

Inflated language in current job titles

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Abstract: The article deals with the usage of inflated language in current English focusing on the description of work positions in vacancy advertisements. Concrete examples of inflated job titles and the explanations of their meaning are given to illustrate this common trend.

Key words: inflated language, job titles, modern trend, job advertisements

Klíčová slova: nafouklý jazyk, název pracovní pozice, moderní trend, inzeráty na volná místa

The term “inflated language” is far from being a new concept in the field of linguistics. As a type of doublespeak it is designed to make the ordinary seem extraordinary, to make everyday things seem impressive, to give an air of importance to people or situations, to make the simple seem complex. (William Lutz, “Doubts About Doublespeak.” *State Government News*, July 1993).

These days, examples of inflated language can be found not only in literature but also business, advertising, the IT industry and increasingly in many new job titles. It is a well-known fact that the job market is currently evolving faster than the language so there is an obvious need to create new job titles. However, already existing jobs are also frequently renamed with a view to making them sound more glamorous and desirable. Another possible reason for this rebranding of old jobs may be an effort to hide the content of the job which would otherwise sound dull, unattractive and perhaps even off-putting to the younger generation.

This trend shows what a powerful means of communication and social behaviour language is. Through it we send crucial messages about our social background, position in the company or institution, authority and power. It would seem that such inflation should pose no problem as long as this trend is generally well accepted. Undoubtedly, there are also benefits to inflated language: a study by the Academy of Management Journal found that these “self-reflective” job titles contributed to a lowering of stress among holders. (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/> retrieved 5 October 2017). Moreover, a change in the job title makes many workers more loyal by providing them a sense of added recognition. Still, this trend seems to have gone over the top recently, resulting in some job descriptions which sound weird or hilarious. Here are some examples of rebranded job positions (Tab. 1).

Seeing from the examples given above, this modern trend of language inflation in job titles may not communicate the message clearly. Very often the wording of the advertised position is ambiguous or vague and may even deter potential job candidates from applying. Some employees already holding the above-mentioned

Tab. 1: *Examples of rebranded job positions*

Director of first impressions	Receptionist
Waste removal engineer	Garbage collector
Knowledge navigator	Teacher
Destination counsellor	Travel agent
Civil enforcement officer	Policeman/Policewoman
Technical horticultural maintenance officer	Gardener
Underwater ceramic technician	Dishwasher
Eviction technician	Bouncer
Media publications administrator	Paperboy/Papergirl
Refreshments and nutrition supervisor	Waiter/Waitress
Textile masseur	Person scrubbing ship decks
Chief troublemaker	Chief Executive Officer
Back-end manager	Graphic designer
Washroom operative	Cleaner
Sandwich artist	Person making sandwiches
Operations manager	Building maintenance engineer
Canine relocation specialist	Dog catcher

positions also say they do not identify with them and prefer not to use them themselves. Besides, recruiters are beginning to call for simple, plain language in job advertisements as opaque job titles cause problems for them and industries as a whole.

It may seem that the end of incomprehensible job titles is near. Even though the initial aim might have been to boost worker's self-esteem and pride in what they do and who they work for, the majority of current job titles have a reverse effect on prospective employees. Many linguists considered inflation to be a degradation of language, which often serves propaganda purposes. Or as George Orwell wrote "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity, which occurs when there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims."

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