

Научная статья
УДК 81-25
DOI 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_9_877_130



Стратегии эквивалентности и преобразования при переводе английских новостных заголовков на русский язык

Ю. А. Филясова

*Санкт-Петербургский государственный экономический университет, Санкт-Петербург, Россия
phillyield@gmail.com*

Аннотация. В статье представлен семантический и количественный анализ 212 заголовков новостей BBC и их перевода на русский язык. Результаты анализа показывают, что в языке перевода стратегии сохранения эквивалентности и преобразования соотносятся 50/50 с большей статистической достоверностью в пользу первой. Наблюдается общий тренд увеличения числа слов в заголовках при переводе на русский язык на 19% вследствие преобразований – расширения значения, уточнения и социокультурной адаптации для русскоязычных читателей.

Ключевые слова: переводческие стратегии, расширение значения, спецификация, количественный анализ, межъязыковая асимметрия, новостные заголовки, переводческие приемы, переводческие трансформации, прагматическая адаптация

Для цитирования: Филясова Ю.А. Стратегии эквивалентности и преобразования при переводе английских новостных заголовков на русский язык // Вестник Московского государственного лингвистического университета. Гуманитарные науки. Вып. 9 (877). С. 130–136. DOI 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_9_877_130

Original article

Equivalence and Transformation Strategies for Translating English News Headlines into Russian

Yulia A. Filyasova

*Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics, Saint-Petersburg, Russia
phillyield@gmail.com*

Abstract. The paper presents a semantic and quantitative analysis of 212 original English BBC news headlines and their translations into Russian as the target language. The findings show 50/50 correlation between the equivalence and transformation strategies with higher statistical validity in favor of the former. When translated into Russian, the English headlines tended to increase in length by 19% as a result of transformations – meaning extension, specification, and sociocultural adaptation for the Russian readership.

Keywords: translation strategies, meaning extension, specification, quantitative analysis, interlingual asymmetry, news headlines, translation technique, translation transformations, pragmatic adaptation

For citation: Filyasova, Yu. A. (2023). Equivalence and transformation strategies for translating English news headlines into Russian. Vestnik of Moscow State Linguistic University. Humanities, 9(877), 130–136. 10.52070/2542-2197_2023_9_877_130

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a multi-componential intellectual process aimed at delivering the meaning from the source into the target language by means of multiple transformations which enable translators to consider interlingual asymmetry and adapt sociocultural realities to the perception of the target audience. Translation is viewed as a completely virtual activity which implies understanding the original meaning, generating a new internal intellectual program, and its expression by means of the linguistic system of the target language [Фролов, 2020]. At a deep semantic level, translation involves such intellectual operations as anticipation, analysis, presupposition, verification, and inference [Коровкина, Семенов, 2022]. Linguistic variation at the superficial level involves heuristics and sophistication of translator's competence [Шыверова, 2019]. In the digital age, translation process requires not only cognitive but also procedural skills [Чистова, 2021].

The equivalence strategy is derived from the fundamental nature of translation aimed at preserving the original meaning and saving intellectual resources required for the translation process. The use of transformation strategy is caused by interlingual asymmetry and differences between the superficial structures of the source and target languages. The information due for translation is analyzed at a deep virtual level in the translator's mind and is further converted into the verbal form of the target language. Linguistic affinity also determines the choice of translation strategy to a certain degree – equivalence for cognate and transformation for non-cognate languages. Original texts in the source language and their translation into the target language allow researchers to study the results of intellectual work and those transformations which helped preserve the original meaning of the original texts.

Media texts are known for their high informative value, persuasiveness, and expressiveness aimed at achieving the attention-grabbing effect. The translation process includes communicating ideas in combination with means of expression, style, culture-specific elements, among others. Translators need to possess deep knowledge of sociocultural specifics related to the source and target languages, in addition to profound language and communication skills.

