

A Comparative Analysis of Adjective Types and Functions in Print Media: *The Star* Newspaper and *Reader's Digest* Magazine Headlines

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ABSTRACT – Headlines play a crucial role in capturing reader attention in print media, often employing adjectives to create compelling content. Despite their importance, adjectives remain under-researched in comparison to other lexical categories, and their use in print media such as newspapers and magazines has received limited attention. This study aims to identify the types and functions of adjectives in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines, focusing on their semantic categories and syntactic functions based on the classification framework proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002). Data were collected through textual analysis of 20 print media samples, comprising *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines. Adjectives were sorted according to semantic categories and further classified based on their syntactic functions in headlines. A total of 651 adjectives were identified in 574 headlines from *The Star* newspapers, with 426 functioning as descriptors and the remaining 225 as classifiers. In 208 *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines, 228 adjectives were identified, of which 189 were descriptors and 39 classifiers. Most headlines in both print media predominantly featured emotive, miscellaneous, and size/quantity/extent descriptors. Regarding syntactic functions, 548 adjectives in *The Star* newspaper headlines functioned as attributive adjectives, followed by 76 as subject predicative, while in *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines, 199 adjectives functioned as attributive adjectives and 17 as subject predicative. This research underscores the importance of print media-based analysis and provides valuable insights for future researchers interested in exploring the use of adjectives in print media.

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INTRODUCTION

Media serves as an indispensable tool for communication, information dissemination, and advertising. In today's fast-paced world, media plays a crucial role in providing and distributing diverse types of information, including news, health, sports, politics, and education. Media can be classified into two primary categories: traditional media and new media. Traditional media, defined as any form of mass communication available before the advent of digital media, encompasses television, radio, newspapers, books, and magazines (Johnson, 2015). New media refers to any media, from newspaper articles and blogs to music and podcasts, delivered digitally (Cote, 2020). While these categories possess distinct characteristics, they share a common goal: conveying information to mass audiences.

Print media, a subset of traditional media, refers to any written or pictorial form of communication produced mechanically or electronically using printing, photocopying, or digital methods, allowing for multiple copies to be made through automated processes (Chandler & Munday, 2011). Print media, which includes newspapers, magazines, brochures, books, and pamphlets, is considered more effective at targeting customers and creating a lasting impression (Klein, n.d.).

In Malaysia, *The Star* Newspaper is a leading daily newspaper. First published as a regional newspaper in 1971 in Penang, it experienced overwhelming success and evolved into a national daily newspaper in 1976 (Our History, 2021). *The Star* has also expanded into online portals, launching e-Paper, which digitizes daily newspapers and offers interactive features for readers (Our History, 2021).

Reader's Digest, an American magazine first published in 1922 by DeWitt Wallace and Lila Acheson Wallace, is the world's largest circulating magazine and the first print magazine to achieve international distribution (About *Reader's Digest*, 2021). This monthly magazine features real-life stories, humour, health tips, advice, medical information, and cultural content, engaging and inspiring readers in a compact format. *Reader's Digest* is published in 17 languages across 34 countries, with its Asian Edition being Malaysia's top-selling English language magazine, boasting a readership of 1.3 million (AdQrate, 2014).

The Star newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines are two popular types of print media in Malaysia, both featuring headlines as prominent components. Headlines, defined as large-print text at the top of an article, news story, or advertisement, are designed to grab the attention of the reader (Doyle, 2011). Captivating headlines entice readers to engage with the full article or story, and an effective headline should be short, accurate, and attention-grabbing, without unnecessary words (Newspaper Headlines KS2, 2020).

Headlines generally consist of lexical words, which can be classified into four classes: adjectives, adverbs, lexical verbs, and nouns (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002). Adjectives, though less common than nouns and verbs, are often used to modify nouns and are frequently found in news and academic prose (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002). Researchers have emphasized the importance of adjectives in influencing readers' opinions and directing their attention toward particular issues (Al-Issawi, 2020; Alamoudi, 2017).

However, adjectives remain under-researched compared to other word classes, and previous studies have predominantly focused on a single type of media (Al-Issawi, 2020; L'Homme, 2002). Studies involving print media and comparative analysis, particularly concerning newspapers and magazines, are scarce. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the lexical word class of adjectives in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines. The significance of comparing adjectives in the headlines of *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazines lies in the fact that headlines are a prominent feature in both print media types, sharing several similar features such as being printed, containing multiple pages, and offering various genres of texts. The classification scheme of adjectives proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) is employed to address the following research questions:

1. What types of adjectives are predominantly used by writers in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines?
2. How are adjectives utilised in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines?

By focusing on adjectives in headlines of print media, this research contributes to English grammar studies and provides valuable insights into the usage of adjectives in print media headlines. The comparative analysis between *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines may reveal interesting linguistic patterns and preferences, which could be beneficial for future research and practical applications in journalism and print media.

