

**The reinforcement of the nature of selected South African
newspapers through the application of language as a sign system**

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**Dissertation submitted for the degree Master of Arts in Communication
Studies at the North-West University**

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2007

Potchefstroom Campus

Foreword

I would like to thank those who made this study possible:

- My ma, Jonita Breytenbach, en my broer Edward Smith – sonder julle is niks moontlik nie.
- My studieleier, mentor en vriendin, Thalyta Swanepoel, vir haar vertroue, geduld, leiding, tyd en insette.
- My hulpstudieleier, prof. Hein Viljoen, vir sy insigte – veral wat die semiotiek betref.
- Dr. Lynnette Fourie, prof. Johannes Froneman en dr. Elanie Steyn vir hul hulp en bydraes.
- My God – vir genade.

Abstract

Language is the most common and crucial element newspapers apply to express meaning.

Language is a system of linguistic signs combined by rules to create meaning. Newspapers use language, among other or sign systems (e.g. photographs, graphics, content and layout) to communicate. These systems support each other and perform as a unit to reflect a newspaper's character and function.

South Africa has a diversity in language, culture, background and literacy levels and the media's target audiences differ significantly. The ways in which these systems are thus applied, diverge to satisfy the various needs of audiences. These needs include being informed, entertained, aesthetically pleased, emotionally involved and mobilized (persuaded). Audiences also seek a reflection of their values, views and cultures in the media.

Due to the different nature and functions of newspapers and the various audience needs, there is an apparent disparity in content, photographs, graphics, and layout in populist, middle-of-the-road and serious newspapers. All these elements, except language, are currently used to classify newspapers.

This study aims to establish whether there are differences in the language application, and if so, whether language can also function as a classification criterium to determine the nature of a newspaper. This entails an analysis of the types of signs, the sign functions, and the stylistic elements on the front pages of the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* as well as the serious *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

It was found that language can aid one in categorizing a newspaper. The serious and middle-of-the-road newspapers do, however, apply traditional populist elements (as set out in the literature), and vice versa. The researcher suggests that the category middle-of-the-road newspapers should be refined into two sections, i.e. populist middle-of-the-road and serious middle-of-the-road categories.

Key words: semiotics; signs; codes; target audience; mediation; style; populist media; media language; media functions; communication needs

Uittreksel

Taal is die belangrikste en mees algemene element wat koerante gebruik om betekenis te kommunikeer.

Taal is 'n linguistiese tekensisteem wat uit reëls en tekens bestaan om betekenis oor te dra. Benewens taal, gebruik koerante ook ander tekensisteme (foto's, grafika, inhoud en bladuitleg) om te kommunikeer. Hierdie sisteme ondersteun mekaar en funksioneer as 'n eenheid om 'n koerant se aard en funksies te weerspieël.

Suid-Afrika se diversiteit wat taal, kultuur, agtergrond en geletterdheidsvlakke betref, het tot gevolg dat die media se teikengehore merkbaar verskil. Die wyses waarop hierdie sisteme dus toegepas word, verskil om in die behoeftes van hierdie onderskeie gehore te voorsien. Hierdie behoeftes sluit in om ingelig, vermaak en gemobiliseer te word. Die lesers wil ook aesteties bevredig word, emosioneel betrokke wees by die boodskap asook 'n refleksie van hul waardes, sieninge en kulture in die media sien.

Gevolglik kan die argument gemaak word dat die onderskeie koerante se taalgebruik ook sal verskil om hulle aard en funksies te ondersteun.

Hierdie studie poog om te bepaal wat hierdie verskille in taalgebruik is (indien enige) en of taal as 'n tekensisteem kan funksioneer om die aard van 'n koerant te bepaal. Dit behels 'n analise van die soorte tekens, tekenfunksies asook stilistiese elemente op die voorblaaie van die populistiese *Son* en *Sunday Sun*, die middelmoot *Rapport* en *Sunday Times* sowel as die ernstige *Mail&Guardian* en *Sunday Independent*.

Daar is gevind dat die toepassing van sekere taaltekens kan help met die klassifikasie van koerante. Die ernstige en middelmootkoerante gebruik wel die tradisioneel populistiese elemente (soos uiteengesit in die literatuur) – en andersom. Die navorser stel voor dat middelmootkoerante in populistiese en ernstige middelmote verdeel kan word.

Key words: semiotics; signs; codes; target audience; mediation; style; populist media; media language; media functions; communication needs

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Chapter 1

Background, problem statement and aims

1.1 Introduction

Language is a powerful tool used by the media to reflect reality and express meaning to the public (Branston & Stafford, 2003:11; Sonderling, 2001:106; Faure, 2001:347). Gluck *et al.* (2004:107) view language as the most important means of interaction – language is *the* essential communication tool (Bowles & Borden, 2004:19). Greer (1999:110) says that “words are the main tools of the journalist”. Language directs and makes our lives and thoughts possible (Oosthuizen, 2004a:448; Sonderling, 2001:106) and it is our most common medium of communication (Sonderling, 2001:105; Hawkes, 2003:101). Language enables us to construct reality, experience and make sense of the world around us. According to Barton (1994:46.67):

...text [written language] influences and structures how we experience reality, and it has the possibility of controlling what we know and how we feel; a story can affect whether we feel sad, or happy, angry or expectant.

Our world involves the construction and interpretation of meaning by communicating messages (Grossberg *et al.*, 1998:142) – and this communication is impossible without language: “... any act of communication to or between human beings presupposes a signification system¹ as its necessary condition ...” (Eco, 1976:9). Thus, a newspaper reader's attempt to reconstruct events experienced by journalists, to read the messages, relies entirely on language.

Language is one of several elements newspapers (the media) communicate with. These elements are photographs, layout, content and graphics (Fourie, 2004b:327; Oosthuizen, 2004a:451; Faure, 2001:347; Fourie, 1983:101-103; Steenveld, 2006). Language is, however, the most important of these elements since all interpretation relies on one's ability to comprehend linguistic messages (cf. Hervey 1982:131; Kress, 1983:121). In spite of this, while the other elements mentioned above are used as criteria to determine the nature of newspapers, language is excluded. The question now arises whether language, as a newspaper communication element, could also act as an element to classify newspapers according to their nature. This study therefore aims to determine whether the language of a newspaper indeed reinforces its nature. This chapter will provide the context and background to

¹ Language is a signification system (see paragraph 2.4).

this question by giving a brief overview of the different communication elements and how they are applied to fulfil audience needs.

1.2 Newspaper communication elements

Media reporting involves mediation: journalists observe events and communicate them to the public (Kress, 1983:120; Sonderling, 2001:110). Journalists then, are *mediators* who *observe*, *perceive* and then process events into message form (Wilson, 2003:38). As individuals, journalists perceive events differently and present it to the readers in different ways. Retief (2002:101) states that, since journalists interpret events, they are subjective (see paragraph 1.3):

Reporting presupposes that a journalist decides which aspects of a given situation are more important than other aspects. This implies that the *process of selection* – of what is important and constitutes news and what is trivial – already is interpretation.

George Gerbner identifies ten essentials of the communication process based on Harold Lasswell's five questions (*who* says *what* in which *channel* to *whom* and with what *effect*?) that illustrate how events are *perceived* by journalists and then *mediated* to the audience (Wilson, 2003:37,38). Gerbner's ten essentials are:

1. Someone
2. perceives an event
3. and reacts
4. in a situation
5. through some means
6. to make available materials
7. in some form
8. and context
9. conveying content
10. with some consequence.

During the communication process, the media uses *all* of the communication elements (see paragraph 1.1). "Text", however, is a difficult concept to define and experts seldom agree on a definition. According to Carstens (2006) a text:

- is a structured unit
- has a semantic nature
- communicates
- has specific functions

- has a syntactic and morphological structure
- is a result of human activity
- is formed within a specific context
- has an indeterminable length
- has coherence
- has a fluctuating form and nature

Language, which is a structured and formal sign system (cf. Anon 2005a; Sonderling, 2001:110; paragraph 2.1), is therefore a text (i.e. tool) newspapers use to communicate with.

In combination, the different communication elements support one another and perform as a unit (Oosthuizen, 2004a:251; Burton, 1997:33) to reflect a newspaper's character and function (Oosthuizen, 2004a:451). Fourie (1983:101) refers to this as *graphic semiology*. The character (i.e. personality) of a newspaper can be detected from a distance by looking at which stories are emphasized, the photographs, the colours and typography (Bowles & Borden, 2004:241) (see paragraph 2.2.1). Hartley (1982:31 in Hartley 2004:451) says that words, photographs, illustrations (e.g. in newspapers) and even moving images (in films) are combined to create and support one other's meaning:

In the media, words, photographs, illustrations and moving images are used together. This combination makes it possible for these different signs and sign systems to support each other's meaning, or jointly to change meaning.

For example, the word "tragedy" in a headline and a photograph of a desolate family are two elements functioning together to transmit a particular message to the reader (Burton, 1997:33). One instantaneously links the two elements and understands the message without having to read further. If merely a picture (or headline) had been used, questions could arise in the reader's mind, such as: "What kind of tragedy?" (Is it a war, the collapse of a business empire or has Bafana Bafana been defeated), and "who was involved?" If only the picture had been printed, the reader would want to know "who are these people?"

Due to the different nature and functions of newspapers and the needs of their various audiences, there is a disparity in content, photographs, graphics, and layout among populist (more often referred to as tabloids), MOR² (MOR) and serious newspapers (as classified by Froneman [2002:37-44]). The ways in which these elements are used also diverge to reflect different identities. A newspaper with a splashy and colourful design is much more likely to

²This will be abbreviated as MOR in this study.

contain sensational stories, whereas a grey-looking paper filled with text might be of a more sophisticated nature (Bowles & Borden, 2004:241). This could be because one associates colour with entertainment, excitement and energy, whereas grey, white and black are more subdued and most people see these colours as sombre, serious and even dull. These characteristics by which newspapers are classified will be discussed fully in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.2).

Consequently one could argue that since the communication elements of content, layout, graphics and photographs vary to support the paper's character and satisfy the audience's needs, the language usage (i.e. text) in the respective newspapers would also differ to support their nature and functions.

How the abovementioned elements are applied determines a newspaper's nature (cf. Oosthuizen, 2004a:451). The media uses these different elements to approach their audiences, *set the agenda* for their readers as well as satisfy their communication needs (see paragraph 1.3).

1.3 Communication approaches

Rule (2001:5) says that a newspaper is something that *happens* and in which many different groups, with various interests, are involved. In South Africa, with its diverse languages, cultures, backgrounds and literacy levels, the difference in target audiences and, consequently, their needs, is tremendous. Since the target audiences of different newspapers vary in social class, income, education, experiences, moral and ethical values and literacy (Faure, 2001:342; Fourie; 1983:50, 51), the way in which these elements are used to communicate would also diverge to satisfy the different needs of the audiences and emphasize issues (i.e. agenda setting [Fourie, 2004c: 304; Froneman et al., 2005:59, 60; Kevelson, 1977:69]). Newspapers put events on the public agenda (Oosthuizen, 2004b:555) i.e. they decide *for* the readers what news is vital for them to function daily. The German tabloid *Bild am Sonntag* does not *react* to news events, but *sets the agenda*, says its political journalist Jochen Gaugele (2006). Gaugele further states that newspapers should offer the readers what they want, not just what they *should* want. The media thus not only shape the agenda to comply with the needs of target audiences, but also emphasize issues in order to *create* needs among its users. The American researchers Malcolm McCombs and Donald Shaw (McQuail & Windahl, 1981:62; Watson, 2003:129) say that:

Audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it.

