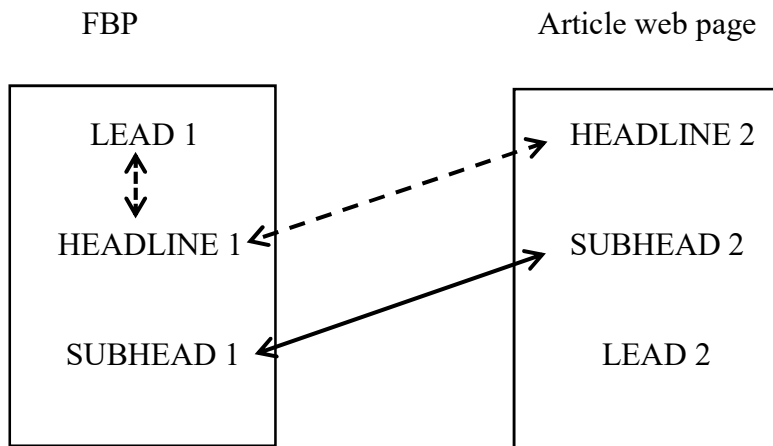
L1 = L2

S1 = S2



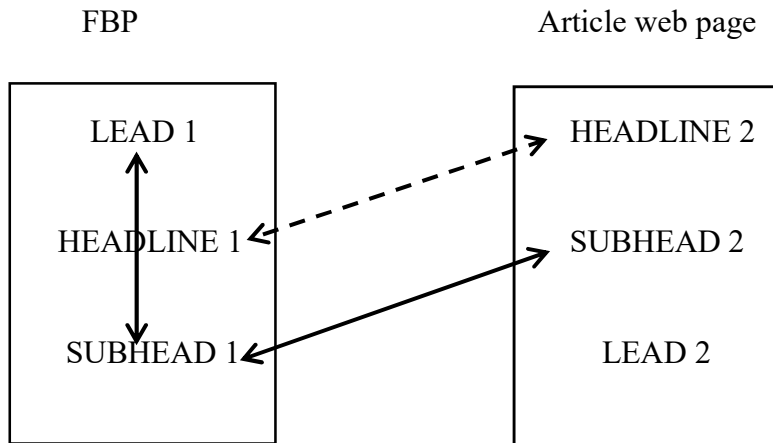
H1 = L1 = H2

S1 = S2

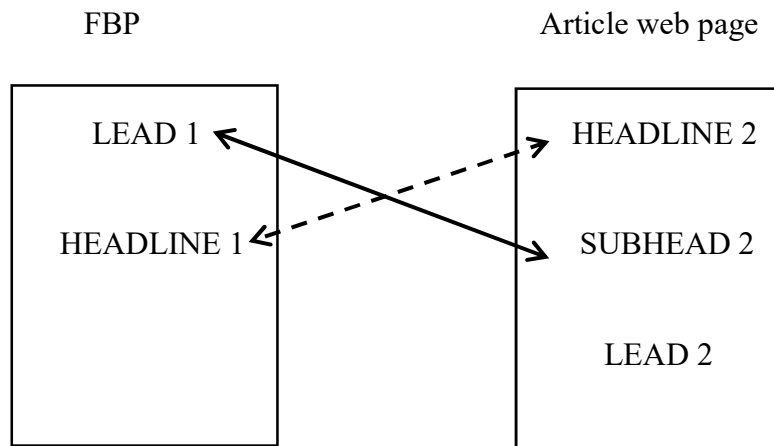


H1 = H2

L1 = S1 = S2

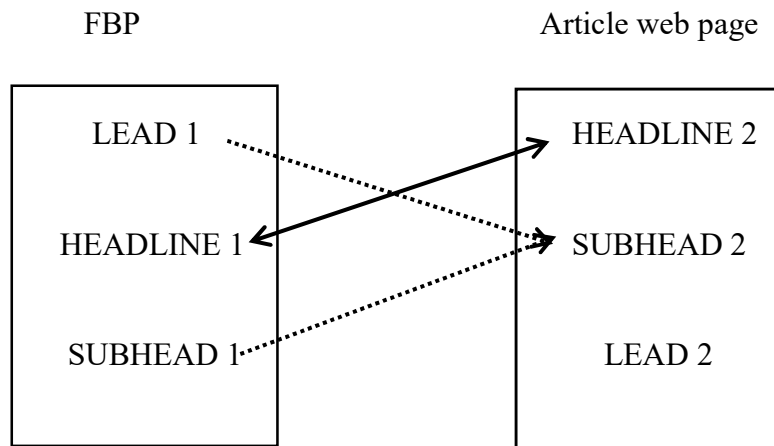


H1 = H2
L1 = S2



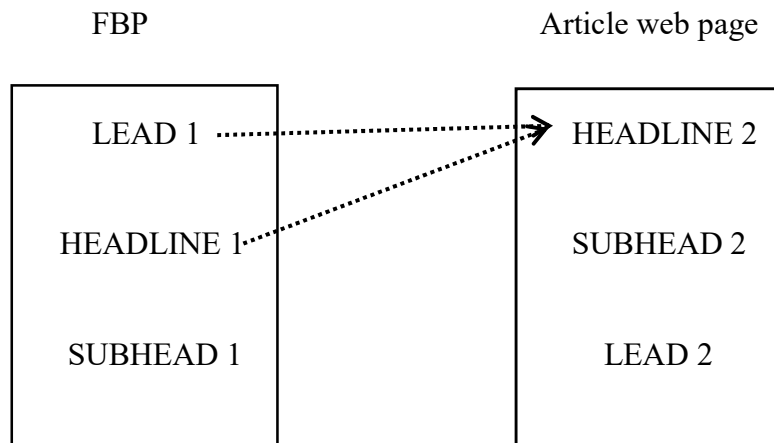
H1 = H2

L1 ... as ... S1 = S2



Modified H1

H1 + L1 = H2



Appendix III – Tense shifts in FBPs

The number of online full-length articles where the double tense shift pattern was found to be in operation was 53. The corresponding FBPs were further analyzed for tense. The count of applied tenses is provided in **Table 24**.

Tense	No.
Present + present perfect	4
Present + past	2
Present + past + pres. perf.	1
Present + present	16
Present + pres. + pres. perf.	1
Present + pres. + pres.	3
Present + nominal	8
Present + will future	1
Ellipsis + present	4
Ellipsis + present + present	1
Ellipsis + present perfect	2
Ellipsis + past + past	1
Ellipsis + past + pres. perf.	1
Ellipsis + pres. perf + past	1
Ellipsis + non-finite	1
Ellipsis + nominal	2
Past + nominal	1
Past + present	2
Imperative + nominal	1
Total	53

Table 24: The double tense shift continuation on the FBP (tense in H1s + L1s)

The findings regarding the tense shifts which occurred in the corpus FBPs with respect to the replication of the double tense shift pattern are further summarized in **Table 25** (corresponding to the graph in **Figure 17**).

	No.	%
Full replication	3	6%
Partial replication	7	13%
Partial r. (no present perfect)	3	6%
No replication	40	75%
Total	53	100%

Table 25: Tense shifts in FBPs with respect to the double tense shift pattern

In 75 % of cases, no replication of the pattern was found. The proportion of tenses used in these H1s and L1s is supplied in **Table 26** (which corresponds to the graph in **Figure 18**).

Tense	%
Present + present	45%
Present + nominal	19%
Present + will future	2%
Present + non-finite	2%
Past + present	4%
Past + nominal	2%
Imperative + nominal	2%
Total	75%

Table 26: No replication – tenses in H1s + L1s