Headline is an integral part of news article; its generation is inconceivable without compression, fusion, and summarization [Barros, Vicente, Lloret, 2021]. For the translation purposes, headlines of foreign news are subject to cross-lingual and multimodal recontextualization [Altahmazi, 2020], cultural and ethical adaptation, cosmopolitan openness, and domestication

[Bielsa, 2016], including such translation techniques as substitution [Guerrero, 2022], thematic conversion [Rahnemoon, Ahangar, Nourmohammadi, 2017], among others. Multiple researches into the translation of headlines helped identify the following techniques: neutralization, periphrasis, lexical extension, omission, the use of colloquial language [Кобцева, 2020], substitution, permutation, addition [Завьялова, 2019], metaphorization, compression, social and national adaptation [Буюнова, Шамина, 2017], pragmatic adaptation, explication, implication [Тимко, 2021], accompanied by identifying some quantitative trends [Калиущенко, Миткова, 2017], and studying into the communicative effect between the original and target texts [Волкова, Наливайко, 2022].

The morphology of BBC news headlines show that the average length varied between 4 and 13 words, half of them were nouns, 0.1 verbs, 0.1 adjectives and adverbs, the rest are mainly function words [Filyasova, 2018; Filyasova, Selenkov, Evseeva, 2018].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material for the research in English as the source language was obtained from the BBC news provider¹ and its Russian service² over the time period of the recent two years – from November 1, 2022, backwards as early as November 2021. Continuous sampling method was used for material selection. Each English news article was searched for its translation into Russian as the target language. The same date, author if any (English speakers), and identical information contents served as a basis for article identification in Russian. The total number of 424 news headlines were collected (original English 212, and their Russian counterparts 212).

News headlines – original English and their translations into Russian – served as major units of analysis. The aim of the research was to compare and contrast headlines of the same news stories semantically and numerically in terms of translation equivalence and transformation. Primary analysis gave the possibility to establish direct interlingual equivalents with the consideration of interlingual asymmetry, and distinguish them from transformations such as adaptation, addition, or omission. Secondly, quantitative data were obtained. Further classification of the headlines and translation techniques was performed.

For example: *Piet Mondrian artwork displayed upside down for 75 years – Произведение художника*

¹ BBC News. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news> (accessed 1.11.2022)

² BBC News Русская служба. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/russian> (accessed 01.11.2022).

Пита Мондриана 75 лет выставляют в галереях вверх ногами. Заметили только сейчас. The lexical components which have direct equivalents are marked in bold. Both the English and Russian counterparts have eight common elements which are regarded as 'equivalents'; while six Russian words do not have any, and therefore, these were considered as 'transformations'. In this example, 'художника' and 'в галереях' are specifications, 'Заметили только сейчас' – meaning extension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that the headlines in the target language are generally 19% longer than those in the source language. The average and median values correlate as 9:11, similarly to the mode values – 8:10. The maximum extremes provide some additional evidence – 15:19, though the minimums are equal – 4. The sum total of all words in the English vs Russian headlines are as follows: 1927/2375. The correlation in characters between the original and translated headlines is 12342/16684, or 74%. Consequently, the visual discrepancy in length between the English and Russian equivalents, on average, is more noticeable (Tb. 1).

Table 1

STATISTICAL DATA ON NEWS HEADLINES

Language	Indicators	Equivalent	Transformed	Total
English (N 212)	average	6.0	3.0	9.0.
	mode	5.0	4.0.	8.0.
	median	6.0	3.0.	9.0.
	max	11.0	10.0.	15.0.
	min	0.0	0.0.	4.0.
	st. dev.	2.18	2.38	1.79
	t-test (equiv. vs tranf.)	10.2 (relevant)		
Russian (N 212)	average	5.0	6.0	11.0
	mode	6.0	4.0	10.0
	median	6.0	5.0	11.0
	max	11.0	17.0	19.0
	min	0.0	0.0	4.0
	st. dev.	2.13	3.45	3.22
	t-test (equiv. vs tranf.)	0.8 (irrelevant)		
N _(total) 424	t-test (Eng. vs. Rus.)	1.1 (irrelevant)	8.0 (relevant)	8.1 (relevant)

The standard deviation shows that the material under analysis is statistically representative, the English statistics being more reliable (1.79) than

Russian (3.22). The equivalent parts are less subject to variation (Eng. 2.18; Rus. 2.13) than the transformed (Eng. 2.38; Rus. 3.45). The transformations in the target language are more likely to vary in length, which becomes evident in the figures of the "total" standard deviation (Tb. 1).

