

THE PECULIARITIES OF THE NATIONAL PRESS IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Summary: The article deals with the peculiarities of the national press in Great Britain. The term 'national press' is defined. The national press is classified into types. Different newspapers are considered. The conclusion is made that the British press includes all the characteristics of the Ukrainian press.

Key words: broadsheet, daily press, national press, tabloid.

Анотація: У статті розглядаються особливості національної преси у Великобританії. Визначається термін 'національна преса'. Національна преса класифікується на типи. Розглядаються різноманітні газети. Зроблено висновок, що британська преса включає в себе всі характеристики української преси.

Ключові слова: бульварна газета, листівка, національна преса, щоденна преса.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются особенности национальной прессы Великобритании. Определяется термин 'национальная пресса'. Национальная пресса классифицируется на типы. Рассматриваются различные газеты. Делается вывод, что британская пресса включает в себя все характеристики украинской прессы.

Ключевые слова: бульварная газета, ежедневная пресса, листовка, национальная пресса.

We cannot imagine our everyday life without different kinds of media such as press, broadcast talk, TV, Internet, etc. All of them are unique, because they cover heterogeneous audience and use different methods of influence. Media, especially newspapers, have got great social importance.

Information is the strongest weapon. Newspapers influence the people thanks to the information. That is why more and more scientists are researching this topic.

This issue is being studied in comparison with the Ukrainian one. The article deals with the features of the national press in Great Britain. It concerns the importance of the national press for the British, secondly, analyzes two types of national newspaper and the characteristics of the national press.

British people watch television a lot. They are also reported to be the world's most dedicated home-video users. But this does not mean that they have given up reading. Swedes buy more. For example, Scotland's newspaper "The Sunday Post" sells well over a million copies.

Newspapers publication is dominated by the national press, which is an indication of the comparative weakness of regional identity in Britain. Nearly 80% of all households buy a copy of the main national papers every day [2, p.150]. There are more than eighty local and regional daily papers, but the total circulation all of them together is much less than the combined circulation of the national 'dailies'. The non-national papers with significant circulations are published in the evenings, when they do not compete with the national papers, which always appear in the mornings.

Most local papers do not appear on Sundays, so on that day the dominance of the national press is absolute. The 'Sunday papers' are called in such a way because that is the only day on which they appear. Some of them are sisters of dailies (published by the same company) but are employing separate editors and journalists [1, p. 43].

The morning newspaper is a British household institution; such an important one that until the laws were relaxed in the early 1990s newsagents were the only shops that were allowed to open on Sundays. People could not be expected to do without their newspapers for even one day, especially a day when there was more free time to read them. The Ukrainians can be expected to do without their newspapers for a day or even more. The Sunday papers sell slightly more copies than the national dailies and are thicker. Some of them have six or more sections making up a total of well over 200 pages.

Another indication of the importance of 'the papers' is the morning 'paper round'. Most newsagents organize that, and more than half of the country's readers get their morning paper delivered to their doors by a teenager who gets up at around half-past five every day in order to earn a bit of extra pocket money.

There are two types of national newspaper. Each of the national newspaper can be characterized as belonging to one or two distinct categories: the 'quality papers', or 'broadsheets', and the 'popular papers', or 'tabloids'. The latter contain far less print than the broadsheets and far more pictures. They use larger headlines and write in a simpler style of English. While the broadsheets devote much space to politics and other 'serious' news, the tabloids concentrate on 'human interest' stories, which often means sex and scandal [3, p. 152].

However, the broadsheets do not completely ignore sex and scandal or any other aspect of public life. The same situation is in Ukraine. Both types of paper devote equal amounts of attention to sport. The difference between them is in the treatment of the topics they cover, and in the preference of whose topics the most prominent are given.

The reason that the quality newspapers are called broadsheets and the popular papers are called tabloids is that they are of different shapes. The V ' broadsheets are twice as large as the tabloids. It is a mystery why in Britain reading intelligent papers should need highly-developed skills of paper-folding! But it certainly seems to be the rule. In 1989 a new paper was published, the Sunday Correspondent, advertising itself as the country's first 'quality tabloid'. It was closed in one year time.