PAST RELATED STUDIES

Adjectives serve to direct readers' attention and evoke specific feelings about a particular issue (Al-Issawi, 2020). Prior research on adjectives has encompassed various domains, including online news, science-based articles, and tourism websites, with investigators employing different approaches and frameworks. Kusumadewi and Puspitorini (2017) analyzed adjectives in news article headlines, specifically in the Jakarta Post Online newspaper. They examined twenty headline news articles to identify the types and frequencies of adjectives present in each article. The collected data were categorized according to the types of adjectives in the English language: descriptive, quantity, demonstrative, possessive, interrogative, and degrees. The researchers found that descriptive adjectives were the most frequently used, followed by degrees of adjectives, and concluded that adjectives play a crucial role in constructing sentences and providing clarity for readers in the Jakarta Post online newspaper.

Jutharat (2017) investigated the rhetorical features of academic articles, focusing on the types and functions of adjectives in popular science articles. The researcher analyzed twenty-five articles from popular science and American scientific websites using Khamyng's (2007) adjective classification model. This model categorizes adjectives into 11 types: descriptive, proper, quantitative, numeral (cardinal), numeral (ordinal), demonstrative, possessive, distributive, emphasizing, exclamatory, and relative. Jutharat found that descriptive adjectives were the most commonly used, while exclamatory adjectives were the least prevalent in science articles. This study contributes to understanding adjective use in scientific writing, though the articles analysed were selected randomly from various sources.

Faiz et al. (2018) explored the choice of adjectives as a lexical category in Mohsin Hamid's novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, using Leech and Short's (1981) lexical categories. The researchers found that most of the adjectives identified were related to physical, emotive, color, and auditory attributes. Predicative adjectives were predominantly used by Hamid to emphasize the mood or behavior of the characters in the book. This study provides intriguing findings, as the researchers were able to observe how lexical categories, such as adjectives, are employed in literary text. They also discovered that Hamid used effective and exclusive adjectives to present a realistic image of the fictional world of Asia to readers.

Maen (2020) compared the use of descriptive and evaluative adjectives on Jordanian tourism websites with those on European and Asian tourism websites. The findings revealed that all the websites contained descriptive adjectives, but European tourism websites employed more evaluative adjectives, especially in promotions. This study demonstrates how descriptive and evaluative adjectives are interconnected in the given discourse and is novel in its comparison of lexical choices between global and local websites in tourism.

Kotrc (2016) conducted a comparative analysis of adjectives in coverage of the World Cup in Brazil to examine the language used by two national English newspapers, *The Independent* and *The Daily Mirror*. Kotrc employed the concept and classification of adjectives based on Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English by Biber et al. (1999). The data for the study were collected by compiling Brazil's World Cup articles from both newspapers and creating a corpus. *The Independent* contained a total of 530 adjectives, while *The Daily Mirror* had 496 adjectives. Both newspapers used more attributive than predicative adjectives and more descriptors than classifiers. Additionally, both newspapers used more emotive descriptors and more restrictive/relational classifiers compared to other types. In conclusion, the study showcased the similarities between both newspapers in terms of adjective types and descriptors and classifiers.

In a local study conducted in the Malaysian context, Mohd Nor, Jeffree, & Abdullah@Mohd Nor (2021) examined how Malaysian newspapers, *The Star Online* and *The New Straits Time*, portrayed mental health issues. The researchers

employed a corpus-driven approach to identify adjective collocates for mental health and discern the portrayal of mental health from the adjective collocates in the two Malaysian English newspapers. They adopted Biber et al.'s (1999) semantic categories of adjectives, which consist of classifiers and descriptors (size, color, time, emotive, and miscellaneous). The results showed that the most common category of semantic grouping of adjectives in both newspapers was emotive, followed by miscellaneous and size. Through this study, the researchers aimed to foster mental health awareness among Malaysians and contribute to the limited literature on mental health issues in Malaysia (Mohd Nor, Jeffree, & Abdullah@Mohd Nor, 2021).

Chai and Ong (2018) conducted a study on the choice of suffix variants for participial adjectives in a corpus of Malaysian e-Newspapers to identify the preferred suffix variant used by Malaysian writers when forming participial adjectives. They employed a corpus-based methodology, analysing 14 articles retrieved from *The Star* Online from 2006-2012 using WordSmith Tools 5 software, which offers a Wordlist and Concordance tools. The findings revealed that, out of the 12 words belonging to the adjective category, seven were used as participial adjectives, with the suffix -t being preferred for forming adjectives. The researchers also hoped their study would have pedagogical implications.

Upon reviewing the related studies by various previous researchers, the present study is distinctly different as it is a comparative study of adjectives involving two types of print media: *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines. This research not only fills the gap in grammatical studies of the English language and linguistics but also offers an interesting focus on the adjectives used in the headlines of the selected newspapers and magazines. The categorisations of the semantic categories and syntactic functions of adjectives by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) are adopted to answer the research questions.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on headlines in two types of print media: *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines. Physical copies of both selected print media were used for analysis. The research methodology employs textual analysis and incorporates qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the data.

