

AN INSIGHT INTO THE BRITISH MONARCHY

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The article reveals the image of the British Monarchy formed in and by the English printed media sphere and realised directly through the image of the Queen and the Royal Family. Official Royal Family websites, British Quality Press and tabloids like “The Independent”, “The Guardian”, “The Sun”, “The Daily Express”, etc., which came out within 2015–2020, make up the empirical basis of the research. The article aims at revealing the contradiction between the image of monarch as head of state and the crisis of monarchic statehood in need of modernization. Research methodology includes contextual, linguoculturological, conceptual analyses, as well as method of critical discourse analysis. These methods involve applying to verbal means of communication through explication of conceptual information in the text. The analysed material testifies to the fact that printed mass media initially serve as the main tools for popularizing images that represent modern monarchy, whereas publicity is becoming the basis of its existence. There is a tendency to express dissatisfaction with the institution of monarchy rather than the personality of the Queen who embodies historical tradition, stability and national identity. The British Queen receives a more positive assessment in society. Explicit and implicit positive evaluation in mass-media texts is achieved through the use of lexemes, expressive syntactic models and contextual markers.

Keywords: the British Monarchy, the Queens’s image, mass media, evaluation, referential zone.

The British Monarchy has been existing for centuries running. The institution being staunch and unflinching like a rock serves as a vertical and horizontal power, facilitating the development of society, pushing it forward non-stop. All talk about the monarchy demise is groundless, for if the pillars of society give way and tumble down, the society itself will be doomed. *I Love The Queen* – these magic words are absorbed and nurtured on mother’s milk.

There is an opinion that the Royalty from the very Queen to the younger generation of Princes and their “newly-hatched” Princesses are spongers with dull commitments and charity work, and it is the British People, bound to pay sky-high taxes, who keep them.

Nevertheless, there is a thing that cannot be easily disregarded and that is life under close “sweet” scrutiny. It is a perpetual hype of Monarchy’s image as a society stronghold as well as drawing public attention and, incidentally, global attention to any events pertaining to the Royal Family.

Here belong Prince Charles and Princess Diana’s wedding, the image of Lady Diana, one of the most adored Royal member, so fragile and shy, rather sorrowful than happy, suffering from loneliness, and, eventually, her tragic death in 1997, the Queen’s diamond jubilee, Prince Harry’s serving in the army, Prince William and Princess Kate Middleton’s wedding, the long-awaited arrival and christening of their firstborn, social agitation prior to Henry and Meghan’s wedding, scandalously smeared reputation of Prince Andrew and his stepping down from all public duties... In view of this, Harry and Meghan renouncing royal privileges but not royal titles is an act of treachery or denial of the Royal Family? The British so-

ciety is at wits’ end over the Sussexes’ decision to abandon the Albion, as surely it is a shocking defiance and a painful trendsetter.

Every Royal member, every move, whether good or bad one, is an object of intense media interest capturing the world’s attention. In the age of global information modern society is always under the influence of constant information flows, and their major part is distributed by mass-media channels [2].

No wonder, being thrust into the media spotlight has pleasing consequences. Media hype is worth it, because constant and perpetual PR stunt of the Queen’s image and that of Monarchy proper yields certain results, namely: easy money rolling into the Royal Treasury through all round ad campaign and further strengthening of the mental picture of austere hereditary authority!

The linguistic research into the problem, based on the analysis of 100 media texts, demonstrates a certain discrepancy in opinions concerning the Queen’s image proper and monarchy as a system of governing.

The opinions about the importance of royalty can be wildly different, and there is always a historical precedence for every sound judgment. “Not keen on the royal family? There was a civil war that ended with the execution of Charles I in 1649. Keen on the royal family? His son Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660” [3].

There is a transparent reason why a constitutional monarchy is held in high esteem these days. “The royal family is the principal *aristocratic* house in the country closely connected with other members of the hereditary *aristocracy* and with big finance interests” [1]. The Conservative party, set up in the XVIIIth cen-

ture and called initially Tories, has always taken the lead being the custodian of big businesses and landowners, commerce and industry. No wonder the policy of unanimous and staunch support of monarchy is justified.

