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# London Newspapers

## Project London

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## Introduction

During our trip to London (06.03-12.03.2011) Sandra and I worked on a project concerning the diversity of newspapers and magazines and their influence on the readers.

We began to structure our project during classtime to make our work on location easier and faster.

Our main sources of information were the different kinds of newspapers we bought and collected in London. The majority of the newspapers we collected were free. We made use of many different research methods so as to get as much information as possible. Among other things we talked to journalists, went to the Museum of London to cover the historical aspects, compared the different newspapers and magazines and created a list of questions to give a detailed overall picture of this topic.

The only limitation we had was that we couldn't research all the existing newspapers and magazines. The selection of magazines and newspapers in London is so diverse that it would be nearly impossible to read and analyse all of them.

Sandra and I divided our topic into different aspects.

I would like to give a report about the following aspects:

- ❖ Quality (comparison between English newspapers and German ones, information content, length of the texts, style, format, and the use of complex vocabulary)
- ❖ Structure (comparison to Germany, clear defined structure, and the difference between the newspapers: free newspapers as opposed to newspapers with costs)
- ❖ Multilingualism (diversity of newspapers from all over the world, where to find the newspapers, reasons of printing so many newspapers in so many languages, who is reading the newspapers, and the comparison of English and German newspapers/magazines)
- ❖ Historical Aspects (origin, currency, some important aspects I got from the Museum of London and the internet)

## Sources

### Texts

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vereinigtes\\_K%C3%B6nigreich#Medien](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vereinigtes_K%C3%B6nigreich#Medien)

<http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/>

### Pictures

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/.a/6a00d8341c630a53ef011570b5fea4970b-800wi>

Pictures I took in London

# Project London – London Newspapers

form 12c

12.04.2011

## Quality

The first topic I would like to talk about is the quality of English newspapers and magazines. First, I made a comparison between different English newspapers and also a short comparison to a well known German newspaper, the *Hamburger Abendblatt*. Furthermore, I analysed the information content, the length of the texts, the style and the use of vocabulary.

These are the results:

Newspapers with a higher level of quality are called broadsheet-newspapers whereas newspapers with a lower quality level are called tabloid-newspapers, or just tabloids. To begin with, I compared the free newspaper you get on the streets or in the *Metro* to another standard newspaper. I used the *London Evening Standard*, and the *Metro*. It is obvious that each of the free newspapers has got a clear structure which they use day after day. This is an aspect which makes it easier to handle with the newspaper. Nevertheless, the pages are always full of texts and advertising which give the paper a disordered impression. You can find a picture referring to nearly every article they print. That is a good thing. Illustrating the articles makes them more interesting. The articles are not longer than half a page, and only contain the most important information you need to know to be informed about the different happenings.

When reading a paid newspaper, you notice that the articles are much longer and always give background information and sometimes comments of experts or longer interviews.

Example: Gaddafi's attacks against the inhabitants of Libya was one of the most important themes in the media during March. The articles in the *Metro* or in the *London Evening Standard* are not longer than one page. The articles in *The Guardian* generally have about three pages and 5 pictures.

You can also see that there are fewer pictures in *The Guardian*, whereas the number of advertisements is nearly the same.

The most important aspect when discussing the quality of a newspaper is the style and the use of vocabulary. That is where the largest difference between a free newspaper and a paid newspaper lies. When you read a free newspaper, it is obvious that the writers often put together sentences using simple grammar. The sentences are not always short, but they are almost always easy to understand. Paid newspapers often use complex sentences combined with technical terms. Furthermore, there is almost always a short introductory sentence or some keywords with the most important information in it. You cannot find these elements in the *Metro*, or the *London Evening Standard*.



The *Hamburger Abendblatt* is not easily comparable to English newspapers. It does not have as many advertisements and the main theme of the paper follows what is current in the

# Project London – London Newspapers

form 12c

12.04.2011

world. Aside from these things, the papers do not have much in common. The format of many German newspapers, like the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, is often different from the English ones. Most of the free English newspapers are printed in tabloid-style; first comes the picture and then the text. This represents a lower quality newspaper. It is like the *Morgenpost* in Germany or the *Metro* in England. The broadsheet-style is nearly always used for newspapers with a higher level of quality. This means the picture comes after the text as in the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, *Die Zeit*, *Financial Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Times*. To conclude, I think that there is a reasonable difference between these two types of newspapers. When you only need basic information about what happens in the world, it is enough to read the *Metro* or *London Evening Standard*. Businessmen who are interested in detailed articles with diagrams and comments of experts need to read newspapers like *The Daily Paragraph*.