The selection of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines aims to compare the adjectives used in the headlines of the chosen print media. Headlines from both newspapers and magazines were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Twenty copies of *The Star* newspapers and twenty copies of *Reader's Digest* magazines were selected to examine adjectives in the headlines. Headlines containing adjectives from both sources were gathered and listed in table form within a Word document. The adjectives were then qualitatively analysed and classified according to the categorisations proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), followed by quantification using descriptive statistics, i.e., raw frequency and percentages.

The first research question asks, "What types of adjectives are widely used by writers in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines?" The semantic categorisation of adjectives (as descriptors or classifiers) proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) was employed to answer this question. The second research question inquires, "How are adjectives used in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines?" To address this question, the categorization of syntactic functions of adjectives proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) was utilised. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), adjectives perform attributive and predicative functions, as well as five other syntactic functions: noun phrase head, linking expression, exclamation, postposed modifier, and free modifier.

FINDINGS

Types of Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* and *Reader's Digest*

In this study, 20 copies of *The Star* newspapers were examined to identify headlines containing adjectives, a lexical word-class. Once identified, the distribution of adjectives was analysed and categorised into two primary semantic groups: descriptors and classifiers, as proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002). The collected data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Findings of adjectives in the headlines of *The Star* newspapers.

Semantic category	Type	Examples	Amount	Percentage (%)
Descriptors	Colour	<i>Red, White</i>	8	1.2
	Size/Quantity/Extent	<i>Little, Long</i>	158	24.3
	Time	<i>Old, New</i>	94	14.4
	Emotive	<i>Good, Calm</i>	77	11.8
	Miscellaneous	<i>Real, Perfect</i>	89	13.7
	<i>Total</i>		426	65.4
Classifiers	Restrictive/Relational	<i>Instant, Fresh</i>	182	28.0
	Affiliative	<i>Belgian</i>	0	0
	Specific	<i>Digital</i>	43	6.6
	<i>Total</i>		225	34.6
Total			651	100

A total of 651 adjectives were identified in 574 headlines obtained from 20 copies of *The Star* newspapers. These adjectives were divided into two primary semantic categories: descriptors and classifiers. Descriptors accounted for 426 adjectives, or 65.4% of the total adjectives found in the newspaper headlines, while the remaining 225 adjectives were identified as classifiers. Both descriptors and classifiers were further categorized according to their types.

Thus, the writers and editors of *The Star* newspapers showed a preference for using descriptors in the headlines, with 426 descriptors identified. The most common descriptor type was size/quantity/extent, followed by time, miscellaneous, and emotive descriptors. The most frequently used type of classifier was restrictive/relational, followed by those providing subject area or specific type. The least common adjectives in the headlines were colour descriptors and affiliative classifiers.

To analyse the adjectives in the headlines of *Reader's Digest* magazines, 20 copies of the print magazines were examined to identify headlines containing adjectives. Similar to the adjectives retrieved from *The Star* newspapers, these adjectives were also analysed and classified into the two main semantic categories: descriptors and classifiers. The descriptors and classifiers were then sorted according to their respective types. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings of adjectives in the headlines of *Reader's Digest* magazines.

Semantic category	Type	Examples	Amount	Percentage (%)
Descriptors	Colour	<i>Golden, Pink</i>	3	1.3
	Size/Quantity/Extent	<i>Little, Big</i>	46	20.2
	Time	<i>Latest, Young</i>	22	9.6
	Emotive	<i>Good, Bad</i>	82	36.0
	Miscellaneous	<i>Healing</i>	36	15.8
	<i>Total</i>		<i>189</i>	<i>82.9</i>
Classifiers	Restrictive/Relational	<i>Final</i>	13	5.7
	Affiliative	<i>Australian</i>	6	2.6
	Specific	<i>Medical</i>	20	8.8
	<i>Total</i>		<i>39</i>	<i>17.1</i>
Total			228	100

A total of 228 adjectives were identified in 208 headlines extracted from 20 copies of *Reader's Digest* magazines. These adjectives were divided into two primary semantic categories: descriptors and classifiers. The majority of the adjectives identified were descriptors, with 189 descriptors accounting for 82.9% of the overall adjectives found in the magazine headlines. In contrast, only 39 adjectives, or 17.1% of the total adjectives found, were classifiers.

The writers and editors of *Reader's Digest* magazines showed a preference for using descriptors in their headlines, with 189 descriptors identified. The most frequently used descriptor type was emotive, followed by size/quantity/extent, miscellaneous, and time descriptors. As for classifiers, the most commonly used type described subject area or specific type, followed by restrictive/relational classifiers. The least incorporated types of adjectives in the magazine headlines were colour descriptors and affiliative classifiers.

Although the same number of copies of both print media were analysed, *The Star* newspapers contained more headlines and adjectives. In the 20 copies of *The Star* newspapers, a staggering total of 651 adjectives were identified in 574 headlines. In contrast, there were only 228 adjectives in 208 headlines retrieved from 20 copies of *Reader's Digest* magazines.

In both *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines, descriptors were more commonly used in the headlines compared to classifiers, as they often describe colour, size and weight, chronology and age, emotion, and other characteristics (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). The headlines in *The Star* newspapers mainly employed size/quantity/extent descriptors, time, emotive, and miscellaneous descriptors. Similarly, *Reader's Digest* magazines primarily utilized emotive descriptors, followed by size/quantity/extent and miscellaneous descriptors. Both *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines had a limited use of color descriptors in their headlines.