The same difference of 13% (Eng. 62% vs Rus. 49%) is statistically irrelevant for the equivalent parts (t-test 1.1); however, it is relevant (Eng. 38% vs Rus. 51%) for the transformations (t-test 8), see Fig. 1. The findings testify to the fact that the equivalent parts in the news headlines under analysis have not only linguistic, but also statistical equivalence. Conversely, transformations are different both in deep semantic and numerical terms.

Due to linguistic asymmetry, the equivalent parts of the headlines that underwent transformations in the target language do not quantitatively coincide in the average values with those in the source language (Eng. 62% vs Rus. 49%). It can be inferred that the analytical structure of the English language is responsible for more functional words and auxiliary verbs (approximately 13%) than in the Russian language with the synthetic structure which is more compact, e.g. 'to be held into' (four words) are equivalent to 'проведет' (one word):

Dawn Sturgess public inquiry to be held into Novichok death (10)¹ – Отравление "**Новичком**": Британия **проведет общественное расследование смерти Дон Стерджесс** (9). Another example: *The Invisible Hand of Donald Trump* (6) – **Невидимая рука Дональда Трампа** (4).

The headlines were further classified on the basis of their total length in the target vs source languages, and types of translation transformations. The overwhelming majority of the headlines under analysis did not have direct interlingual equivalents due to modulation, permutation, transposition, etc. However, some of them contained direct equivalents and were considered separately (see: Meaning extension, Semantic equivalents, and Omissions) (Fig. 2).

The findings show that over 60% contained more words due to specification and adaptation. In many cases, the English headlines were intentionally extended with the information from the article in order to make them more informative or sensational, e.g.:

Prince Charles 'accepted a suitcase with 1 m euros', report claims (11) – 3 млн евро для **принца Чарльза в чемоданах** и сумках. Как наследник престола **получал** деньги на благотворительность от

¹ Hereinafter the figures in brackets after examples specify the number of words in the headlines.

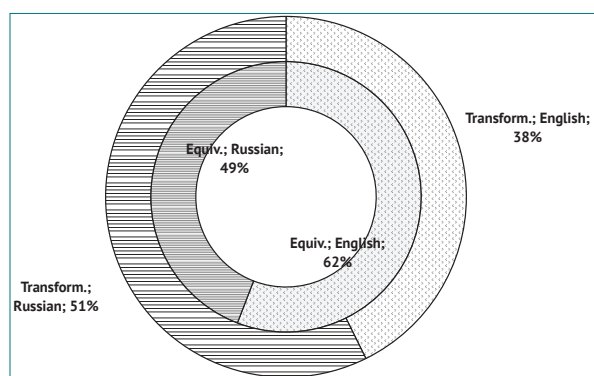


Figure 1. Proportions between equivalent and transformed language material in news headlines (average)

шейха (19); *Ex-UK pilots lured* to help Chinese *military*, MoD says (9) – Китай *переманивает британских отставных военных летчиков*. С этим хотят бороться законом об “иностранном влиянии” (14).

A separate group included examples in which all words from the original headlines had equivalents in the Russian translation and some more information was added from the article:

Ukraine war could last for years, warns Nato chief (9) – “На это могут уйти годы”. Генсек НАТО предупредил, что война в Украине будет долгой; Британия готовится к наземным битвам (19); *Beautiful Plumed Bird of Paradise* (5) – Райские птицы: откуда у них такое завораживающее оперение? (8).

Omissions, on the contrary, were exceedingly rare:

British Prime Minister *Liz Truss resigns* (6) – Лиз Трасс уходит в отставку (5).

Complete semantic equivalents were also infrequent:

The Invisible Hand of Donald Trump (6) – Невидимая рука Дональда Трампа (4).

Only one headline had no direct equivalents as a result of substitution, meaning extension and generalization:

Black Death 700 years ago affects your health now (9) – Как чума сыграла (и продолжает играть) важную роль в эволюции человека (11).

The headlines with fewer words in the target language occurred as a result of generalization, interlingual asymmetry, cultural adaptation, or information omission:

T.rex gets Christmas jumper at Natural History Museum in London (10) – В музее Лондона тираннозавра нарядили в рождественский свитер (8) (generalization); *Ikea cuts sick pay for unvaccinated UK staff* who are self-isolating (11) – IKEA сократит выплаты по больничным невакцинированным сотрудникам (9) (information omission).