Papers *set the agenda* or indicate the importance of these respective affairs with the varied application³ of the different communication elements. Watson (2003:133) states: "How an issue is reported is as important as whether the issue is reported at all." The model below illustrates that target audiences have different *communication needs* (cf. Fourie, 1983:5, 6). The media aims to satisfy these needs by using the abovementioned elements (signs). Readers' needs vary, and consequently newspapers have different communication *approaches* (cf. Fourie 1983:75, 76) and the signs⁴ have various *functions* to comply with the audiences' needs (cf. Fourie, 2004a:336; Sonderling, 2001:116).

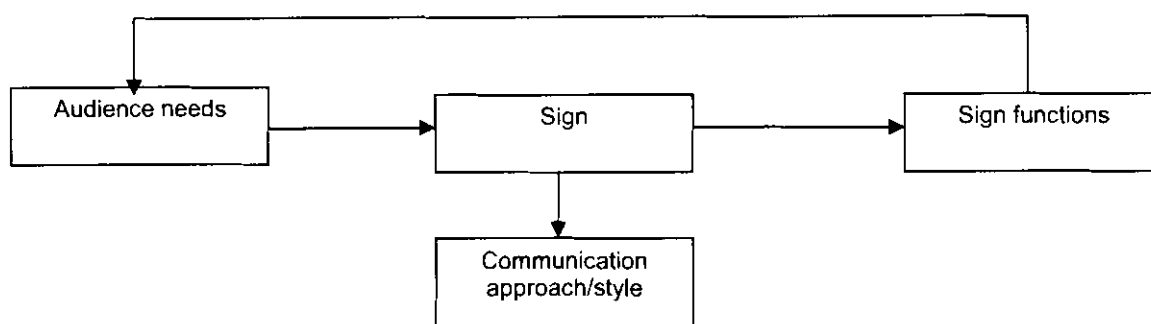


Figure 1.1: Media compliance with different audience needs

It is clear that newspapers *choose* to fulfil these needs and represent reality in various ways (styles) (Kevelson, 1977:3). Barthes (1964:21) adds that this occurs in the language of the receiver or a favoured *in-group* language code⁵ (i.e. a code agreed upon and preferred by a specific group of readers [Kevelson, 1977:69]).

Cruse (2004:59) differentiates between *field*, *mode* and *style*. Field refers to the technical language belonging to a particular field such as that of engineers, doctors or journalists. Mode, on the other hand, is the *way* or *channel* through which one communicates whether by phone,

³ The researcher prefers "application" instead of "use" in this study, for "application" implies the manner in which a sign is used to convey meaning. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2005:62) "application" is "the practical use of something" – in this study, language.

⁴ All the abovementioned elements used by the media are sign systems which exist through signs and codes (cf. Guiraud, 1971:1; Coulmas, 2003:7, 19; Kevelson, 1977: 17; Eco, 1976: 69; Hawkes, 2003:103; Fourie, 2004a: 333).

⁵ Codes are structured collections of signs and symbols – codes are the rules by which signs are combined to make sense and convey meaning (cf. Grossberg *et al.*). Language is, therefore, a complex code (cf. paragraph 1.3.3).

e-mail or even in a conversation. Style, he says (2004:60) is the distinction between formal and informal language. He notes that “pass away” is more formal than “die” or even the very informal “kicked the bucket” (see paragraph 1.3.3). He also gives the following example to illustrate how complicated style is:

Take the sexual domain. Looking at descriptively equivalent expressions, “have intercourse with” is relatively formal, “have sex with”/“go to bed with”/“sleep with” are fairly neutral, but while “bonk”/“do it with” and “fuck” are all informal, there are significant differences between them. “Did you do it with her?” might be described as “neutral informal”; however, “bonk” is humorous, whereas “fuck”, “screw” and “shag” are somehow aggressively obscene (although probably to different degrees).

Carstens (2003:335) notes that “style” is not easy to define, but that it generally refers to the way in which a writer uses words and makes sentences.

Whatever the style a newspaper chooses to communicate with, it is important that the “message we want to send our readers must be the message they receive” (Greer, 1999:96). Greer adds that, because target audiences differ concerning culture and background, stories should be written to be understood by anyone: “Our writing should be incisive [sharp and clear] so that there is no doubt about what we are trying to say.”

1.3.1 Audience needs

The various needs of audiences the newspapers aim to satisfy are discussed in the table below. The media use the different communication elements to comply with newspaper readers’ needs. These needs include being informed, entertained, aesthetically pleased, emotionally involved, and mobilized (persuaded). Audiences also seek a reflection of their values, views and cultures in the media (i.e. ideological need) (Fourie, 1983:5, 6).

Need	Description	Example
Information	People want to improve their (factual and rational) knowledge to be able to make informed decisions, form opinions, plan ahead and function in society.	“Getting on with the in-laws from hell” – an article in the <i>Sunday Sun</i> (Jentile, 2005:30) on how to cope with unfriendly in-laws. “Zuma rape case turns on DNA” – front page lead of the <i>Sunday Times</i> (Mahlangu <i>et. al.</i>, 2005:1) informing the public about the progress in the Zuma rape case.

Entertainment	Readers (media users) want to be entertained in order to relax. People prefer different types of entertainment: some might prefer watching a drama instead of a comedy, or the other way around.	The <i>Sunday Times</i> ' weekly "Crazy people in a crazy world" on page 2 as well as "Lighter side" on the front page entertain the reader with trivial and funny stories that he/she does not necessarily <i>have</i> to know about.
Aesthetic	Individuals also need to be "intellectually" pleased by being shown and told about beautiful events and subjects – aesthetic needs are known as art.	The "Body of work" lead photograph on the front page of the <i>Sunday Times</i> (Shean, 2005:1) show a painted model at the City Varsity Multimedia School's Body Special bash.
Emotional	People want to be emotionally involved when using the media – they want to <i>feel</i> something, be it sad, happy, angry or amazed. Everyone wants to know that they are loved and appreciated and people have a desire to feel fear and excitement. These needs might also be displayed in feelings of loyalty, patriotism and even hate.	The front page lead of the <i>Sunday Sun</i> (2005:1, 5) "Please help, I am broke, says Thabang Lebese" makes an emotional appeal on the reader to sympathize with the man. "A sangoma will curse these boys to death!" (Hlatshwayo & Nknwashu, 2005:6) also calls on the reader to feel fear, shock and to commiserate with these children.
Persuasion/Motivation	Readers need to be persuaded and motivated to <i>act</i> . They want the media to mobilize them to improve their circumstances, communities and standard of life.	" <i>Ons EET ons dood!</i> " (Malan, 2005a:17) and " <i>Studente rof met seks: jong mense speel met hul eie lewe</i> " (Malan, 2005b:vii) in the <i>Rapport</i> do not only inform the reader, but aim to persuade them to change their lifestyles. Editorial comment also falls under persuasive/motivational communication.

Ideological	Readers have certain beliefs, attitudes and they even support certain stereotypes. They use the media that confirms their own ideological views.	Reader's who support quota systems and affirmative action would not read the <i>Rapport</i> – a newspaper that often reports on “unfair quotas” and those who are disadvantaged by affirmative action (e.g. the <i>Rapport</i> story <i>Regstel-aksie vasgevat, Wye steun vir plan teen vergrype</i> [Du Toit, 2005:1]) These readers would, however, probably prefer the <i>Sunday Sun</i> and its “Mange’s agenda: racism still stinks like hell in the new SA” (Mange, 2005:18). The <i>Rapport</i>’s front page lead “<i>Dis klaarpraat met Jacob Zuma</i>” (Msomi, 2005:1) would, on the other hand, attract anti-Zuma supporters. Soccer lovers will either buy the <i>Sunday Times</i> with its weekly <i>Soccer Life</i> supplement or the <i>Sunday Sun</i>. Rugby supporters would read the <i>Beeld</i> or <i>Rapport</i> to get their dose of rugby news.
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Table 1.1: Audience communication needs as described by Fourie (1983:5, 6)

These are only basic categories and people have a combination of the abovementioned needs. These needs, says Fourie (1983:5, 6), are “diversified and culturally bound”. Age, sex, background and circumstances all have an influence on a particular individual’s communication needs. The content and application of the different elements should act in accordance with what the audiences want, otherwise newspapers would not sell. Readers who desire entertainment would probably not be interested in the *Mail&Guardian*’s elaborate article on discussions between Nigeria’s President Olusegun Abasanjo and President Thabo Mbeki concerning the exiled former Liberian leader Charles Taylor (Paye-Layleh, 2006). One could argue that they would much rather read about Jurie Els and Hestrie Cloete’s wedding (Barnard, 2005a:8), or the singer Robbie Williams’ South African tour (Barnard, 2005b:4). Readers with conservative values would again prefer a newspaper that reflects these principles in content, language and visual elements. They might steer away from the *Son* and the *Daily Sun* (a daily South African populist newspaper) because of their photographs of topless or barely clothed girls (respectively referred to as the “Sonstraaltjie” and the “Sunbabe”) on page 3 and the sometimes obscene and suggestive language (e.g. *Kyk, in ’n strip joint is min dinge slap* [Booyens, 2005:3]; ...*maar jy*

het 'n moerse babelas⁶ van al die gesuip tot vyfuur vanoggend, jou girlfriend lê net so moer toe langs jou... [Anon, 2005b:25]).

The popularity of these two tabloids does, however, suggest that there is a demand for papers of this nature – it complies with the needs and values of a specific target audience. One could argue that a newspaper that provides for readers' needs and reflects their values, views and cultures would have the support of that audience. According to Barton (1994:64), texts do not only *exist*, but they are *used*. Thus, the argument could be raised that if a text does not comply with audience needs, it will not be bought and read and consequently will have no function. Barton (1994:63) even goes as far as to suggest that daily newspapers, which are often thrown away, may have no particular significance apart from ultimately positioning people and shaping their identities. Newspapers, then, have to comply with audience needs in order to sell *and* be used.