Regarding classifiers, *The Star* newspaper headlines mainly incorporated restrictive/relational classifiers, while the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines utilized classifiers that provided subject area or specific type. Furthermore, there were no affiliative classifiers found in *The Star* newspaper headlines, whereas in the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines, there were instances where affiliative classifiers were utilised.

Function of the Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* and *Reader's Digest*

To answer Research Question 2, "How are adjectives used in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines?", the adjectives identified in the headlines of the newspapers and magazines were studied in context to determine their syntactic functions. The classification framework proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) was adopted to categorise the adjectives according to their syntactic functions in the headlines.

According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), there are seven main types of syntactic roles or functions of adjectives: attributive, predicative, postposed modifiers, noun phrase heads, linking expressions, exclamations, and free modifiers. The results of the analysis are illustrated in Figure 1.

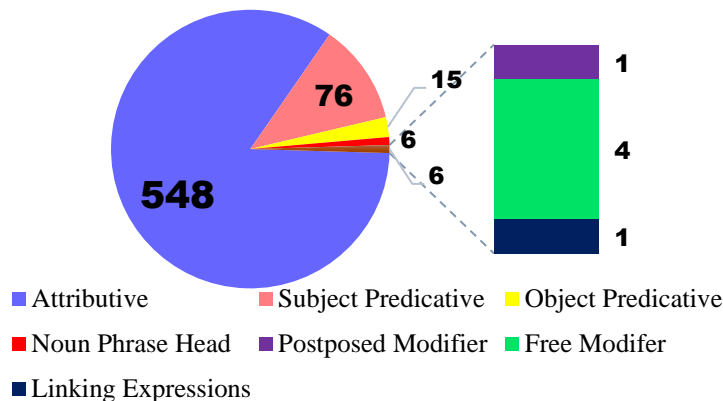


Figure 1. Syntactic roles/functions of adjectives.

As mentioned in the previous section, 651 adjectives were identified in 574 headlines extracted from 20 copies of *The Star* newspapers. In this section, the adjectives identified were classified according to their syntactic functions in the headlines. The adjectives were sorted based on the syntactic functions of adjectives proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002). The majority of the adjectives, 548, equivalent to 84.1%, function as attributive adjectives in the headlines. Attributive adjectives can modify common nouns, proper place nouns, names of persons, and personal pronouns (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). Examples of attributive adjectives found in the headlines are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of attributive adjectives found in the headlines.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Young entrepreneurs seek more incentives from govt	<i>Young</i>	D: Time	Attributive
Dubai breaks world record for largest fountain	<i>Largest</i>	D: Size	Attributive
The makings of a great teacher	<i>Great</i>	D: Emotive	Attributive
Kongsi’s vital lifesaving move	<i>Vital</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Attributive
White coats chant protests	<i>White</i>	D: Colour	Attributive
Brunei govt dismisses viral news about attire	<i>Viral</i>	C: Restrictive	Attributive
Bridging the educational gap	<i>Educational</i>	C: Specific	Attributive

Although most of the adjectives found in the newspaper headlines are attributive adjectives, some adjectives perform other syntactic roles, such as predicative adjectives. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), predicative adjectives can be divided into two syntactic functions: subject predicative and object predicative. For instance, 76 adjectives function as subject predicative in the headlines, equivalent to 11.7% of the overall total. Additionally, there are 15 adjectives, equivalent to 2.3%, that function as object predicative. Examples of adjectives that serve as subject predicative and object predicative are showcased in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of adjectives that function as subject and object predicative.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Spain unhappy about lack of VAR in Greece draw	<i>Unhappy</i>	D: Emotive	Subject Predicative
Traders getting creative to draw customers	<i>Creative</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Subject Predicative
South Australia ends lockdown quick	<i>Quick</i>	D: Time	Subject Predicative
Lego collector recreates Vietnam street scenes in miniature	<i>Miniature</i>	C: Restrictive	Object Predicative
Farrell wants Ireland to be ruthless against Italy	<i>Ruthless</i>	D: Emotive	Object Predicative

Moreover, some adjectives perform syntactic roles such as noun phrase head, postposed modifier, linking expression, and free modifier. However, only six adjectives function as noun phrase head in the headlines, and four adjectives serve as free modifiers. Two adjectives function as linking expressions and postposed modifiers, respectively. Examples of adjectives that operate as noun phrase head are presented in Table 5, while adjectives that fulfil the remaining syntactic roles are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Adjectives that function as noun phrase head.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Utterly impractical	<i>Impractical</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Noun Phrase Head
Extremely natural in doubles	<i>Natural</i>	C: Specific	Noun Phrase Head
Competency tests for better care of the elderly	<i>Elderly</i>	C: Restrictive	Noun Phrase Head

Table 6. Adjectives that function as the remaining syntactic roles.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Elegant and aesthetic, they began fashion week	<i>Elegant, Aesthetic</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Free Modifier
Chill, authorities are just doing their job	<i>Chill</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Linking Expression
Making everything possible with e-learning	<i>Possible</i>	C: Restrictive	Postposed Modifier

The findings reveal that the writers and editors of *The Star* newspapers primarily incorporated adjectives that function as attributives, with 548 attributive adjectives identified in the headlines. The second most common type of adjectives are predicative adjectives, with 76 functioning as subject predicatives and 15 serving as object predicatives. Other less prevalent adjectives are those that act as noun phrase heads and free modifiers. Adjectives functioning as postposed modifiers and linking expressions were the least common, with only one instance of each.