A group of 18 headlines with equal length were a matter of chance rather than a trend:

Channel *migrants: Emmanuel* Macron and *Boris Johnson* clash over crisis (10) – “Дорогой Эммануэль”. Борис Джонсон разгневал Францию открытым письмом о мигрантах (10).

Transformations included a wide range of translation techniques and their combinations:

– substitution:

Zara and Mike Tindall lose their baby (7) – Внучка королевы Елизаветы II потеряла ребенка (6);

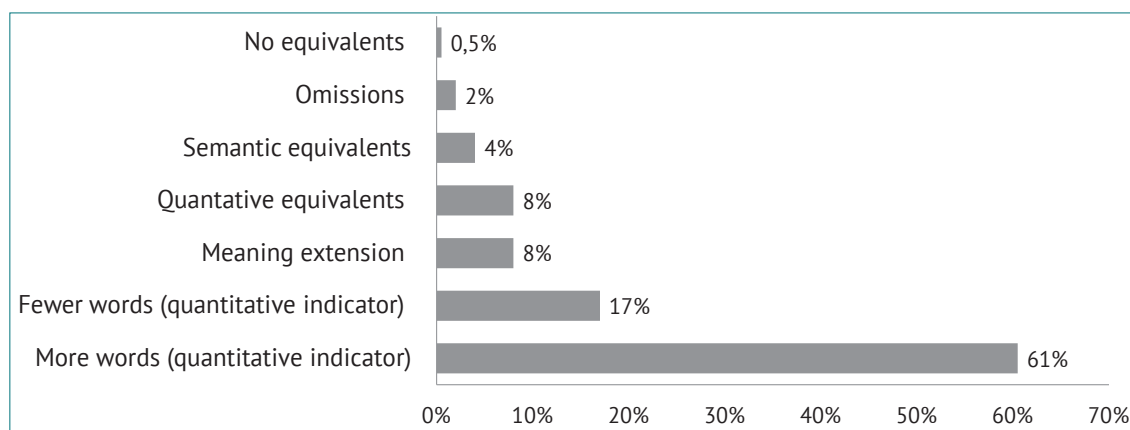


Figure 2. Characteristics of the headlines in the target language, as compared to the source language.

- omission, specification, and syntactic adaption:

Watch: The moment *a sloth was saved from electrical wires* (10) – *Спасли ленивца*. Животное застряло в *электропроводах* (6);

- generalization and lexical transformations:

Colombia cocaine production acreage at 'record level' (7) – В *Колумбии производство* наркотиков достигло *рекорда* (6);

- substitution and specification:

Oak Fire: Emergency declared as wildfire rages near *Yosemite National Park* (11) – “*Дубовый пожар*” угрожает знаменитым древним секвойям в *Йосемитском парке* Калифорнии (10)

- holistic transformation:

Prince Charles test positive for Covid, Clarence House tok (9) – *Принц Чарльз* во второй раз заразился коронавирусом (7);

- **meaning extension** with some additional information from the article:

Prince Harry in legal fight to pay for *UK police* protection (11) – *Принц Гарри через суд* пытается вернуть *полицейскую охрану в Британии*. Он готов оплачивать ее сам (15).

Translation strategies occur as a result of deep transformations at the cognitive level which generate units of meaning lying behind verbal structures. Headline as a unit of meaning creates a

certain context which expands further on in article. Being the ultimate expression of article contents, headline finds expression through particular linguistic forms of the target language. The conducted analysis shows that, on average, only 50% of the original English units of language remain in the Russian headlines as a result of translation, which gives evidence of complex correlations between linguistic structures, cultural perceptions, and media standards.

CONCLUSION

Translation, aimed at maintaining equivalence in meaning between the source and target texts, has to comply with various principles which extend beyond the scope of interlingual asymmetry. Apart from interlingual equivalence, headline translation should be highly informative, appealing to the reader, culturally comprehensive, and meeting journalistic standards.

The findings show that structurally, the Russian headlines are shorter in the absence of auxiliary verbs and function words. However, the majority of the Russian translations have additional pieces of information that specify English political, cultural, or economic realities from the articles for achieving a similar perceptual effect for the Russian-speaking readership. Such additions extend the original English headlines. Generally, the equivalent parts of the headlines had more regular manifestations in the source and target languages in statistical terms, demonstrating a narrower range of dispersion, whereas transformations tended to be more variable. It can be concluded that the strategy for equivalence slightly prevails over transformations.