1.3.2 The basic communication process

In order to understand why communication approaches are important, familiarity with the basic communication process is necessary. Shannon and Weaver (1949) developed the first classic model of communication (Watson, 2003:34):

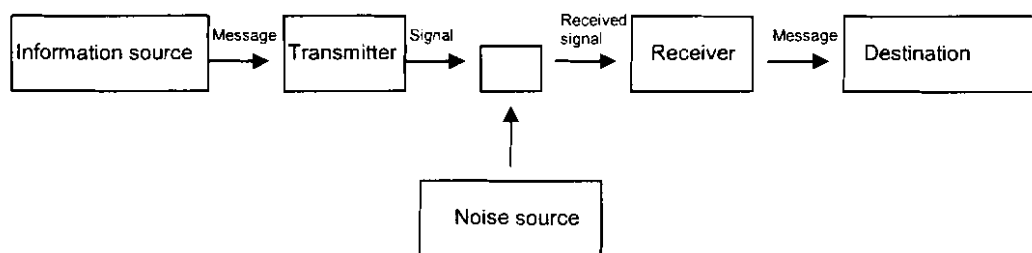


Figure 1.2: Shannon and Weaver's basic communication model

Even though this model does not depict communication as an interactive, two-way process, it clearly illustrates how *noise* occurs when sending and receiving a message. *Noise* refers to anything that might interfere with the message and prevent successful transmission (Watson, 2003:34). Watson further distinguishes between three kinds of noise: *mechanical/technical*, *psychological* and *semantic*. Mechanical noise could be anything from a bad telephone line, unreadable and badly printed texts, a teacher mumbling or an airplane distracting listeners. *Psychological* noise refers to a decoder's emotional state. He/she might not like the encoder, be preoccupied or maybe too excited to concentrate. *Semantic* noise, on the other hand, influences the comprehensibility of a message. When the source (encoder) uses terms or expressions

⁶ See paragraph 1.3.3 and the *Mail&Guardian* Style Guide (Appendix E).

which the receiver (decoder) does not understand, it prevents effective and successful transmission. If an English lecturer, for example, explains an intricate poem to a room full of science students, they would *not* understand everything he says – even though they all speak the same language. It is thus of the utmost importance that those involved in the communication process not only have the same *language* in common, but the same *in-group language*.

1.3.3 Communication styles

Newspapers talk to readers in a variety of ways (Steenveld, 2006). It is, however, important that the newspaper's *topics* and *language* correlate as much as possible with the *needs* and *language* of the audience. These topics and in-group language all belong to each participant's *field of experience* as illustrated in the model below:

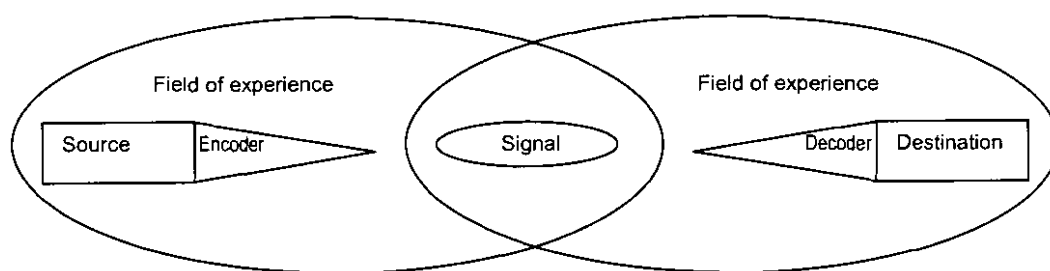


Figure 1.3: Wilbur Schramm's interactive communication model illustrating fields of experience

It is impossible for the sender and receiver during the communication process (cf. paragraph 1.3.2 and table 1.1) to share exactly the same codes and experiences. These can and should, however, overlap to a certain degree for the message to be conveyed successfully. Wilson (2003:37) says that communication is most successful when fields of experience overlap, e.g. when the participants speak about familiar topics in a familiar language, less noise occurs and the message is clear. When the needs of the readers (which include language and issues) do not intersect with the communication style of the newspaper, semantic or psychological noise could occur which would result in ineffective communication.

This *familiar language* or *in-group code* is an identifiable and appropriate register people choose to communicate in with each other. Barthes (1964:21) refers to in-group codes as *idiolects*: "The language ... of a group of persons, who all interpret in the same way all linguistic statements ..." Wikipedia (2006a) defines it as follows:

An idiolect ... is a variety of a language unique to an individual. It is manifested by patterns of word selection and grammar, or words, phrases or idioms that are unique to that individual.

Thus, idiolect is a language unique to an individual or a group of people, and style is a matter of preference (i.e. selection) (cf. Cruse, 2004:59, 60). A newspaper could prefer one correct spelling over another spelling (e.g. “babalaas” vs. “babelas” vs. “babbelas” [see Mail&Guardian Style Guide, Appendix E]) or even one word over another with the same meaning (“dood” vs. “oorlede” vs. “vrek”) (Answers.com, 2006). These styles, idiolects or *discursive practices* are deviations from standard language (Sonderling, 2001:119) and are linked with a writer’s purpose (Barton, 1994:55), which in the case of newspapers, is to fulfil audience needs. Just as a speaker applies different styles when speaking to the president, parents or friends to communicate different messages successfully, the media chooses a particular language style to convey its messages and to comply with the newspaper readers’ needs.

Kevelson (1977:3) stresses that the style of a newspaper is significant in that newspapers interpret the same events differently, and *choose* to tell these truths in various ways (Kress in Davis & Walton, 1983:120). Style functions to create consistency in newspapers and establish its identity. The researcher could thus argue that style functions to establish a newspaper’s nature. It also “... instil(s) confidence in the reader that the newspaper’s right hand knows what its left hand is doing ...” (Bernstein, 1958:207). Newspapers should always, regardless of how they use the elements, maintain their identity and look and feel the same to readers (Sutton, 1987:9). This is done by applying a particular style. Consistency is *the* main goal. Bowles and Borden (2004:63) emphasize that readers *do* notice inconsistencies such as *advisor* and *adviser* in one paragraph. Such inconsistencies could irritate them to the extent that they lose confidence in a newspaper’s factual accuracy. In the *Sunday Times* of 13 November main story journalist Wisani wa ka Ngonbeni’s name is printed “WISANI WA KA NGONBENI” whereas it is “WISANI wa ka NGONBENI” in all the other issues.

A newspaper’s style, or chosen communication approach, could be humorous, serious, rational, emotional, or even a combination of these depending on the needs of the target audience (Fourie, 1983:75, 76). The editorial pages of newspapers are good examples. Members of the senior editorial staff give critical comment on topical and timely news affairs, while the cartoonist observes and interprets the same events in a humorous manner. The *Sunday Times*, for example, always balances serious and lighter stories on the front page by publishing news on *The lighter side* alongside their front page lead story (e.g. the lead story “Charge Zuma, say police” [Ngobeni, Mahlangu & Lubisi, 2005:1] vs. the trivial “Sexy billboards drive men to distraction” [Sunday Times Foreign Desk, 2005:1]).

The argument is that language, as one of the elements with which a newspaper communicates, must correlate with the paper's communicative approach. All these elements should comply with audience needs and reinforce the nature of the paper. The success of populist newspapers in South Africa, for example, does not only lie in the topics they cover (e.g. ordinary people's and celebrities' lives and issues), but also in the comprehensible language they use to convey this information – a language their readers can relate to (Joseph, 2005:30). The style and the way in which newspapers choose to communicate through language are imperative. Tumber (Conboy in Aitchison & Lewis, 2004:36) argues that the language the British tabloid *The Sun* uses is the essential ingredient of its commercial and popular success. According to him one significant feature of *The Sun*'s language is its word play that "draws the individual reader into an enjoyment of language ..." (Conboy in Aitchison & Lewis, 2004:46). Conboy (2004:47) says that the vocabulary that the readers of the British popular press relate to consists of words such as "hunks", "fellas", "shocker", "stunna", "nut" and "love-cheat". To a certain extent, these newspapers use all the elements to break complex information into digestible and bite-sized pieces to attract people who never read newspapers before (Joseph, 2005). Conboy (2004:47) says the language of populist papers "seem(s) to be making political and social news available for the average reader", and that these papers construct a culture of reading in the process.

The application of appropriate language is critical since texts either include or exclude people (Barton, 1994:60, 61). Barton (1994:57) adds that language *can bind groups together*. The audiences a text targets are called *discourse communities*, i.e. groups of people who use similar texts in a related way (Barton, 1994:57). These groups might be the readers of a particular newspaper, a group of academics or even a circle of friends. Discourse communities then all prefer the same *idiolect* (cf. Barton, 1964:21). Barton adds that different discourse communities use texts in different ways (Barton, 1994:66). The various approaches to writing and speaking in diverse situations and to different people are respectively called *genre* and *register* (Barton, 1994:55) or *mode of address* (Branston & Stafford, 2003:21). Accordingly, a newspaper has to *address* the readers in their own *code* to communicate effectively (see figure 1.3).

Barthes (1964:21) argues that "language is always socialized, even at the individual level, for in speaking to somebody one always tries to speak more or less in the other's language, especially as far as vocabulary is concerned". Barton (1994:57) agrees and says that when people use language, they *always do so within a particular socially constructed discourse*⁷. The French linguist and father of semiotics Ferdinand de Saussure distinguishes between two kinds

⁷ *Discourse* refers to the ways in which language is used (Barton, 1994:56).

of "language": *langue* and *parole* (Moriarty, 1991:32, Barthes, 1964:14, 15). The first refers to language as a system with rules which, according to Barthes (1964:14), cannot be created or altered by the individual. The second implies each individual's unique approach to language (Berger, 1998:13). This unique approach is nothing other than a newspaper's *mode of address*, *in-group language code* and *style*. Thus, *discourse communities* use the same *in-group language code* and therefore the language used in texts can *include* or *exclude* people (see paragraph 1.3 and 1.3.2)

However, in whatever style the newspaper addresses its readers it should always aim to communicate quickly and easily, for this is the purpose of news writing (Bernstein, 1958:75; cf. Leiter *et al.*, 2000:504; Highton, 1978:16).

1.4 Problem statement

Against the above background it is evident that language is an important newspaper element that functions in combination with other elements to communicate. Since newspapers all apply these communication elements in different ways, the researcher endeavours to determine whether the language usage differs, and if so, *how* it differs and *how* it is applied to reinforce a newspaper's nature. Not much research has been done in South Africa to establish how language is used to establish a newspaper's identity (or nature) (see paragraph 1.7.1).

1.5 Main research question

In the light of the above, the main research question is as follows:

How do selected South African populist, middle-of-the-road and serious newspapers utilize selected linguistic signs to reinforce their respective natures?

1.5.1 Specific research questions

The following questions result from the main research question:

1.5.1.1 What are the functions of language in the print media?

1.5.1.2 What do the nature and functions of various types of newspapers entail as described in the literature?

1.5.1.3 What are the characteristics of the use of punctuation, format and style in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*?

1.5.1.4 What are the average lengths of linguistic signs and sign units in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*?

1.5.1.5 On which sign types do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus?

1.5.1.6 On which sign functions do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus?

1.5.1.7 What are the differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and what is the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures?

1.5.2 Specific research aims

Accordingly the research will aim to establish:

1.5.2.1 The functions of language in the print media.

1.5.2.2 The nature and functions of newspapers as described in the literature.

1.5.2.3 The characteristics of the use of punctuation, style and format in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

1.5.2.4 The average lengths of linguistic signs and sign units in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

1.5.2.5 The sign types the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on.

1.5.2.6 The sign functions the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on.

1.5.2.7 The differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures.

1.6 Main theoretical premise

The use of language as a sign system in the respective newspapers will be investigated within a semiotic framework in this study. The researcher will compare the sign types and functions (i.e. the communication approach) as identified by semioticians to the theoretical audience needs and media functions. This could allow the researcher to determine whether language indeed reinforces a newspaper's nature.