Similarly, the *Reader's Digest* magazines were analysed to retrieve headlines containing adjectives. Based on the first part of the research, 228 adjectives were extracted from 208 headlines of the magazines. In this section, the adjectives are analysed and categorised according to their syntactic functions. The results are presented in Figure 2.

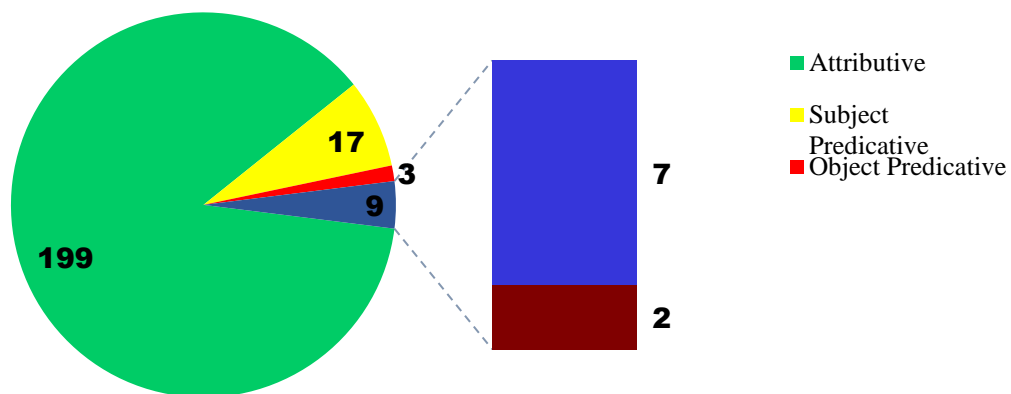


Figure 2. Syntactic roles/functions of adjectives.

As shown in Figure 2, a total of 228 adjectives were identified in 208 headlines from the *Reader's Digest* magazines. The adjectives were classified according to their syntactic roles/functions within the headlines. Of these, 199 adjectives, equivalent to 87.3%, function as attributive adjectives in the headlines. Examples of adjectives serving as attributives are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Adjectives that function as attributives.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Why we always seem to choose the slowest queue	<i>Slowest</i>	D: Time	Attributive
Mega Thrills	<i>Mega</i>	D: Size	Attributive
A fond farewell to Tokusatsu	<i>Fond</i>	D: Emotive	Attributive
My favourite stories	<i>Favourite</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Attributive
The golden elm tree	<i>Golden</i>	D: Colour	Attributive
A toast to Belgian beer	<i>Belgian</i>	C: Affiliative	Attributive
The experimental scientist	<i>Experimental</i>	C: Specific	Attributive
Sirim QAS International : Helping firms prove their green credentials	<i>Green</i>	C: Restrictive	Attributive

The majority of adjectives in the headlines of the magazines serve as attributive adjectives. Nevertheless, some adjectives perform other syntactic functions in the headlines. For instance, 17 adjectives, equivalent to 7.4% of the total adjectives found, function as subject predicative. Additionally, three adjectives were identified as functioning as object predicative in the magazine headlines. Examples of adjectives functioning as subject predicative and object predicative are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Adjectives functioning as subject and object predicative.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
Why Rome is captivating	<i>Captivating</i>	D: Emotive	Subject Predicative
The future just got thinner	<i>Thinner</i>	D: Size/Quantity/Extent	Subject Predicative
When we were young	<i>Young</i>	D: Time	Subject Predicative
They had it wrong	<i>Wrong</i>	D: Miscellaneous	Object Predicative
5 weird brain exercises that help you get smarter	<i>Smarter</i>	D: Size/Quantity/Extent	Object Predicative

Additionally, some adjectives serve as noun phrase heads and free modifiers. Seven adjectives, equivalent to 3% of the total adjectives found in the magazine headlines, function as noun phrase heads, and two adjectives were identified as functioning as free modifiers. Examples of these adjectives are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Adjectives functioning as noun phrase head and free modifier.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category	Syntactic Function
The Australian hits jackpot	<i>Australian</i>	C: Affiliative	Noun Phrase Head
Seville: Unexpectedly magical	<i>Magical</i>	C: Specific	Noun Phrase Head
The Korean is taking over	<i>Korean</i>	C: Affiliative	Noun Phrase Head
It cleans, bright and shiny	<i>Bright, Shiny</i>	D: Size/Quantity/Extent	Free Modifier

It is evident that the writers and editors of Reader's Digest magazines favoured attributive adjectives in the headlines, with 199 such adjectives identified. Predicative adjectives were also employed, including 17 adjectives functioning as subject predicatives and three adjectives functioning as object predicatives in the headlines. The least frequently used adjectives were those functioning as object predicatives, noun phrase heads, and free modifiers.

