TEMA

67

The Media in English (1): Journalistic Style. The Press. Quality Papers and Tabloids

Los medios de comunicación en lengua inglesa (1): El estilo periodístico. La prensa. Periódicos de calidad y periódicos sensacionalistas.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION

2. JOURNALISTIC STYLE

- 2.1. What counts as news
- 2.2. The structure of the news story
- 2.3. Headlines
- 2.4. Language and register

3. THE BRITISH PRESS: A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

- 3.1. From the Daily Courant to the Victorian press
- 3.2. Northcliffe and the mass market
- 3.3. The post-war press and The Sun

4. QUALITY PAPERS AND TABLOIDS

- 4.1. Terminology and format
- 4.2. The quality papers
- 4.3. The tabloids
- 4.4. Quality and popular compared

5. REGULATION, TRUST AND THE DIGITAL CRISIS

- 5.1. From phone hacking to Leveson
- 5.2. IPSO, Impress and the Editors' Code
- 5.3. Trust and the digital challenge

6. THE PRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

7. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

8. CONCLUSION

Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

On 5 May 1921, in the leader that marked the centenary of the Manchester Guardian, its editor C. P. Scott wrote one of the best-known sentences in the history of journalism: "Comment is free, but facts are sacred". Seventy-one years later, after a general election, a very different paper put a very different sentence on its front page: "It's The Sun Wot Won It". Between those two headlines lies the whole subject of this topic: the English-language press can be a forum for verified information and reasoned opinion, or a commercial machine for entertainment, outrage and political influence, and very often it is both at once.

This topic deals with the first of the media in English, the press. I will first examine journalistic style: what makes an event news, how a news story is built, and how headlines and the language of reporting work. Secondly, I will trace the history of the British press, from the first daily paper of 1702 to the mass-market papers of the twentieth century. Thirdly, I will define and compare quality papers and tabloids, with their formats, titles, ownership and readerships. Fourthly, I will consider regulation, trust and the digital crisis of the press as of November 2026, and then I will glance at the American press. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications of this content for the Secondary English classroom.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the language of the press I have drawn on Danuta Reah's The Language of Newspapers, Allan Bell's The Language of News Media, David Crystal and Derek Davy's Investigating English Style, whose seventh chapter is devoted to the language of newspaper reporting, and Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge's article "The Structure of Foreign News". For facts about newspapers and their regulation I have used institutional sources such as the British Library, GOV.UK, the Editors' Code of Practice, legislation.gov.uk, the Library of Congress and the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford. The curricular framework is the Ley Orgánica 3/2020 (LOMLOE), Real Decreto 217/2022, Real Decreto 243/2022 and the Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022.