1.7 Research method

1.7.1 Literature study

A study of books, articles and internet sources (South African and international databases) has been done in order to establish what has already been written on the subject of language usage in the print media. Extensive research has already been done on the use of signs in visual media such as film and television as well as advertising (cf. Wallis, 1975; Hartley, 1992). However, language usage in the print media has not been studied widely in South Africa (a Nexus and EbscoHost search [Academic Search Premier, Pre-CINAHL, MLA International Bibliography, Communication & Mass Media] produced only related results).

Furthermore, existing style guides will be investigated in order to establish how the six newspapers approach language (cf. Sonderling, 2001:119). Style guides are language manuals newspapers use to ensure consistency and to guide the journalists when writing. Papers compile their own style guides to correspond with their characters.

1.7.2 Empirical study

The empirical component of the study will be a qualitative analysis of the front page stories of all the November 2005 editions of the *Sunday Times*, *Rapport*, the *Sunday Sun*, *Son*, *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian*. All six papers appear once a week: the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Sun*, *Sunday Independent* and *Rapport* on Sundays and *Son* and the *Mail & Guardian* on Fridays.

The language use of the four English newspapers' (one populist, one MOR and two serious) will be compared while the language usage in the two Afrikaans newspapers (respectively populist and MOR) will be evaluated. Based on the types of newspapers as set out in the literature (see paragraph 2.2), no serious Afrikaans newspaper exists. The language will be qualitatively evaluated and signs will be categorized according to Jakobson's model of sign functions (vide Fourie, 2004a:336; Sonderling, 2001:116) and Peirce's sign types (see paragraph 2.4.1). The researcher will also identify style markers such as the length of words and sentences,

obscurities, foreign words, punctuation, uppercase and underlined words (especially in headings) as well as the use of italics.

The qualitative approach to research is mainly based on inductive reasoning (i.e. the researcher aims to develop and then verify an assumption or observation) and collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore and interpret communication (Du Plooy, 2001:37). Du Plooy (2001:83, 84) also states that this research method is appropriate when analyzing the content of messages and for comparative analyses.

1.8 Structure of the study

The study is presented in seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** This chapter contains a background, the problem statement and specific research aims of the study.
- **Chapter 2:** In this chapter the researcher outlines the theoretical framework of semiotics and aims to answer the first two research questions namely:
 - a. **What are the functions of language in the print media?**
 - b. **What do the nature and functions of newspapers entail as described in the literature?**
- **Chapter 3:** In this chapter the research method is discussed.
- **Chapters 4 – 6:** In these chapters the researcher aims to establish what the characteristics of language usage are in the populist, MOR and serious newspapers. These chapters contain a qualitative content analysis of the front page stories and headlines of the six newspapers. These chapters will answer the following research questions:
 - a. **What are the characteristics of the use of punctuation, format and style in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*?**

- b. What are the average lengths of linguistic signs and sign units in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*?
 - c. What sign types do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on?
 - d. What sign functions do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on?
- **Chapter 7:** In the final chapter the researcher will conclude on the findings of the previous chapters and aim to answer the main research question:
 - a. How do selected South African populist, middle-of-the-road and serious newspapers utilize language as a sign system to reinforce their respective natures?

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Words are linguistic signs, and language (spoken or written)⁸ is a formal system of signs (Anon, 2005a; Sonderling, 2001:110). It is not possible to communicate without signs (Fourie, 2004a:333). Kress (1983:121) states that even though the events on which journalists report and their causes are *not* linguistic, reports exist *only in and through language* (see paragraph 1.1). Thus, without language we are unable to communicate or share our experiences, thoughts, feelings, needs and opinions. Things *exist* and *occur* only because we have *words* to describe what we see and experience. For example, we can only *hate* because we have a *word* to describe a particular emotion. If this word did not exist, *hate* would not have existed and would have possibly been referred to as, and thus have become, *aggression*, *disgust* or even *antagonism*. Branston and Stafford (2003:11, 10) explain it as follow:

Things and events in themselves do not have inherent meaning. Of course they exist. But neither they, nor the ways we describe or photograph or even perceive them, are ever experienced “raw” or unmediated. It is the ways that cultures, through their changing use of language, have “agreed to perceive” and then to name things and events that determines how they get defined and valued.

Hervey (1982:131) says that a red traffic-light does not communicate a red-traffic-light-message, but a *linguistic message*: “Stop.” Meaning is impossible without language. Therefore, the role and function of language in the media should not be taken lightly.

In this chapter the importance of language as a communication element will be discussed based on the theoretical premise of semiotics. An overview of the different characteristics of newspapers will also be given to ultimately enable the researcher to determine whether language could be used to classify a newspaper’s character. This possibility will be explored in the empirical part of the study (see chapters 4 to 9). This chapter aims to answer the following research questions (see paragraph 1.8):

⁸ Speaking and writing are different communication activities. When speaking, the receiver is able to immediately perceive, interpret and respond to the message either non-linguistically or linguistically. Writing, on the other hand, is perceived “by people who are distant from the writer in both space and time” (Chafe, 1995).

1.5.1.1 What are the functions of language in the print media?

1.5.1.2 What do the nature and functions of newspapers entail as described in the literature?

2.2 The nature of newspapers

Newspapers are generally classified into two main groups: populist and quality papers (Froneman, 2005:38; Gaugele, 2006; Clark, 2006). Froneman et al. (2005, 38, 39) refine these categories into populist, middle-of-the-road (MOR) and serious newspapers (see paragraph 1.2). They state that, since South Africa does not have such a large population, it is not financially feasible to publish specialized newspapers on a daily or weekly basis. Middle-of-the-road newspapers⁹ thus cover topics that would be of interest to a large part of the population (see table below). Regardless of the category a newspaper falls in, one can still distinguish between *good* and *bad quality* newspapers. A populist newspaper is thus not necessarily of a lesser quality than a serious newspaper (Froneman, 2005:36, 39, 40). The criteria by which newspapers are classified are discussed below (paragraph 2.2.1).

2.2.1 Newspapers' application of communication elements

The table below summarizes the various ways in which different newspapers apply the communication elements to comply with their audience needs and reinforce their characters (cf. paragraph 1.2):

Nature of newspaper	Populist	Middle-of-the-road	Serious
Example	• <i>Die Son</i> • <i>Daily Sun</i> • <i>Sunday Sun</i>	• <i>Rapport</i> • <i>Sunday Times</i> • <i>Star</i> • <i>Beeld</i>	• <i>Sunday Independent</i> • <i>Business Day</i> • <i>Mail&Guardian</i>

⁹ Froneman et al. (2005:39) suggest that MOR newspapers might be “schizophrenic” due to the fact that these newspapers do not steer away from the “middle” – the aim to satisfy the needs of many.

Layout	The layouts are bright and splashy to attract readers and make the papers more appealing. Headlines are often in uppercase (for the same reason). Steenveld (2006) is of the opinion that the tabloid form plays an imperative role in its success. Form includes font, size, colour and boxes. The visual element contributes hugely to these papers' appeal.	These newspapers' designs are less colourful, yet still appealing. Lately, MOR papers tend to use larger, uppercase and underlined headlines (to attract readers).	Colour and other elements are used with more discretion. The <i>Mail&Guardian</i> is an exception since it has colourful front pages.
Photographs	Photographs are an indispensable element for these newspapers – they use photographs to get readers' attention. Pictures are often scandalous, violent or an invasion of someone's privacy. Usually photographs <i>are</i> the stories.	Photographs are used with more discretion. These papers would think twice before publishing violent or scandalous photographs.	Even though serious newspapers use photographs, it is not their main element of communication. Photographs are used to support the stories and inform the readers and not necessarily to attract attention.
Graphics	Graphics are used to simplify information and make it more comprehensible.	These papers use graphics to support content and illustrate or explain issues.	Serious newspapers also make use of graphics to illustrate issues and support the content.
Content	Trivial and frivolous topics are covered. Reporting is not always balanced (information usually come from one, or an incredible source). Editorial comment does not form such an important part of the content. Topics vary from sport to entertainment to news.	MOR newspapers offer something for everyone. Their topics include sport, economics, art, news and entertainment. The newspapers do contain editorial comment.	These newspapers present significant issues seriously and in-depth. The papers aim to report objectively and balanced. Editorial comment is an important part of the content. Content is the most emphasized element.

Table 2.1: The application of communication elements by different newspapers

Serious newspapers, such as *Business Day*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail&Guardian*, write for a smaller, specialized market. These papers do in-depth news coverage including sports, entertainment, economics and politics, whilst appealing to the readers' intellect. MOR newspapers, on the other hand, try to accommodate all tastes. These newspapers offer serious (e.g. the Zuma rape case [Molele & Malefane, 2006:5]) and trifling information to the readers (e.g. Robbie Williams' new music video [Huisman, 2006a:3]). Both MOR and serious newspapers focus on more balanced as well as breaking news. Froneman (2005: 38, 39) refer to populist newspapers (such as the *Sunday Sun* and *Son*) as sensational since they not only focus on trivial information, but also tend to trivialize and sensationalize profound topics. "Bring on the big guns JZ, you'll need them" (Qwelane, 2005:14) is a typical lurid heading for supposedly serious editorial commentary on the respective Zuma cases. These papers give the masses what they want – juicy and scandalous stories about celebrities and ordinary citizens (Froneman, 2002:40). *Die Son* states on its website (dieson.co.za, 2006):

Die Son is onbeskaamd sensasioneel en fokus op plaaslike sondes en skandes, nasionale en internasionale celebrities, showbiz en fun, fun, fun...

Steenveld (2006) is of the opinion that texts address readers as either consumers or citizens. Consequently, one could argue that newspapers that entertain through trivial, sensational information view their readers as consumers and only want to sell newspapers. These papers give readers more of what they want, and less of what they need. Papers that supply vital information to readers on how to function effectively in society, address their audience as citizens. This information includes various topics such as politics, health, education and business. Steenveld (2006) stresses, however, that entertainment need not always entail frivolous information. One could inform, educate, mobilize and entertain simultaneously. Froneman (2002:39) agrees, saying that even serious newspapers could present weighty issues in a readable and interesting way without compromising quality. Entertainment does not exclude education or quality, nor does quality exclude entertainment or attractive and interesting news presentation.

Where the communication elements of layout and presentation are concerned, populist newspapers tend to use bright and dramatic colours (mostly black, red and yellow) to catch readers' attention. The photographs in populist newspapers are typically striking, shocking and large whereas the MOR and serious newspapers use photographs and colour with more discretion. MOR papers have, however, recently started using more colour, possibly in an attempt to compete with the popularity of the populist newspapers (see Appendix F). Gaugele

(2006) is of the opinion that quality (serious) newspapers now include more populist elements. Martin (2006) admits that the biggest weekly serious newspaper in Germany, *Die Zeit*, had to change as a result of the success of tabloids in the country. He notes that the biggest change was on its front page.

Headings in populist papers are often in uppercase and either white-on-black (WOB) or yellow-on-black (YOB).