DISCUSSION

Similarities of the Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines

Based on the findings, several similarities exist between *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines. The first similarity pertains to the semantic categories of adjectives. Both *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines contain more adjectives classified as descriptors. In *The Star* newspapers, the top four descriptor types—size/quantity/extent, time, miscellaneous, and emotive—closely resemble those found in *Reader's Digest* magazines. Another shared aspect is the least frequent descriptor type. In *Reader's Digest* magazines, only three colour descriptors are identified, while in *The Star* newspapers, only eight colour descriptors are found, making it the least common among the other descriptor types.

It is evident that the writers of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines prefer incorporating descriptors in their headlines. This preference is likely due to the characteristics of descriptors, as they are adjectives that describe colour, size, weight, chronology, age, emotion, and other characteristics, and are often gradable (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). These characteristics play a crucial role in making headlines more detailed and attention-grabbing, as they provide simplified information or often the gist of the entire article. Examples of descriptors used in the headlines of both print media are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Descriptors in the headlines of both print media.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category
Dolla members slammed for sexy dance moves	<i>Sexy</i>	D: Miscellaneous
Mysterious vandal attacks Berlin museums	<i>Mysterious</i>	D: Emotive
Chilling medical dramas	<i>Chilling</i>	D: Emotive
Extraordinary inventions by ordinary people	<i>Extraordinary, Ordinary</i>	D: Emotive
Big drop in donations	<i>Big</i>	D: Miscellaneous

Based on the examples above, descriptors such as *Sexy*, *Mysterious*, *Chilling*, *Extraordinary*, *Ordinary*, and *Big* not only provide simplified information about the articles, but they also enhance the headlines by making them more captivating and newsworthy for readers. For instance, if the descriptor *Sexy* is removed from the first headline, it becomes dull and uninteresting, potentially discouraging readers from engaging with the article. Descriptors like *Mysterious* and *Chilling* in the second and third headlines add dramatic effect and create a sense of eagerness, prompting readers to immediately start reading the articles. In the fifth headline, the descriptor *Big* emphasises the severity of the issue, conveying the news' intensity to readers. Removing *Big* from the headline might diminish the seriousness of the issue as a whole.

Another similarity between both print media lies in their use of classifiers. In *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazines, the number of classifiers is lower compared to descriptors. Both print media share similarities in the types of classifiers found. In both newspaper and magazine headlines, the number of restrictive/relational classifiers and specific classifiers is higher than affiliative classifiers, which can be attributed to the classifiers' characteristics.

According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), classifiers can limit or restrict a noun's referent, rather than describing characteristics as descriptors do. The reason why affiliative classifiers are less prominent in both newspaper and magazine headlines is because they are used to identify the national or social group of a referent (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). In contrast, restrictive classifiers and specific classifiers can limit the referent of a noun in relation to other referents and provide the subject area or specific type of a noun, respectively (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). Examples of restrictive classifiers and specific classifiers from headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines are illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. Restrictive and specific classifiers in the headlines of both print media.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category
Renaming plant-based foods	<i>Plant-based</i>	C: Restrictive
Digital help for small traders	<i>Digital</i>	C: Restrictive
Renewable energy projects to pick up steam	<i>Renewable</i>	C: Restrictive
The experimental scientist	<i>Experimental</i>	C: Specific
The medical trailblazer	<i>Medical</i>	C: Specific
Malaysians embrace high-rise living.	<i>High-rise</i>	C: Specific

Based on the examples above, the restrictive/relational and specific classifiers include terms such as *plant-based*, *digital*, *renewable*, *experimental*, *medical*, and *high-rise*. The restrictive/relational classifiers—*plant-based*, *digital*, and *renewable*—limit the referent of the nouns (in this case, *foods*, *help*, and *energy*) in relation to other referents. For instance, if the restrictive classifier *plant-based* is removed, the topic of the headline becomes generic and vague, leading to a wide interpretation of the noun *foods*.

As for the specific classifiers, *experimental*, *medical*, and *high-rise* provide the subject area or specific type of the noun in the headlines. In this case, the classifiers *experimental* and *medical* indicate the subject area for the nouns *scientist* and *trailblazer*, respectively. Regarding the specific classifier *high-rise*, it modifies a specific type of noun. In this case, *high-rise living* in the headline refers to living in a multi-story building.

Differences of the Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader’s Digest* magazines

Based on the findings, there are differences in certain aspects of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader’s Digest* magazines. One notable difference is the scarcity of colour descriptors found in the headlines of both print media. There are eight colour descriptors identified in *The Star* newspaper headlines and three colour descriptors in *Reader’s Digest* magazine headlines. Examples of colour descriptors used can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12. Colour descriptors from both print media.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category
The golden elm tree	<i>Golden</i>	D: Colour
Mr Lee’s red box	<i>Red</i>	D: Colour
White coats chant protests	<i>White</i>	D: Colour

Colour descriptors are the least common descriptor type in the headlines of both print media. In newspapers and magazines, headlines are often accompanied by visual images to captivate the reader’s attention. Furthermore, compared to other descriptors such as emotive or size/quantity/extent, colour descriptors present in the headlines merely describe the nouns *box*, *coats*, and the noun phrase *elm tree*. As such, colour descriptors do not emphasise the intensity or increase the severity of the issues.