СПИСОК ИСТОЧНИКОВ

1. Фролов В. И. Определение и границы перевода: психолингвистический подход // Вестник Московского государственного лингвистического университета. Гуманитарные науки. 2020. №4(833). С. 91–101.
2. Коровкина М. Е., Семенов А. Л. Инферирование и функциональный подход к тексту: на материале синхронного перевода // Вестник РУДН. Серия: Теория языка. Семиотика. Семантика. 2022. Т. 13. №2. С. 337–352. doi: 10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-2-337-352
3. Шуверова Т. Д. Лингвовариативность как основа формирования переводческих компетенций // Актуальные проблемы коммуникации. Язык и перевод: сб. ст. I Междунар. науч.-практ. конф. Москва, 16–19 апреля 2018 г. М.: МПГУ, 2019. С. 115–121.
4. Чистова Е. В. Модель экологичного управления когницией в цифровом переводе // Вестник Московского государственного университета. Серия 22: Теория перевода. 2021. №3. С. 46–59.
5. Barros Ch., Vicente M., Lloret E. To what extent does content selection affect surface realization in the context of headline generation? // Computer Speech and Language. 2021. Vol. 67. 101179. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csl.2020.101179>

6. Altahmazi Th. H. M. Creating realities across languages and modalities: Multimodal recontextualization in the translation of online news reports // *Discourse, Context and Media*. 2020. Vol. 35. 100390. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100390>
7. Bielsa E. News translation: global or cosmopolitan connections? // *Media, Culture and Society*. 2016. Vol. 38 (2). P. 196–211. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715613635>
8. Guerrero M. J. H. The translation of multimedia news stories: Rewriting the digital narrative // *Journalism*. 2022. Vol. 23. Iss. 7. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221074>
9. Rahnemoun S. N., Ahangar A. A., Nourmohammadi E. Thematic structure and translation: A case study of the translation of English news into Persian // *Lingua*. 2017. Vol. 194. P. 26–50. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2017.05.003>.
10. Кобцева А. Ю. Основные способы перевода заголовков статей иностранных СМИ с английского языка на русский // *Языки и литература в поликультурном пространстве*. 2020. №6. С. 53–57.
11. Завьялова Ю. А. Функционирование трансформаций при переводе заголовков немецкоязычных статей онлайн-ресурса deutschland.de на русский язык // *Litera*. 2019. №2. С. 1–5.
12. Буянова Е. В., Шамина Н. В. Амплификация и компрессия текста и его названия как средство передачи информационной структуры // *Russian Linguistic Bulletin*. 2017. № 1 (9). С. 15–17.
13. Тимко Т. В. Стратегии экспликации и имплицирования при переводе заголовков статей СМИ с английского языка на русский // *Известия Волгоградского гос. пед. ун-та*. 2021. №1 (154). С. 203–208.
14. Калиущенко В. Д., Миткова Е. А. Перевод на русский язык англо- и немецкоязычных заголовков политических статей // *Studia Germanica, Romanica et Comparatistica*. 2017. Том 13. №1–2 (35–36). С. 150–159.
15. Волкова Т. А., Наливайко К. Ю. Перевод и адаптация научно-популярной статьи: эксперимент с разными коммуникативными заданиями // *Язык и культура*. 2022. № 58. С. 150–169. doi: 10.17223/19996195/58/9
16. Filyasova Yu. News headlines: a contrastive linguistic analysis // 5th international multidisciplinary scientific conference on social sciences and arts SGEM 2018: Conference proceedings, Vienna, March 19–21, 2018. P. 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.5593/sgemsocial2018H/31/S10.042>.
17. Filyasova Yu. A., Selenkov A. A., Evseeva A. A. BBC news headlines' characteristics // *Язык и речь в Интернете: личность, общество, коммуникация, культура: сб. ст. II Междунар. науч.-практ. конф. Т. 2. Москва, 29–30 марта 2018 г. М.: РУДН, 2018. С. 335–342.*