According to the respective functional models of mass communication of Wright and of Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn the media functions to inform, entertain, educate, interpret and comment, persuade, maintain cultures and values and mobilize audiences politically, socially and economically (De Beer, 1998:13, 14, 15). McQuail's typology of media functions varies slightly and includes the information (informing people about events in society and assist innovation, adaptation and progress), correlation (explaining, interpreting and commenting on events), continuity (maintaining values), entertainment (offering amusement) and mobilization functions (Fourie, 2004b:267; Watson, 2003:104-105). The differences in the content of MOR, serious and populist newspapers are apparent. The content depends on the audience needs, as well on what the newspaper see as newsworthy and vital to their readers (see agenda-setting paragraph 1.3) (cf. Fourie, 2004c: 304; Froneman, 2002:63; Kevelson, 1977:69).

Newspapers also use different types of stories to convey their messages. These include hard news stories, feature articles, news analysis and commentary as well as background features, art criticism and opinion pieces (Lombaard, 2002:60). According to Lombaard (2002:61) hard news, which usually occupies the first pages of newspapers "is generally not intended to provide any overt interpretation". He says, however, that interpretation is inevitable (cf. paragraph 1.2; Wilson, 2003:38). Feature articles, on the other hand, allow for a "freer" approach and they are less time-bound. They have a human interest angle and it is not uncommon for these articles to be written in a "touching and tragic" style (Lombaard, 2002:61). The analysis and interpretation of news events belong in interpretative and background articles as well as on the commentary pages (Lombaard, 2002:65). He adds that editorial commentary aims to persuade. It is thus clear that signs are applied differently to offer news in various "packages".

Language is also one of a newspaper's communication elements (see paragraph 1.2). It is already evident what the differences are in the application of the various communication elements, yet the difference in the language use of the newspapers remains unclear. Since it is

the only one of the communication elements currently not used to classify newspapers with, the researcher aims to establish what these differences are to eventually determine whether language can also function as an *identification* or *classification* element. This will be done by analyzing the language use and then comparing it to the different newspaper functions and characteristics as set out in the literature. If these characteristics correlate, language could in all probability be used to determine a newspaper's nature.

2.3 Theoretical framework

From a semiotic point of view the abovementioned elements (see paragraph 1.2 and 2.2) used in the print media are viewed as signs. Saussure (1959:16) wrote in his *Course in General Linguistics*:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology*¹⁰...
Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance.

Thus, semiotics is a science applicable to anything: mathematics, language, human behaviour, stereotyping, cultures, sport and art. Semiotics is the science of signs, codes and the meanings they convey (Nöth, 1977: 21; Jansen & Steinberg, 1991: 63; Eco, 1976:7; Fourie 2004a: 327; Fourie, 1983:97; Guiraud, 1971:1). Jansen and Steinberger add to this and define semiotics as the study of signs, messages, users and culture (1991:63). Semiotics includes the study of how meaning is *produced* (Branston & Stafford, 2003:9). It is a method of analyzing how messages are created (Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:68) and what their impact is on audiences. In this study the focus is on *how* the message is created i.e. *how* language is used to comply with the respective newspapers' identities (see paragraphs 1.1). The production of meaning or how it is conveyed will therefore not be investigated.

The American philosopher and semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) (Hervey, 1982:9) defines semiotics as "the comprehensive doctrine of signs", or as Hervey (1982:38) rephrases it, "the systematic study of signs". Even though Peirce and Saussure's approaches to the study of signs are different, both *semiology* and *semiotics* are generally acceptable terms

¹⁰ Saussure derived the term *semiology* from the Greek word *sèmeion* (*sign*) (Saussure, 1959:16).

(Cruse, 2004:11). This study is based on a formalistic¹¹ approach i.e. how the message is created (*how* language is used to comply with the respective newspapers' identities). It does not focus on the meaning conveyed. *Semiotics* is the more widely used and "attractive" term and will be used in this study (Berger, 1998:2; Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982:66). Some argue that the origin of semiotics is *structuralism* – a theory stating that the world comprises of the relationships between things (Hawkes, 2003:7; Fourie, 2001:128; Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982:67). Structuralists say that any entity's meaning depends on its relationship to the other elements that are involved in the same situation (Hawkes, 2003:7; see paragraph 2.4.3):

...the full significance of any entity or experience cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated unto the structure of which it forms a part.

Semioticians view everything as signs – the cover of a book, a dog barking, a sweet smell, a word, a song. Signs are anything perceivable referring to or substituting something else (Eco *in* Berger, 1998: 11; Kevelson, 1977: 17; Eco, 1976: 69; Hawkes, 2003:103; Fourie, 2004a: 333). Hawkes (2003:103) defines a sign as something that "stands for something to somebody in some respect". Morris (1971) agrees and says "something is a sign only because it is interpreted as a sign of something by some interpreter". In certain cultures, for example, making eye contact is a sign of being rude. Others see this as showing respect.

Signs refer, in short, to reality (Fourie, 2001:333). Eco (1976:7) says, however, that the "thing" a sign stand for, does not necessarily have to exist or "be somewhere in that moment". Based on this argument, he defines semiotics as "the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie". One could say "Sarah is sleeping". She might not be sleeping, but that does not mean that she *couldn't* or never *would* be.

The signs we use, as said earlier, refer to real life. The word "table" is a sign which refers to a table. Signs could even refer to multiple entities. The *colour* yellow could imply happiness or friendship, whereas the *word* "yellow" refers to the colour. Hervey (1982:157; Morris, 1971:81) argues, however, that the scale of semiotics is limited. He restricts the term "sign" to only that which has the following characteristics: it has to be (i) conventional, (ii) part of a structure or set and (iii) used with the intention to communicate. Accordingly, he does not view the barking or scratching of a dog, or even someone blushing, as a sign. Even though it might communicate

¹¹ Formalism was first introduced by the Russians. Formalists discard the content and meaning and focus on the stylistic features of a text (Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982:15-22, 69). According to the formalists "how a work was constructed... was of far greater importance than what is said" (Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982:16, 17).

that the dog is hungry and even though it belongs to a set (*type* of behaviour), the barking is *not* determined by convention. All semioticians do not agree, however, and Cruse (2004:7, 8) categorizes a sign with these three characteristics, among many other types of signs, as *conventional* (cf. paragraph 2.4.1). Conventionality means that a sign has to be decided upon and then learned. Foul language (or obscenities [see paragraph 3.2.7.2]) is a typical example: the meaning of these words have been agreed upon and learned by a certain group of people. For others, who are not familiar with certain swear words, it will not carry the same meaning and therefore it would not be labelled as “foul” (cf. paragraph 2.4).

2.4 Language as a sign system

Words, syllables and letters are the fundamental sign units of a language (Coulmas, 2003:7, 19). Language, which forms a part of semiotics (Guiraud, 1971:1), is thus a linguistic sign system in which words are combined by grammar rules to create meaning and express ideas (Berger, 1998:6; Sebeok, 1967:5; Cruse, 2004:6 & Hawkes, 2003:10, 13; Anon, 2005a; Sonderling, 2001:110; Fourie, 1983:97). This combination is called coding (Grossberg *et al.*, 1998:129, Burton, 1997:33; Fourie, 2004a:326). Signs are mostly combined by rules and guidelines into comprehensible texts or codes: “Codes govern signs which, when assembled, become texts” (Watson, 2003:42). Codes are structures of signs (Grossberg *et al.*, 1998:129, Burton, 1997:33; Fourie, 2001:326). Fourie (2001:339) refers to a code as the “recipe according to which signs are combined” and says that a communication code “is a collection of related signs and/or symbols together with the rules that regulate their use in communication” (Fourie, 1983:97). Language is a complex code. Cruse (2004:10) argues: “There is no theoretical upper limit to the complexity of linguistic signs.” Language as a code enables us to communicate and interpret messages (Nöth, 1977:25; Berger, 1998:9; Grossberg *et al.*, 1998:129). According to Coulmas (2003:19) the communication of meaning is the main intent of writing.

In selecting particular words and discarding others when writing, and in combining these words in a particular way, the writer communicates a certain meaning to the reader (Hawkes, 2003:65; Sonderling, 2001:113, 114; Fourie, 1983:97). Messages entail selection and combination (Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:65). Branston and Stafford (2003:11, 19) and Oosthuizen (2004a:450) use the classic example: should the media use the term “terrorists”, “freedom fighters” or even “guerrillas”? Is a person “drunk” or “under the influence”? The *Sunday Sun* (Preller, 2005:3) chose the heading “Bigwig pees in public” instead of other possibilities such as “Top official urinates in public”. The former correlates with the in-group language code their readers prefer and understand. These words all refer to the same entities, yet they invoke different images in the reader’s mind and thus convey different meanings. Selections such as

these are termed *paradigmatic choices* (Oosthuizen, 2004a:449). Kevelson (1977:23) says that not only selected signs convey meaning, but the absence of a sign communicates just as important a message, especially when the sign is normally present in the language.

2.4.1 Elements and types of signs

A sign consists of three components as illustrated in figure 2: the signifier (the word "table"), the signified (the concept "table") and the referent (the real table) (Berger, 1998:8; Grossberg *et al.*, 1998: 132; Sebeok, 1967: 37; Jansen & Steinberg, 1991: 64, 65; Moriarty, 1991:23; Branston & Stafford, 2003: 11; Barthes, 1964: 35; Barthes, 1964: 38; Fourie, 2004a: 334; Sonderling, 2001:110; Todorov, 1977:19). Peirce identifies the sign components *object* and *interpretant* (the idea the object invokes in the interpreter's mind) (Eco, 1976:69).

The referent (that which is referred to by the messenger) could be abstract e.g. *love*, *passion*, *hatred* (Fourie, 2001:335). Signification is the mental process that takes place when one interprets the signifier and creates a mental image of the referent called the signifier. Further signification takes place when the signified (the table) becomes a signifier for hospitality. Hospitality could then be a sign for happiness and this continues into infinity (Grossberg *et al.*, 1998:138; Moriarty, 1991:23). Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher, refers to this process, which Grossberg *et al.* calls *an endless production of meaning*, as *dissemination* (Grossberg, 1998:135, 138). Eco (1976:68) terms it *unlimited semiosis*.

The signified (the table) is *not* a thing or entity, but a mental concept of the real entity (Barthes: 1964:42; Eco, 1976:15). Eco (1976:66) notes that words such as /the/, /of/ and /so/ have no referents. This does not mean that these words do not convey meaning – they simply do not *stand in the place of* or *substitute* an object, emotion or any other entity. Wallis (1975:2) refers to these as dependent (non-representing) conventional signs. Signs with signifieds and referents are independent conventional signs (i.e. signs that have to be learned [Cruse, 2004:8; cf. footnote 9]).

Linguistic signs (words) are mostly arbitrary signs (Cruse, 2004:7) for they bear no resemblance to the object to which they refer. The lines one draws to spell "flower" do not resemble a flower in any way. The fact that different languages use very different words to describe the same thing (e.g. "sorry", "jammer" and "entschuldigung") proves that these signs are not in any way similar to the referent. The majority of linguistic signs are arbitrary, though onomatopoeic signs (for example "klik-klak", "knock-knock") are an exception for their sounds do suggest and resemble reality (Cruse, 2004:7). Saussure (1959:68) does not agree with Cruse, however. He says that even though these words *sound* or sometimes *look* like the referent, they are "*chosen*

somewhat arbitrarily, for they are only approximate and more or less conventional imitations of certain sounds". He further states: "I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary" (Saussure, 1959:67).