Another difference between the two print media is in terms of affiliative classifiers. In *The Star* newspapers, no affiliative classifiers were identified in the headlines retrieved, whereas there are six affiliative classifiers in the *Reader’s Digest* magazines. Examples of affiliative classifiers found in the *Reader’s Digest* magazines can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13. Affiliative classifiers found in *Reader’s Digest*.

Headline	Adjective	Semantic Category
A toast to Belgian beer	<i>Belgian</i>	C: Affiliative
Sicilian connection	<i>Sicilian</i>	C: Affiliative
Indian summer	<i>Indian</i>	C: Affiliative

Based on the examples above, *Belgian*, *Sicilian*, and *Indian* are affiliative classifiers. *Belgian* refers to ‘belonging to or relating to Belgium or its people’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). *Sicilian* refers to ‘belonging or relating to Sicily, or to its people or culture’, and *Indian* refers to ‘belonging or relating to India, or its people or culture’ (Collins Dictionary, 2021). Both print media incorporate fewer affiliative classifiers in their headlines because these classifiers are used to only identify the national or social group of a referent (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). Using these affiliative classifiers in headlines may promote or degrade a certain social group or nationality, depending on the positivity or negativity of the news article.

Similarities of the Functions of Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader’s Digest* magazines

Based on the findings, there are several similar aspects between *The Star* newspaper and *Reader’s Digest* magazine headlines regarding the syntactic functions of adjectives. The first aspect is that, in both print media, most of the adjectives identified in the headlines function as attributive adjectives. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), attributive adjectives typically modify common nouns, personal pronouns, and proper place nouns. Additionally, attributive adjectives that modify personal pronouns are uncommon and usually found in verbal communication and fiction, particularly in exclamations (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2002). Examples of adjectives functioning as attributive in the headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader’s Digest* magazines are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Adjectives functioning as attributive in both print media.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
The most unforgettable Nancy Astor	<i>Unforgettable</i>	Attributive
Confident girls	<i>Confident</i>	Attributive
Wild nights at the zoo	<i>Wild</i>	Attributive
4 historical facts about Turkey	<i>Historical</i>	Attributive

The adjectives *unforgettable*, *confident*, *wild*, and *historical* all function as attributive adjectives in the headlines. In the first headline, the adjective *unforgettable* modifies the individual named *Nancy Astor*. In the remaining three headlines, the adjective *confident* modifies the common noun, *girls*, while the adjective *wild* modifies the common noun, *nights*. The adjective *historical* also modifies the common noun, *facts* in the headline. Based on the findings and analysis, it is evident that most of the attributive adjectives modify common nouns in the headlines of both print media.

Another similar aspect in both print media is that adjectives functioning as subject predicative are the second most common adjectives in the headlines. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), subject predicative adjectives complement a copular verb and characterise the nominal expression in the subject position. Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) also stated that predicative adjectives can occur with a phrasal or clausal complement of their own, meaning they have a prepositional phrase, *to*-infinitive clause, or *that*-clause that complements their meaning. Examples of adjectives functioning as subject predicative in the headlines of both print media are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Adjectives that function as subject predicative in both print media.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
Maxis stays steady despite worries over ARPU dilution	<i>Steady</i>	Subject Predicative
Traders getting creative to draw customers.	<i>Creative</i>	Subject Predicative
SOPs are crucial	<i>Crucial</i>	Subject Predicative
That's outrageous	<i>Outrageous</i>	Subject Predicative

Based on the examples above, the adjectives *steady*, *creative*, *crucial*, and *outrageous* function as subject predicative in the headlines. In the first headline, the adjective *steady* complements the verb *stays* and characterises the subject *Maxis*. In the second headline, the adjective *creative* complements the verb *getting* and refers to the subject *traders*. The adjective *crucial* in the third headline complements the copular verb *are* and refers to the subject *SOPs*. Lastly, in the fourth headline, the adjective *outrageous* complements the copular verb *is* and refers to *that*, which is in the subject position.

Differences of Functions of the Adjectives Used in the Headlines of *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazines

Based on the findings, there are differences between *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines in terms of the syntactic functions of adjectives identified in the headlines. Firstly, there are differences in using adjectives as object predicative. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), object predicative occurs with transitive verbs, following the direct object, and characterises the object instead of the subject. In *The Star* newspaper headlines, 15 adjectives function as object predicative, whereas there are only three in the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines. Examples of adjectives that function as object predicative in *The Star* newspaper are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Adjectives that function as object predicative in *The Star* newspaper.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
Flight simulators keep pilots sharp.	<i>Sharp</i>	Object Predicative
The venture capitalists declared it false.	<i>False</i>	Object Predicative
PM wants it foolproof.	<i>Foolproof</i>	Object Predicative

Based on the examples above, the adjectives *sharp*, *false*, and *foolproof* function as object predicative in their respective headlines. In the first headline, the adjective *sharp* characterises the direct object, *pilots*. The verb *keep* functions as a complex transitive verb in the headline. In the second headline, the adjective *false* characterises the direct

object, *it*. In the third headline, the adjective *foolproof* characterizes the direct object, *it*. The verbs *declared* and *wants* function as complex transitive verbs in the headlines, respectively, as they appear with the object predicative.