Sarah Gristwood, a best-selling Tudor biographer, broadcaster and commentator on royal affairs speculates on why the royal institution retains its popularity. The truth is in “tradition, especially when it is softened by a little flexibility”. The secret to the long success of the British monarchy is attributed to “its connection, not to the stodgy old ways of the stately home, but to the aggressive, thrusting, young nation that we [the royalty. – R.S.] used to be” [4].

The British monarchy has changed since the time of Magna Carta¹ in 1215. The Queen is a regular taxpayer and tweeter, has a keen *British* sense of humour. Another obvious change is “readiness among the royals to be seen – though not necessarily heard – as often as required” and it concerns royal weddings, which used to be private ceremonies before World War I, royal occasions such as the Queen’s Jubilees, the State Opening of Parliament, Trooping the Colour and Changing the Guard. Now they have become “valuable crowd-pleasers,” moreover detachment from poli-

tics allowed the monarchy to remain popular and provide “a focus for national unity” [4]. As for the need to be spotted in crowds the Queen once famously said: “I have to be seen to be believed” [6].

Brits love the Queen for “providing stability and continuity..., for being the focus for national identity and pride, which was demonstrated through the celebrations of her Jubilee” [3]. There is so much passion, gratitude and reverence in Affirmation of Allegiance: “I ... do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that on becoming a British citizen, I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, her Heirs and Successors, according to law” [6].

However, the issue of monarchy is likely to generate controversial views. In the table below the two referential zones are represented through positive / negative evaluation. The examples are drawn from British Quality Press, tabloids and official websites.

To crown it all it feels like an honest single answer to the question, whether the British monarchy is going to survive and be effective in the years to come, will not be easily received. The research has displayed that the critics are more likely to argue against the institution of monarchy rather than the personality

Table

Referential zone Monarch (+)	Referential zone Monarchy (--)
<p>Tradition: Britain has had a monarchy for a really long time, so the person of the queen is a <i>living embodiment of our history. Tradition is intertwined with national and cultural identity.</i></p> <p>If it [the system. – R.S.] is not broke, why fix it?</p>	<p>There are plenty of Brits that <i>are fed up with the principle of the monarchy</i> and would like to replace it with something better. <i>So what do we replace the monarchy with?</i> If someone could prove that any proposal would be better than the current one, it might gain great attraction; however, the world has countless heads of state that are corrupt, are morons, are megalomaniacs, etc. Which system do we replace Her Majesty with?</p>
<p>Ceremony: People like a bit of pomp, pageantry and extravaganza.</p> <p>The British <i>are accustomed to a monarchy. It is their way of life.</i> The Queen has always been a <i>positive ambassador</i> and role model for the UK.</p>	<p>It is understandable <i>to distract people with memorabilia of the good old days</i> to boost their moral.</p> <p>... monarchy is very <i>out-dated</i> and ... <i>we need to finally get rid of them</i> like the French and other countries did ... they are just <i>living museums exhibits</i> by now. Sadly I'm <i>not in a majority</i> and I have to put up with this need for monarchy. Eh, they seem to give some people hope. Most people are just <i>not that bothered who is ruling.</i></p>
<p>She's not political: The reigning monarch is constitutionally forbidden from expressing personal opinion, and is <i>not beholden to political ideologies nor the whims of fickle voters.</i></p> <p>As to finances, she's <i>a great deal cheaper to run</i> than a number of bent 'Presidents' and even those <i>costs ... are but a gnat's whisker off our GDP.</i> Even then, she's probably a great deal cheaper than any alternative.</p>	<p>Sorry to disappoint. 'Love'? Perhaps not, <i>we don't do 'love' much</i> in our political processes. <i>Admire and respect? Yes.</i></p> <p>I cannot agree with an institution that so strongly <i>represents entrenched privilege</i> in society. <i>So down with the monarchy!</i> Or at least <i>let's reduce a bunch of their money and privileges. Let's not pretend that accident of birth gives anyone the right to be considered better than anyone else</i> [7].</p>
<p>Value for money: Hordes of wide-eyed tourists who <i>wish they had a queen of their own</i> flock to Britain to take selfies in front of royal landmarks, <i>generating vast sums of revenue for the UK.</i> Having a royal family certainly has some <i>advantages for tourism, historical narrative and continuity.</i></p>	<p>This is a <i>perfidious system...</i> <i>we hardly notice the monarchy.</i></p>