In my opinion, a high quality newspaper needs to have a multitude of varying information, visualisations like pictures and diagrams and a reasonable number of technical terms.

## Structure

It is common knowledge that there is always a certain structure which differs from newspaper to newspaper. The following analysis shows similarities and differences in English and also in German newspapers.

Each newspaper has its own specific structure which is generally similar every day. The main pages in the *London Evening Standard* generally follow national and international news. Following the main pages comes a chapter which is called *London Life*. This section contains the latest news about London society, living, books, visual arts, and more. The *Metro*, which usually has the same format as the *London Evening Standard*, is structured a bit differently. The main pages contain many national news articles followed by just a few articles about happenings from all over the world. The index gives a clearly structured overview of the newspaper's contents, the webpage and help lines. All of the texts are written in a grouped style (like "Blockschrift" in German).

The headlines are always written in boldly printed letters to catch the reader's attention or to make the paper attractive to read. After the national and international news, lies the biggest difference concerning the structure. The *Metro* has a small business and finance part, whereas the *London Evening Standard* talks about stars, TV and radio. The sports section is always at the end.

There are many differences between free newspapers and the paid newspapers. As described above, every newspaper has its own specific structure. This includes paid newspapers. The biggest thing these two types of newspapers have in common is that the part with the latest news and economy is always the largest, followed by culture, and last come reports about VIP's and sports. It is similar to what we can see in German newspapers. Another similarity between the papers is that the headlines are all written in bold printed letters to catch the reader's attention.

# Project London – London Newspapers

form 12c

12.04.2011

Finally, I recognized that paid newspapers use some key words at the beginning of an article to give the reader a short overview about what the rest of the article is about. I really like this because it makes the article more interesting to read when one is presented with the facts directly.

In conclusion, you could say that the cost differences between free newspapers and newspapers with costs are not as big as the differences between the qualities. Of course a newspaper you buy at the kiosk is clearly better laid out than a newspaper you get for free at the train station. Nevertheless it is possible to deal with it.

## Multilingualism

London is full of international newspapers and magazines. As it is in London is a metropolis dominated by many people from all over the world and has every imaginable culture. That is one of the reasons why many agencies from different countries, such as China, Poland, Russia, and Australia, offer their newspapers to people in London: the majority for free! It helps people to stay updated on the latest news even if they do not speak English. In Chinatown, I talked to some people who were very bad at speaking English. In Fleet Street, I spoke with a journalist who told me some interesting things about all these newspapers in different languages.

He said that basically every quarter of London has its specific majority of foreigners. As a result, special newspapers in this language were offered. (Chinatown = Chinese Newspapers, Brick Lane= Indian, Arabian and Russian Newspapers, etc.)



Newspaper at a Metrostation

When you compare German newspapers to English newspapers, you notice that English newspapers are offered in many more languages. On the picture you can see a typical place where free newspapers were distributed.

## Historical Aspects

During the 17th century, there were many kinds of publications that told both news and rumors. At the beginning of the 17th century, the right to print was strictly controlled in England. Because of that, the first English newspapers were printed in Amsterdam in 1620. During this period of time, most of the newspapers were called newsbooks because they were published at least once a week. However, when England started printing their own newspapers in London, they strictly reverted format. The ages of these “newsbooks” lasted until the publication of the *Oxford Gazette* in 1665. In the picture you can see one of the first English Newspaper.



One of the first Newspaper

The history of newspapers in England was influenced by the Civil War. To some extent, after the ending of the Star Chamber in 1641, the control over printing relaxed a bit. News

# Project London – London Newspapers

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pamphlets often reported about the war. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were about 52 London papers and the most significant newspaper of this century was created: *The Times*. Over the years there were some strongly competitive papers, differentiated by their political interests.

The first versions only had about 10 pages. Today, there are always about 20 or even more. Due to the freedom of the press, each newspaper can now write freely and without any restrictions.

## Conclusion

Finally, it can be said that it was easy to get involved in the theme because of the large variety of information and newspapers which London offered us. In the light of the evidence drawn from the newspapers, we found out many interesting aspects of the historical background and also of where the differences between the different papers lie.

In my mind, the most interesting part of the composition was the visit to the Museum of London. There I got much of this information I have mentioned.

*“A newspaper is a device for making the ignorant more ignorant and the crazy crazier.”*

This is a quote I totally agree with. It shows that newspaper often make things crazier and more spectacular than they really are.

In comparison to other projects, I really liked the way we got to put this information together. It was not just a single internet search, but rather a mixture of self-analysis and one's own experience.