Moreover, Cruse notes that if arbitrary signs did not exist, iconic signs would limit our expression and communication. *Representative* or iconic signs resemble the entity they signify, for example the Roman sign "III" is an indication of the number (Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:65; Wallis, 1975:1; Cruse, 2004:7). Peirce distinguishes between different types of arbitrary and representative signs depending on the relationship between the signifier and the signified: the index, symbol and icon (Sebeok, 1967:7, 43; Barthes, 1964:35; Branston & Stafford, 2003:17; Hawkes, 2003:107, Fourie, 2004a:334; Blunden, 2005; see paragraph 6.2.1). Iconic signs, such as photographs and drawings, resemble what they signify; photographs resemble reality (the referent). Indexical signs on the other hand "act as evidence": smoke indicates a fire, sweat shows work, and bags under one's eyes are evidence of sleep deprivation (Branston & Stafford, 2003:17). Branston and Stafford define symbolic signs as "visual signs" that are "arbitrarily linked to referents". Flags often symbolize prosperity, freedom and unity even though they do not physically *look* like freedom or unity. Symbolic signs are not necessarily visual. They are defined as signs where the relation between the object and the signifier is established by convention, e.g. "red" means "danger".

2.4.2 Sign functions

Lévi-Strauss says signs function to "express one by means of the other" (Kevelson, 1997:17). Roman Jakobson, a Russian American linguist, refined this by identifying the following sign functions: referential, expressive, metalinguistic, conative, phatic and poetic (Fourie, 2004a:336; Sonderling, 2001:116; Fourie, 1983:5, 6; Guiraud, 1971:6-9). Signs can thus be used to refer to something, express feelings or opinions, to imply messages and to persuade or involve the reader. Guiraud (1971:6-9) describe these functions as follow:

Sign	Description	Relation	Examples
Referential	Forms the basis of all communication. The sign is cognitive and objective.	Defined by the relation between message and object.	"table" "war" "fraud"

Emotive/expressive	Also forms basis of communication. Expresses the sender's attitude toward the sign. These signs are affective and subjective.	Labels the relation between message and sender.	"good" "ugly" "happy"
Conative	These signs aim to elicit reaction from the receivers - whether it is action or participation.	Defines the relation between the message and the receiver.	"One <i>should</i> never allow..."
Poetic/aesthetic	The sign also becomes the object it refers to.	Defines the relation between the message and itself.	Art
Phatic	This sign confirms and accentuates communication and attracts attention.	Defines the relation between the sender and receiver.	"Is it not so?" "Claim your car today!" "As you would know..."
Metalinguistic	These are signs that readers might not understand. They are often written in inverted commas or explained and elaborated on.	Defined by the relation between the message and the code?	"Democracy" can have different meanings depending on the context and how it is used.

Table 2.2: Jakobson's sign functions

Guiraud (1971:6-9) is of the opinion that one could determine the type of communication depending on the dominant sign in a text. The abovementioned sign functions correlate with the media functions and communication needs of audiences (cf. Fourie, 1983:5, 6) (see paragraph 1.3).

2.4.3 The application of signs to communicate

According to Saussure a sign or sign unit has no meaning by itself and only conveys meaning when combined with, and in relation to other signs (Anon, 2005a). Jansen and Steinberg (1991:65) say that "cat" itself means nothing. It is only meaningful because it is not "cab" or "bat" or even "dog" or "cow". Kress (*in* Davis & Walton, 1983:126) states, however, that units have meanings in isolation, but attain new meanings in relation to other units. Burton (1997:33) agrees with Kress:

Individual signs may signal strongly to us, but in the end it is always the collection of signs which add up to the complete meaning in a message. Ultimately one has to read the complete sentence, the paragraph, or the entire news article, in order to make sense of it.

Meaning also depends on *how* and in which *context* the signs are used and *where* they occur (i.e. the position of a word in a sentence). Language has many grammatical elements that do not convey meaning, but *contributes* to the meaning by creating a context that allows other elements to be decoded (Hawkes, 2003:65). Structuralists claim that elements have no significance on their own. These have to be integrated into a structure in order to convey meaning (see paragraph 1.2). Hawkes (2003:14) argues that even though signs have separate meanings, these meanings change through the “simultaneous presence of others”. Signs, therefore, also *mean* something in *relation* to other signs. Each word has a “horizontal” relationship to the words that precede and succeed it – and the position of a word suggests its meaning (Hawkes, 2003:15). For example, in the sentence “The crazy man shot the fat lady”, we know that crazy describes the man and that “fat” and “lady” belong together. We base this interpretation on the *position* and sequence of the respective nouns and adjectives in sentences.

The post-structuralists, on the other hand, argue that meaning is conveyed through difference (i.e. binary codes) (Branston & Stafford, 2003:15). “Black” is only “black” because it is not “white”. Saussure uses examples such as “hot”/“cold” and “masculine”/“feminine” to illustrate how binary codes work (Branston & Stafford, 2003:13). Branston and Stafford (2003:15) note however, that these different signs (e.g. “black” and “white”) do share qualities – in this case the colour spectrum. Hervey (1982:11) illustrates “meaning conveyed through difference” by using chess pieces as an example. What sets the knight apart from the other pieces is its ability (or characteristic) to move in an L-form, and it is this *difference* that determines its *identity* (Hervey, 1982:11).

It is true that a unit such as “coffee” can convey meaning as Hawkes argues. It obviously signifies the hot caffeine drink. “Coffee” also conveys meaning in combination with other units for example “Suzie drinks coffee”. The question arises, however, how do we “obviously” know that coffee is a hot caffeine drink. Saussure is right in saying that signs *do not* communicate meaning *in isolation*. The sign “coffee” is arbitrary and means nothing if one has not *learned* what it refers to, what its characteristics (brown, caffeine, drink, hot) and differences (not tea, not cold) are to other *signs*. We can only understand a sign if we have knowledge of other signs

and the context. According to Cruse (2004:11) "the meanings of all linguistic expressions vary within the context in which they occur". "Coffee", therefore, only conveys meaning in isolation when we have already *learned* what the relation between coffee and other signs is. Thus, signs are interdependent and language is an interdependent system of signs (Hawkes, 2003:14).

We associate *and* differentiate words when decoding, says Saussure (Branston & Stafford, 2003:13). Decoding is done through connotation and denotation. Connotation is the subjective meaning (either symbolic, historic or emotional) an individual derives from a message, while denotation refers to the objective, explicit meanings of words (Berger, 1998:14; Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:67; Fourie, 2001:345; Guiraud, 1971:28). Guiraud (1971:28) sees sciences as denotative and arts as connotative sign systems. Hawkes (2003:108) explains these concepts as follows: denotation occurs when we use language to say exactly what we intend. Connotation, on the other hand, is language usage with the intention to mean something other than what one is actually saying.

2.5 Encoding and decoding of messages

It is important to note that communication is not natural (Burton, 1997:33; Branston & Stafford, 2003:18; Oosthuizen, 2004a:449). Some signs are "conventionally assigned meanings". They have to be learned and they "differ in different communities" (Cruse, 2003:8). Different communities, or groups of people, prefer different *modes of address* or *idiolects* (see paragraph 1.3.3). A group of students would, for example, use a different language code than a group of lecturers. They function in different contexts and learn different codes. Cruse further states that linguistic signs are prototypical conventional signs. For example: the green traffic light meaning "go" could easily be replaced by the colour pink if everyone were to decide and agree that pink means "go" (Branston & Stafford, 1994:18). The word "coffee" could also be replaced by the unknown sign "vavou" if everyone agrees and recognizes this new "word" as the sign for "coffee". The words "cool", "wicked" and "bad" have, for example, lost their original meanings since it has been generally agreed that these now refer to "fashionable", "enjoyable", "fun", "tough" (Branston & Stafford, 2003:19). Different discourse communities agree on different signs and codes. However, the reader is not a passive participant in the communication process (Barton, 1994:65). Readers discover and even produce meanings by actively decoding the message encoded by the writer (Ellis, 1989:115; Wigston, 2001:141). Guiraud (1971:17) distinguishes between *hot* and *cold* messages. Hot messages (e.g. written messages) offer more elements for decoding whereas cold messages (e.g. spoken messages) offer less. In this study the emphasis is on the encoding process, i.e. how the newspapers *choose* to manipulate language.

Reading does not however, merely involve knowing the meaning of words (Barton, 1994:65). Texts convey obvious meanings, while concealed messages are also communicated (Burton, 1997:30). The reader actively decodes the message encoded by the writer. The message *encoded* could either be *overt* or *covert* (Fourie, 1983:12; Burton, 1997:30). Overt (or *direct*) messages are explicit and obvious and could be understood by anyone whereas covert (or *indirect*) messages are hidden and *imply* meanings by saying one thing and meaning another (Fourie, 1983:13; Hervey, 1982:227; Burton, 1997:30). This is evident in the *Son's* page 3 heading "*Dié een wys ons alles: Loslyf se boetie staan Stokstyl*" (Anon, 2005c:3) and its front page lead "*'JOU TERT': lees wat gay skinderbekke oor Rian te sê het*" (Barnard, 2005c:1,2). The signs in the first heading, for example, are sexually loaded and imply that the new pornography magazine will offer more explicit and exciting content. "*Tert*" on the other hand, loses its dictionary (denotative) meaning in this context. The reader decodes "*tert*" as a signifier for a *promiscuous* gay celebrity. Ellis (1989:115) and Burton (1997:35) both stress that readers as well as producers of messages, discover and even construct meanings. Readers actively select, organize and connect information to form meanings (Barton, 1994:65). This happens through denotation and connotation (cf. paragraph 2.4.3).

When a signifier is linked with a signified, *denotation* occurs. Yet, when the unit of signified and signifier becomes a new signifier (when *dissemination*¹² takes place) the message acquires more meanings and this is called *connotation* (Moriarty, 1991:88) (see paragraph 2.4). Roland Barthes (1990:6) defines *connotation* as secondary meaning and Eco (1976:56) calls it a sub code. The word "dog" can refer to the animal. It could also, in certain groups, signify a loyal friend. In other discourse communities a "dog" is a ruthless and shameless person. The word "red" is another example: it could refer to the colour (denotation), or to hate, passion, love, anger (connotation) (Branston & Stafford, 2003:15). Readers would for example make certain connotations when interpreting the headline "*JOU TERT*" (Barnard, 2005c:1, 2). The connotation, secondary meaning or sub code depends on the agreed upon in-group language code. Different discourse communities would *create* different sub codes and *make* different connotations when for example using the word "dog".

Not any interpretation of a text is legitimate, but, according to Grossberg *et al.* (1998:155) there is never just one interpretation of a text. This phenomenon is termed *polysemy* (Ross &

¹² Dissemination occurs when a signified becomes the signifier of yet another signified for example the word "red" (signifier) refers to the colour red (signified). The colour red now becomes the signifier when it refers to either love, anger or blood (signifieds) (cf. paragraph 2.4.1).