The way politics is presented in the national newspapers reflects the fact that British political parties are essentially parliamentary organizations. Although different papers have different political outlooks, none of the large newspapers is an organ of a political party. Many of them are often obviously in favour of the policies of this or that party (and even more obviously against the policies of another party), but none of them would ever use 'we' or 'us' to refer to a certain party [4, p. 280].

What counts for the newspaper publishers is business. All of them are in the business first and foremost to make money. Their primary-concern is to sell as

many copies as possible and to attract as much advertising as possible. They normally put selling copies ahead of political integrity. The abrupt turnabout in the stance of the Scottish edition of the Sun in early 1991 is a good example. Previously, it had along with the Conservative party which it normally supports, vigorously opposed any idea of Scottish independence or home rule; but when it saw the opinion polls in early 1991 (and bearing in mind its comparatively low sales in Scotland), it decided to change its mind completely.

The British press is controlled by a rather small number of extremely large multinational companies. This fact helps to explain two notable features. One of these is the freedom from interference from government influence, which is virtually absolute. The press is so powerful in this respect that it is sometimes referred to as 'the fourth estate' (the other three being the Commons, the Lords and the monarch). This freedom is ensured because there is a general feeling in the country that 'freedom of speech' is a basic constitutional right. A striking example of the importance of speech freedom occurred during the Second World War. During this time the country had a coalition government of Conservative and Labour politicians, so that there was really no opposition in Parliament at all. At one time, the cabinet wanted to use a special wartime regulation to temporarily ban the Daily Mirror, which had been consistently critical of the government. The Labour party, which until then had been completely loyal to the government, immediately demanded a debate on the matter, and the other national papers, although they disagreed with the opinions of the Mirror, all leapt to its defence and opposed the ban. The government was forced to back down and the Mirror continued to appear throughout the war.

The other feature of the national press which is partially the result of the commercial interests of its owners is its shallowness. Few other European countries have a popular press which is so 'low'. Some of the tabloids have almost given up even the pretence of dealing with serious matters. Apart from sport, their pages are full of little except stories about the private lives of famous people. Sometimes their 'stories' are not articles at all, they are just excuses to show pictures of almost naked women. During the 1980-s page three of the Sun became infamous in this respect and the women who posed for its photographs became known as 'page three girls'[3, p.155].

The desire to attract more readers at all costs has meant that, in the late twentieth century, even the broadsheets in Britain can look rather 'popular' when compared to equivalent 'quality' papers in some other countries. They are still serious newspapers containing high quality articles whose presentation of factual information is usually reliable. But even they now give a lot of coverage to news with a 'human interest' angle when they have the opportunity. (The treatment by The Sunday Times of Prince Charles and Princess Diana is an example).

This emphasis on revealing the details of people's private lives has led to discussion about the possible need to restrict the freedom of the press. This is because, in behaving this way, the press has found itself in conflict with another British principle which is as strongly felt as that of freedom of speech

- the right to privacy. Many journalists now appear to spend their time trying to discover the most sensational secrets of well-known personalities, or even of ordinary people who, by chance, find themselves connected with some newsworthy situation. There is a widespread feeling that in doing so they behave too intrusively.

Complaints regarding invasions of privacy are dealt with by the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). This organization is made up of newspaper editors and journalists. In other words, the press is supposed to regulate itself. It follows a Code of Practice which sets limits on the extent to which newspapers should publish details of people's private lives. Many people are not happy with this arrangement and various governments have tried to formulate laws on the matter. However, against the right to privacy the press has successfully been able to oppose the concept of the public's 'right to know' [5, p. 752].

Of course, Britain is not the only country where the press is controlled by large companies with the same single aim of making profits. That is why the British press is more frivolous [3, p. 155]. The answer may lie in the function of the British press for its readers. British adults never read comics. These publications, which consist entirely of picture stories, are read only by children. It would be embarrassing for an adult to be seen reading one. Adults who want to read something very simple, with plenty of pictures to help them, have almost nowhere to go but the national press. Most people do not use newspaper for 'serious' news. For this purpose they turn to another source - broadcasting.

In conclusion, we can say that the British press consists of two main types of national newspapers: quality and popular. They have got their own topics. Most newspapers have their own political point of view and support a particular party or group. The British press includes all the characteristics of the Ukrainian press: features of the audience and perspective, style, design, etc.

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