REFERENCES

1. Frolov, V. I. (2020). Definition and limits of translation from psycholinguistic perspective. *Vestnik of Moscow State Linguistic University. Humanities*, 4(833), 91–101.
2. Korovkina, M. Y., Semenov, A. L. (2022). Inferencing and Functional Approach to Text: Based on Simultaneous Interpreting. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 13(2), 337–352. [10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-2-337-352](https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-2-337-352)
3. Shuverova, T. D. (2019). *Lingvovariativnost' kak osnova formirovaniya perevodcheskikh kompetencij = Linguovariability – the Basis of forming translator competences. Aktual'nye problemy kommunikacii. Jazyk i perevod* (pp. 115–121): proceedings of I International scientific and practical conference. April 16–19, 2018. Moscow: MPSU.
4. Chistova, Ye. V. (2021). An eco-friendly model of cognitive management in digital translation studies. *Moscow University Translation Studies Bulletin*, 3, 46–59.
5. Barros, Ch., Vicente, M., Lloret, E. (2021). To what extent does content selection affect surface realization in the context of headline generation? *Computer Speech & Language*, 67, 101179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csl.2020.101179>
6. Altahmazi, Th. H. M. (2020). Creating realities across languages and modalities: Multimodal recontextualization in the translation of online news reports. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 35, 100390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100390>.
7. Bielsa, E. (2016). News translation: global or cosmopolitan connections? *Media, Culture & Society*, 38(2), 196–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715613635>
8. Guerrero, M. J. H. (2022). The translation of multimedia news stories: Rewriting the digital narrative. *Journalism*, 23(7). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221074>

9. Rahnemoon, S. N., Ahangar, A. A., Nourmohammadi, E. (2017). Thematic structure and translation: A case study of the translation of English news into Persian. *Lingua*, 194, 26–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2017.05.003>.
10. Kobtseva, A. Yu. (2020). Osnovnye sposoby perevoda zagolovkov statej inostrannykh SMI s anglijskogo yazyka na russkij = The main techniques for translating headlines of foreign media articles from English into Russian. *Languages and literature in a multicultural environment, Osnovnye sposoby perevoda zagolovkov statej inostrannykh SMI s anglijskogo yazyka na russkij. Jazyki i literatura v polikul'turnom prostranstve*, 6, 53–57.
11. Zavialova, I. (2019). Functions performed by transformations that appear in the process of translating German article headlines on deutschland.de to Russian. *Litera*, 2, 1–5.
12. Buyanova, E. V., Shamina, N. V. (2017). Amplification and compression of the text and its title as a means of conveying the information structure // *Russian Linguistic Bulletin*, 1(9), 15–17.
13. Timko, N. V. (2021). Strategies of explication and implication during the translation of the titles of the mass media articles from English into Russian. *Izvestia of the Volgograd State Pedagogical University*, 1 (154), 203–208.
14. Kaliuščenko, V. D., Mitkova, Ye. A. (2017). Translating headlines of English and German political articles into Russian // *Studia Germanica, Romanica et Comparatistica*, 13, 1–2(35–36), 150–159.
15. Volkova, T. A., Nalivaiko, K. Yu. (2022). Translation and adaptation of a popular science article: an experiment with different translation briefs. *Language and Culture*, 58, 150–169. doi: 10.17223/19996195/58/9
16. Filyasova, Yu. (2018). News headlines: a contrastive linguistic analysis. 5th international multidisciplinary scientific conference on social sciences and arts SGEM 2018 (pp. 333–344): Conference proceedings, Vienna. March 19–21, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.5593/sgemsocial2018H/31/S10.042>.
17. Filyasova, Yu. A., Selenkov, A. A., Evseeva, A. A. (2018). BBC news headlines' characteristics. *Language and Speech in the Internet: Personality, Society, Communication, and Culture* (vol. 2; pp. 335–342): Proc. of II International scientific and practical conference. Moscow, March 29–30, 2018. Moscow: RUDN.

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ

Филясова Юлия Анатольевна

кандидат филологических наук

доцент кафедры английской филологии и перевода

Санкт-Петербургского государственного экономического университета

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Filyasova Yulia Anatolyevna

PhD (Philology)

Associate Professor at the English Philology and Translation Department

Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics

Статья поступила в редакцию
одобрена после рецензирования
принята к публикации

16.11.2022
08.06.2023
03.07.2023

The article was submitted
approved after reviewing
accepted for publication