Nightingale, 2003:73; Jansen & Steinberg, 1991:67). A *noetic field* indicates the possible number of interpretations a sign could signal (Hervey, 1982:72) and this field is determined by the sender, depending on his communication intentions (Hervey, 1982:76). The sender decides which interpretations he wants to include in his message. A traffic light's noetic field, for instance, officially only allows three possible interpretations: "stop", "prepare to stop" or "go".

Based on the possible interpretations, a further distinction could be made between texts: that of *open* and *closed* texts. Watson (2003:44) uses political communication as an example of a closed text. These messages are developed and presented in such a way that only one interpretation is possible. If a politician is opposed to violence against women and children he definitely wants readers to think that he does not encourage domestic violence and not the other way around. His message would therefore allow only one possible interpretation. If not, he has failed in communicating his ideas.

2.6 Summary

It is evident that language is the most important communication element a newspaper has. A newspaper combines all the communication elements or sign systems (photographs, graphics, content, text and layout) to communicate to their readers, comply with their needs, and establishes its identity (cf. Watson, 2003:3; Fourie, 2004b:327; Oosthuizen, 2004:451; Faure, 2001:347; Fourie, 1983:101-103; Steenveld, 2006; see paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3.1). The literature clearly describes the difference among the communication elements, yet no adequate description of language usage exists. Moreover, all the communication elements except language are used to categorize newspapers. The researcher has established in the literature that language is a crucial communication element and aims to determine whether this element can too function to establish the nature of a newspaper. In the empirical study which follows (chapters 4, 5 and 6), the researcher endeavours to ascertain what the language characteristics and differences are in populist, MOR and serious newspapers to eventually make a conclusion whether language as communication element could be added to the classification criteria.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research questions and aims (cf. paragraph 1.5) require a critical analysis of the language usage in the six weekly newspapers. This chapter entails an overview of what the literature says about the media and its functions and the importance of language. A qualitative research method is most applicable in this study, since the researcher is working with narrative data (newspaper stories) that requires interpretation (Du Plooy, 2001b:9). Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore and interpret communication (Du Plooy, 2001b:37). Du Plooy (2001b:83, 84) further states that this research method is appropriate when analyzing the content of messages as well as for comparative analyses.

This chapter gives a brief overview of a qualitative research approach and then an outline of how this approach will be used to analyse how the language usage of the *Sunday Sun*, *Son*, *Sunday Times*, *Rapport*, the *Mail&Guardian* and *Sunday Independent* reinforce their respective nature and support their various functions.

3.2 Research method

3.2.1 Qualitative versus quantitative approaches

Du Plooy (2001b:9) says that qualitative and quantitative research approaches mean that we "... look(ing) at the world through different lenses..." Qualitative and quantitative approaches are based on different assumptions (Du Plooy, 2001b:11). Du Plooy adds that researchers using quantitative methods assume that communication can be numerically calculated, whereas qualitative researchers work with narrative data (see paragraph 3.1). Quantitative results will be presented in percentages and/or graphics and tables, whereas qualitative research results will be in the form of qualitative descriptions and interpretations (Du Plooy, 2001b:11). The qualitative approach is mainly based on inductive reasoning (i.e. the researcher aims to develop and then verify an assumption or observation) in collecting and analyzing data.

According to Du Plooy (2001b:13-15; 2001a:34) and Hoepfl (2006) the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods can be summarized as follows:

- *The view of reality:*

A quantitative approach sees reality as something that can be objectively studied, analysed, explained and generalised. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, view

reality as subjective and assume that it can be studied by interpreting and understanding meanings and purposes.

- *Research goal and objectives:*

Quantitative research approaches "... measure, compare, predict and/or control hypotheses..." regarding a certain issue whereas a qualitative approach tries to understand and explain the issue in qualitative terms. Between 1940 and 1970 qualitative research focused primarily on meaning, language and culture. Researchers were more interested in understanding these situations than in generalising the results. They used case studies and in-depth analysis of, among others, interviews and documentation (Du Plooy, 2001a:33). Qualitative studies aim to explore fairly unknown areas (Du Plooy, 2001a:83; Hoepfl, 2006).

- *Form of reasoning:*

Quantitative approaches usually use deductive reasoning. This method attempts to measure and verify certain preconceived assumptions, theories and hypotheses. The qualitative research approach, as stated in the paragraph above, is based on inductive reasoning. Inductive research methods are aimed at creating or developing theories based on data collection and analysis (Du Plooy, 2001b:32). The researcher aims to verify and understand his/her own observations. This type of research does not attempt to substantiate a hypothesis or theory, though tentative hypotheses can be formulated to act as guidelines and underlying assumptions (Du Plooy, 2001a:75).

- *Research design:*

Quantitative researchers view themselves as outsiders who objectively gather and analyse data and present results. The researcher is the one who derives meaning. He/she defines concepts (e.g. statements and questions in questionnaires) as variables and then operationalises them as items that can be measured. Other researchers can repeat the study since the method is fixed and systematic. The results are presented in figures and tables. Qualitative approaches entail that meaning is obtained from the subjects (e.g. the participants or the texts). Researchers admit that they are subjective (i.e. they are closely involved with the subjects) and thus the research is conducted from an insider's point of view. The researcher creates categories and themes, as opposed to the quantitative *items*, to organise and operationalise the concepts¹³ (data). These themes and categories are not as fixed as the items identified in quantitative research. The themes and categories change and are refined during the research process through

¹³ Abstract concepts (for example "loyalty", "success" or "signs") should be defined "within the parameters of a particular conceptual framework" (Du Plooy, 2001a:66). This means that a concept should be clearly defined in terms of the study before research is attempted. Once a *concept* is *operationalised* it becomes a *construct* (Du Plooy, 2001a:66).

coding. Maxwell (1996:2) agrees. According to him the research components need to be revised and modified during the research process since the study needs to respond to new developments and findings. Maxwell (1996:2) also refers to Hammersley and Atkinson's opinion that a qualitative research approach "... should be a reflective process operating through every stage of a project..." This constant revision is of the utmost importance because (Maxwell, 1996:2):

The activities of collecting and analysing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating and refocusing the research questions, and identifying and eliminating validity threats are usually all going on more or less simultaneously, each influencing all of the others.

The research design is unique to the particular study since it is conducted within a specific context, and consequently also more flexible. Due to this uniqueness and flexibility, the study cannot be repeated exactly. Results are not presented in tables and figures, but in descriptive words.

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches have different strengths and are applicable to different questions and problems (Maxwell, 1996:17). This author is of the opinion that qualitative research's inductive approach and its focus on words are definite strengths. Qualitative methods are well suited for the following purposes (Maxwell, 1996:17):

- When the researcher tries to understand reality as well as intentions, cognition and affect an interpretative approach is necessary (see paragraph 3.1)
- When the researcher wants to understand how participants' context and unique environments influence their behaviour.
- When the researcher is interested in explaining certain phenomena. In doing so, new theories are often developed.
- When the researchers want to understand processes i.e. how events and actions take place.
- When the researcher wants to develop explanations and identify relationships. In this study the researcher aims to understand the relationship between language usage and a newspaper's character (see paragraph 1.5).

One research approach does not exclude the other (Du Plooy, 2001b:11). For example, data can be summarized and explained qualitatively and then be put into percentages in order to draw comparisons. A qualitative approach does not mean that the researcher cannot count

(Sandelowski, 2006; see paragraph 3.2.3). This study will describe, interpret and compare the researcher's findings qualitatively. The results will, however, also be presented in percentages and tables (see paragraph 3.2.3) to make comparisons and conclusions easier and clearer (e.g. the number of expressive signs [see paragraph 2.4] present in the respective newspaper stories).

3.2.2 An interactive research design

Even though a qualitative research design is more flexible than a quantitative design, it does not mean that a research plan is not necessary. Maxwell (1996:2) says that: "A good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning..." Based on this opinion, he developed and suggests an interactive model of research design specifically aimed at a qualitative research approach (Maxwell, 1996:4-12). This study uses Maxwell's model as a framework:

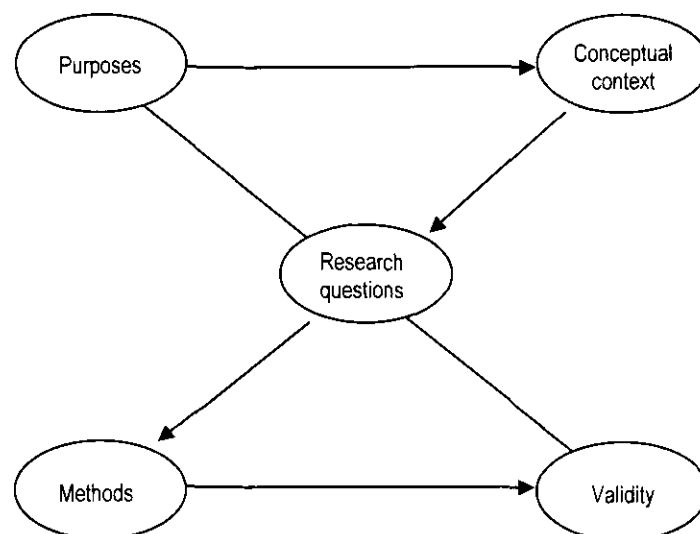


Figure 3.1: Maxwell's interactive model of research design

By making the *purposes* clear, the researcher highlights why the study and the results are important (cf. paragraph 1.5). The purposes are not only important, but crucial to the study (Maxwell, 1996:10). They guide as well as justify a study (Maxwell, 1996:14). The *conceptual context* refers to the theories that guide the study (cf. paragraph 1.6). The sources of this theory could be personal experiences, existing theories, results of previous studies or even thought experiments. *Research questions* guide the researcher to understand what he/she does not know about the research material. These are the questions the study aims to answer (cf. paragraph 1.5). How one approaches and conducts the study (e.g. gather, organise, analyse and present data) is referred to as the research *method*. *Validity* is a crucial element of the research design. One should always be aware of *how* and *why* the results might be wrong. It is

necessary to identify any alternative explanations and threats to validity that might influence the researcher's conclusions (cf. paragraph 3.2.4.1). The methods and validity are discussed in this chapter whereas the purposes, context and questions were looked at in chapters 1 and 2.

3.2.3 Study of literature

This study will be conducted using two research methods: a literature study (see chapter 2) and qualitative content analysis¹⁴ (chapters 4-6).