¹ In 1215, King John was forced to agree to a charter of rights called the Magna Carta. It restricted the king’s power and stated that even the king had to obey the law.

Referential zone Monarch (+)	Referential zone Monarchy (-)
She works hard: <i>She does seem to take her job as head of state seriously. So do most heads of state, though few are still working at the age 90, and none have enjoyed such a lengthy, uninterrupted term of office.</i>	The Queen <i>had been too passive as head of state: the monarchy wouldn't be as popular if they were part of politics – they're above and beyond it.</i>
Amazing, awesome, <i>a reminder of past glory, very careful not to offend anyone...</i> She did her bit during WW2 – as a truck mechanic who wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty. She has a sense of humour – the James Bond Stunt during the Olympics 2012 opening ceremony is testament to that.	Over three – quarters of all expenditure arising from <i>maintaining the royal family</i> (including <i>allowances to its members</i>) come from British taxpayers [1]. The Royal Family <i>is costing UK taxpayers more than ever.</i>
She has modernised the royal family and <i>brought it into the 21st century.</i>	Nevertheless, <i>the whole anachronistic, class ridden establishment poisons our society's values and attitudes at the root.</i>
She is protected and favoured by the press. She has remained, throughout decades, <i>a dignified and admirable figure who has served her country without fail ...</i> in 70-odd years on the throne she <i>has shepherded the UK</i> through loss of Empire, downsizing, and loss of global stature <i>without sacrificing a shred of dignity</i> [7].	The Queen is estimated to be personally worth at least £427million, according to Forbes. <i>The entire British monarchy is worth around £72billion according to the publication estimates</i> [5].

of the incumbent monarch. In conclusion, we would like to state that the basic point holds good: most of the royal personae gratae play the popularity game and they have no other choice left. Monarchy as a form of government is shaken to its foundations then and now, but, given the lifelong time in the public eye, it should survive.

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ВЗГЛЯД НА БРИТАНСКУЮ МОНАРХИЮ

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В настоящей статье рассматривается медиаобраз британской монархии, формирующийся на страницах англоязычного печатного медиапространства и реализующийся непосредственно через образ королевы и королевской семьи. Эмпирическую базу исследования составляют статьи из официальных порталов королевской семьи Великобритании и британской качественной прессы и таблоидов “The Independent”, “The Guardian”, “The Sun”, “The Daily Express” и т. д., вышедших в свет в период 2015–2020 г. Цель статьи состоит в том, чтобы выявить противоречие между образом монарха, как главы государства и кризисом монархической государственности, нуждающейся в модернизации. Методика исследования включает контекстуальный, лингвокультурологический, концептуальный анализ, а также метод критического дискурс-анализа. Данные методы подразумевают обращение к вербальным средствам коммуникации посредством экспликации концептуальной информации в тексте. Проанализированный материал позволяет сделать вывод, что печатные средства массовой информации прежде всего являются основными инструментами популяризации образов, олицетворяющих современную монархию, а публичность становится основой ее существования. Наблюдается тенденция выражать недовольство скорее институтом монархии, нежели личностью королевы, воплощающей историческую традицию, стабильность и национальную идентичность. Британская королева получает в большей степени положительную оценку в обществе. Эксплицитная и имплицитная положительная оценочность в массмедийных текстах достигается за счет использования лексем, экспрессивных синтаксических моделей и контекстуальных маркеров.

Ключевые слова: британская монархия, образ королевы, СМИ, оценочность, референциальная зона.

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