

Hooks and Endings in Magazine Articles to Engage Readers

Su-Hie Ting¹, Universiti Malaysia, Sarawak and Jacqueline Chin-Chin Siaw²

Date Received: 25 September 2020 Revised: 31 October 2020 Accepted: 2 November 2020

Abstract

In view of the lack of research on types of hooks and endings which are commonly used in articles for leisure reading, this study examined hooks and endings in magazine articles. A total of 19 articles from *Kuching In and Out (KINO)* magazine published in Malaysia were selected for analysis (6 by males, 13 by females). The most common types of hooks to draw readers into the next sentence and set the tone for the rest of an article were flashback, description, and facts. Flashback and self-introduction were new, probably due to the nature of the *KINO* magazine which features the life experiences of writers from Kuching who are presently living in other parts of the world. Less-frequently used hooks were empathy, mystery, plot twist, and questions. Most endings were a return to the writer's hook or information mentioned earlier in the article, taking the form of reflections or issue resolution, as well as two other less-used endings, questioning and giving revelations. An ending that was different was taking leave, which reflected a talking style similar to "a good-bye" in social interactions. The study suggests that some hooks and endings are specific to the subject matter and readership of magazines.

Keywords: *Magazine articles, organisational features, hooks, endings*

Introduction

Magazine articles are written to entertain, which is why they are mostly stories of human interest. Even when an article is about technical subject matter in specialist magazines, the articles are set in more casual settings and written to attract the audience's attention, capitalising on captivating pictures, catchy headings, and hooks. Magazine articles may not have a clear organisational structure like academic texts because the casual tone leaves a lot of space for writers to structure articles in their own ways. However, the introduction and conclusion parts of magazine articles define their success; in magazines, these are referred to as hooks and endings respectively (Copeman, 2006). To our knowledge, there is a lack of academic research on the introductions and conclusions of magazine articles, and most of the available information is from websites on magazine writing. Therefore, little is known about the types of hooks and endings which are commonly used in magazine articles. The extant studies on magazine writing focused on gender-based variations in magazines for women and men (Argamon et al., 2003; Arvidsson, 2009; Kapidzic & Herring, 2011; Miller, 1987; Rusling, 2010; Schler, 2006; Willemsen, 1998).

This study investigated hooks and endings of articles in a magazine written for a largely Malaysian readership. The analysis focused on the introductory and concluding paragraphs of the magazine articles. A genre analysis of the entire article was not conducted because magazine articles may not have a clear organisational structure like academic texts. The casual tone of magazines gives leeway for writers to structure their articles in their own ways, and there is great variability in organisational structures. This study adds to knowledge in the field of magazine writing, in view of the lack of previous academic research on the use of strategies to hook readers and to leave a memorable impact on them in the conclusion.

Literature Review

In this section, articles on strategies used in hooks and endings of magazine articles will be reviewed. The hook refers specifically to the first sentence in the introduction. The purpose of the

¹ Corresponding author's email address: suhieting@gmail.com

² Independent researcher