Another difference between *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines is the adjectives that function as noun phrase head. The *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines contain seven adjectives that function as noun phrase heads, which is more than *The Star* newspapers, which only have six adjectives. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), adjectives that function as noun phrase head can be modified by adverbs and can also take pre-modifiers. Examples of adjectives that function as noun phrase head in the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines are shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Adjectives functioning as noun phrase heads in the *Reader's Digest* headlines.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
Have the rich hijacked healthy eating	<i>Rich</i>	Noun Phrase Head
The Australian hits jackpot	<i>Australian</i>	Noun Phrase Head
What it's like to be a personal assistant for the rich and famous	<i>Rich, Famous</i>	Noun Phrase Head

Based on the examples above, the adjectives *rich*, *Australian*, and *famous* function as noun phrase heads in the headlines. The first and third headlines illustrate that the adjective-headed noun phrases refer to groups of rich people and rich and famous people, respectively. In the second headline, the noun phrase head, *Australian*, refers to the citizens of the country, Australia.

The difference in the number of adjectives that function as free modifiers between both print media is also evident. According to Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002), adjectives can be syntactically free modifiers of a noun phrase without being syntactically part of the noun phrase. In *The Star* newspaper headlines, four adjectives function as free modifiers, whereas in the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines, only two adjectives are found. Examples of adjectives that function as free modifiers in *The Star* newspaper headlines are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Adjectives functioning as free modifiers in *The Star* newspaper.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
Elegant and aesthetic, they began fashion week	<i>Elegant, Aesthetic</i>	Free Modifier
Widening of liquor ban, unnecessary and ridiculous	<i>Unnecessary, Ridiculous</i>	Free Modifier

In the examples provided, the adjectives *elegant* and *aesthetic* function as free modifiers, occurring in the initial position of the headline and modifying the noun phrase *they*. Conversely, the free modifiers *unnecessary* and *ridiculous* appear in the sentence-final position, modifying the phrase *widening of liquor ban*. A notable distinction between the two print media sources is the presence of adjectives functioning as linking expressions and postposed modifiers, which are exclusively found in *The Star* newspaper headlines, with one adjective each.

Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) explain that adjectives used as linking expressions serve to connect clauses or sentences and can also have modifiers. Additionally, they describe a postposed adjective as part of a noun phrase that follows the headword and is typically employed with compound indefinite pronouns as heads, such as *no one*, *anything*, or *somebody*. Table 19 presents examples of adjectives functioning as linking expressions and postposed modifiers from *The Star* newspaper headlines.

Table 19. Adjectives functioning as linking expression and postposed modifier from *The Star* headlines.

Headline	Adjective	Syntactic Function
Chill, authorities are just doing their job	<i>Chill</i>	Linking Expression
Making everything possible with e-learning	<i>Possible</i>	Postposed Modifier

Finally, in the first headline, the adjective *chill* functions as a linking expression, connecting to the sentence *authorities are just doing their job*. In the second headline, the adjective *possible* acts as a postposed modifier, accompanying the compound indefinite pronoun *everything*.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aimed to achieve two primary objectives: first, to identify the types of adjectives employed by writers in *The Star* newspaper and *Reader's Digest* magazine; and second, to examine the syntactic functions of the adjectives used in the headlines of these publications. The classification schemes proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) were adopted in this study to analyse the adjectives.

The analysis revealed that adjectives in *The Star* newspaper headlines predominantly consist of descriptors of size/quantity/extent, followed by time and miscellaneous categories. Although a significant difference exists in the number of adjectives found, the *Reader's Digest* magazine headlines primarily feature emotive descriptors, followed by size/quantity/extent and miscellaneous categories. This indicates that writers of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines predominantly favoured adjectives belonging to the semantic category of descriptors.

Moreover, it is evident that adjectives in the headlines of *The Star* newspapers and *Reader's Digest* magazines primarily function as attributive adjectives, followed by subject predicative. No adjectives function as exclamations in either dataset. This demonstrates that both print media primarily incorporated adjectives functioning as attributive.

The study aims to provide insights into the use of adjectives in headlines across both print media sources. It will benefit researchers interested in adjectives within the print media discourse. Furthermore, the classification schemes proposed by Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002) have proven valuable in the study of adjectives. This research also underscores the importance of conducting print media-based analyses. The findings will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the semantic categories and syntactic functions of adjectives among language learners. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore lexical word classes in other types of print media, such as newsletters, flyers, and brochures, and to utilise corpus tools to facilitate the process of generating and analysing the relevant data.

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