The Language of Entertainment News is a Serious Business!

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Key words: entertainment news, structural complexity, semantic diversity

ABSTRACT

An essentially qualitative structural and semantic analysis is performed on the text of an 'American Idol' coverage posted on yahoo.com January 24th, 2013, constituting a micro corpus of 2,739 words. Being what it is, entertainment laced with a shot of drama and scandal, most of us share similar expectations as to what packaging such content will come in: in short, we anticipate relatively informal language and simple structures. However, a preliminary analysis of the story reveals at face value a fair amount of both phrasal and clausal complexity, with modification embedded at different levels of structures under investigation. Moreover, not only do the structures appear morphologically and syntactically complex, but their semantic representations also add to this diversity. Much as providing too much detail at word, phrase and clause level can easily lead to information overload, it also makes a clever tactic helping to transform a basically frivolous event into a top story of the day. It seems to be an attempt to ascribe relevance and newsworthiness to an affair that is nothing more than entertainment, but the aforementioned strategies almost make it look like a serious business.