A literature study is usually conducted to attain the following information (Du Plooy, 2001a:61):

- what research has already been done on the subject
- what research methods were used
- what were the results and
- what was done with the findings

Primary, secondary as well as tertiary sources will be used in this study. The primary sources include the newspaper stories selected. The secondary and tertiary sources include books, articles and internet sources (South African and international databases). These sources can aid the researcher in establishing what has already been written on the subject of language usage in the print media. Secondary sources can also help identify any conflicting views concerning the issue at hand (Du Plooy, 2001a:60). Research has already been done on the use of signs in visual media such as film and television as well as advertising (cf. Wallis, 1975; Hartley, 1992). However, language usage in the print media has not been studied widely in South Africa (see paragraph 1.7.1)

Quality publications should make use of style guides to ensure consistency (Highton, 1978:14; cf. Leiter *et al.*, 2000:46-47; Bowman & Willis, 2003:34). Many newspapers consequently compile their own style guides to correspond with their characters. The *Mail&Guardian's* style guide (see Appendix E) as well as that of *Rapport* (the official Media24 style guide *Skryf Afrikaans van A tot Z* (Müller, 2003) will therefore be studied and compared with the researcher's findings in order to establish if these correlate as well as to determine how the newspaper approaches language (cf. Sonderling, 2001:119; see Appendix E). According to the Deputy Editor: Insight and Opinion of the *Sunday Times*, Gillian Anstey, this newspaper's style

¹⁴ Content analysis is a qualitative research approach "relating to the characteristics of language" (Struwig & Stead, 2001:14). According to them a content analysis entails the analysis of textual content (e.g. words, meanings, symbols and themes). They further state that content analysis aims to classify many words in a text into "considerably fewer" categories.

guide is still being compiled. The *Son* does not have a formal style guide. Neither the *Sunday Independent* nor the *Sunday Sun* made their guides available to the researcher.

3.2.4 Empirical study: qualitative content analysis

A qualitative content analysis¹⁵ is a "...systematic analysis of written or verbal responses and audiovisual material..." (Du Plooy, 2001a:84). Selected newspaper stories will be analysed in this part of the study to determine how newspapers apply language and if it supports their nature. Content analysis should still meet the requirements of scientific research. These include a systematic procedure, objectivity and validity, content that is quantified and interpretation within the context of the research problem (Du Plooy, 2001a:192).

3.2.4.1 Research material and time period

Sampling refers to the process of selecting units to analyse (Du Plooy, 2001a:100). One could analyse (or investigate or interview) every unit/member in a population¹⁶ to gain accurate data on the population, called a *census*. Time, money and distances, however, often limit this method of sampling. It is crucial that the sample should still be representative of the population (Du Plooy, 2001a:100).

The empirical component of the study will focus on a qualitative analysis of the front page stories of four editions of the *Sunday Times*, *Rapport*, the *Sunday Sun*, *Son*, *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail&Guardian*. All six papers appear once a week: the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Sun*, *Sunday Independent* and *Rapport* on Sundays and *Son* and the *Mail & Guardian* on Fridays. Front pages focus on what newspapers view as the most important news and they are the windows of a newspaper (see paragraph 1.3 on agenda setting) (Faure, 2001:346,348; Steenveld, 2006). Faure explains it as follows:

The *front page* is the show window of all newspapers; it is the most important element of newspaper design. Because readers see the front page first, it gives them their first impression of the paper's contents. Readers cannot ignore the front page.

Furthermore, front pages not only strongly convey a newspaper's image, but the individual stories function to attract readers and sell newspapers. The linguistic signs on this page will

¹⁵ See footnote 12.

¹⁶ A population is "... any group of individuals, groups, organizations, social artifacts/objects, or social interactions and events..." (Du Plooy, 2001a:100).

therefore give the researcher insight into the connection between the papers' nature and their language usage.

Since the *Sunday Sun* and the *Son* do not have stories on their front pages, but only headlines and photographs, the researcher analyzed the main teasers¹⁷ on the front pages as well as the stories inside the newspapers to which the headlines on the front page refer. Each of these stories has another headline *inside* the newspaper, but this was treated as part of the text. Consequently each story in this study had only one headline analyzed, which ensures consistency.

Newspapers form a homogenous population since they have numerous common parameters (e.g. function, elements) (Du Plooy, 2001a:101). Consequently, a smaller sample (six newspapers in this study) is required. The selected newspapers do, however, differ where language, target audiences, content and distribution are concerned. This requires a larger representative sample. Populist, MOR as well as serious newspapers needed to be selected in both Afrikaans and English. The researcher decided on weekly newspapers, and this restricted the selection. Only one weekly MOR Afrikaans newspaper exists (the *Rapport*) and South Africa has only one Afrikaans populist newspaper (the *Son*). Since there is no serious mainstream Afrikaans newspaper, the researcher used two serious English newspapers to conduct the research. The only two serious weekly English newspapers were consequently included in the study (the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*). The *Sunday Times*, on the other hand, were chosen since it too, just as is the case with the other chosen MOR newspaper the *Rapport*, appears on Sundays.

As mentioned earlier, a sample of only six newspapers is required to ensure external and internal validity, since the units are homogenous. Three (and in some cases four) of each newspaper was selected, however, and this amounts to a total of 21 newspaper front pages used for the content analysis. The sample drawn is shown in the table below:

¹⁷ A teaser is an element designed to arouse the reader's curiosity about a story on the inside pages. It could, for example, take the form of a headline, a photograph, the beginning of a story or a banner (cf. Nel, 2001:304; Freep Academy, 2001; McElwain, 2001).

	Serious	Middle-of-the-road	Populist
Afrikaans		<i>Rapport</i> (4)	<i>Son</i> (3)
English	<i>Sunday Independent</i> (3) <i>Mail&Guardian</i> (3)	<i>Sunday Times</i> (4)	<i>Sunday Sun</i> (4)

Table 3.1: Sample drawn of South African newspapers

South Africa has 20 daily newspapers and 13 weekly papers (southafrica.info, 2006). The study thus includes almost half (46.2%) of the published weekly newspapers in the country (this excludes community and non-mainstream political newspapers such as *Die Afrikaan*).

3.2.4.2 Background on selected newspapers

The background information on the newspapers is, according to southafrica.com (2006) and the latest ABC figures (SAARF, 2006):

- ***Sunday Independent***

This serious Sunday newspaper was established in 1995 and "... aims at readers in the higher-income bracket...". It is mainly sold in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Northern Cape. 47% of its readers are black, 29% are white, 11% coloured and 13% Indian. It has an average weekly sale of 41 464 newspapers to 179 000 readers. It states on its website that:

The *Sunday Independent*, South Africa's quality Sunday newspaper is read by the decision makers of the new South Africa. Top flight writing, photography and reproduction have firmly established The Sunday Independent as South Africa's quality newspaper of choice. The publication includes news, opinion, business, reviews, marketing and sports sections and has won widespread critical acclaim.

- ***Mail&Guardian***

Formerly the *Weekly Mail*, the *Mail&Guardian* was established in 1985 in an attempt to resist Apartheid. Today the newspaper is owned by Trevor Ncube's (a Zimbabwean entrepreneur) company, Newstrust Company Botswana Limited. About 233 000 readers buy 43 050 newspapers every week. The *Mail&Guardian* states on its website that it is :

... interested in a critical approach to politics, arts and current affairs. Large numbers of readers among professionals, academics, diplomats, lobbyists, non-governmental

groups. Regularly achieves the highest circulation percentage increases in the newspaper market.

- ***Sunday Times***

The *Sunday Times*, established in 1906, is the country's biggest national newspaper with an average of 3.24 million readers. The newspaper includes the *Sunday Times Magazine*, *Lifestyle*, *Business Times* as well as a *Metro* section. The paper is distributed in South Africa and in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. It sells on average 504 301 newspapers a week. The newspaper is owned by Johnnic Communications.

- ***Rapport***

Rapport is South Africa's only weekly mainstream Afrikaans newspaper. It was established in 1970 and is currently sold in South Africa and Namibia. This newspaper has "... the biggest Afrikaans-language penetration in South Africa...". Approximately 1.6 million readers buy 325 807 copies of the paper every Sunday (naspers.co.za, 2006). The paper is owned by Media24.

- ***Sunday Sun***

The *Sunday Sun* is also owned by Media24. This English newspaper was established early in 2002 and originally aimed at attracting black readers (Naspers.co.za, 2006). It is now, with a current readership of 186 933, the fastest growing newspaper in South Africa. Many of its readers are first-time newspaper readers. The content is mainly of tabloid nature. 195 850 newspapers are sold to 1.96 million readers every week. The paper is distributed countrywide as well as in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

- ***Son***

Die Son is the first Afrikaans tabloid and is sold weekly countrywide and daily in the Western Cape (naspers.co.za, 2006). This populist newspaper was established in 2003 and has an average of 184 179 readers countrywide. The newspaper "... is based on British tabloids such as *The Sun*, focusing on scandal, gossip, entertainment and sport...". The paper sells an average of 179 287 copies to 744 000 readers every Friday. It is owned by Media24. The weekly Northern (*Son Noord*) edition is analysed in this study.

3.2.5 Validity and reliability

3.2.5.1 Validity

Validity refers to the "...correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account..." (Maxwell, 1996:87). Maxwell (1996:87, 88)

emphasises that validity as a component is a key issue/strategy in any research design. It enables the researcher to rule out any *validity threats* (i.e. ways in which the findings might be wrong). It is crucial that a researcher identify possible alternative explanations for his/her findings, possible threats to the study as well as develop ways to rule out these threats (Maxwell, 1996:88).

Since quantitative and qualitative research designs differ in a number of ways, their validity components and strategies would also vary. As opposed to quantitative research designs, qualitative designs do not have the advantage of formal comparisons, statistical manipulations or preceding controls of variables (Maxwell, 1996:88). Qualitative researchers must identify possible threats to validity as well as gather data to refute alternative hypotheses *during* the research process. It is important to gather “evidence”, says Maxwell, to counter these other possible explanations and support one’s own findings. Contrary to what the positivists believed, research methods do not guarantee validity. Maxwell (1996:86) refers to Brinberg and McGrath’s statement in this regard:

Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques. Instead, it depends on the relationship of your conclusions to the real world, and there are no methods that can assure you that you have adequately grasped those aspects of the world that you are studying.

Maxwell (1996:86) emphasises this by saying that:

...validity threats are made implausible by *evidence*, not methods; methods are only a way of getting evidence that can help you rule out these threats...

Two types of validity apply to a research design: internal and external (Du Plooy, 2001a:84). Internal validity refers to the “...extent to which the design can account for all the factors that may affect the outcome of the hypotheses to be tested or the research questions to be answered...” (Du Plooy, 1996:84). In other words, a research design is internally valid if the researcher has effectively refuted all the possible alternative explanations (see previous paragraph). If research results can be generalised, then it is externally valid (cf. paragraph 3.2.5).

The following factors contribute to the internal validity of a research design (see paragraph 3.2.4.1) (Du Plooy, 2001a:85):

- accurate operationalisation of theoretical concepts (cf. paragraph 3.2.1)
- drawing a random sample from the population (cf. paragraph 3.2.4.1)
- neither the researcher (in a qualitative design, for example), nor the measuring instrument should disrupt, intrude or direct the data (cf. paragraph 3.2.4.3)
- the effectiveness with which the researcher manipulates independent variables to ensure an effect on the dependent variables

These factors, on the other hand, add to the external validity of a cross-sectional research design (Du Plooy, 2001a:85):

- drawing representative rather than volunteer or convenience samples from a population (cf. paragraph 3.2.4.1)
- when the researcher conducts the research within real settings and not in laboratories

3.2.5.2 Reliability

Reliability is another requirement of a research design and Du Plooy (2001a:121) defines it as follows:

Measurement reliability means that the measure must be stable and consistently produce the same measurements (or answers) over a period of time.

A study is also reliable when the findings can be applied to different groups and settings with the same results (Morgan & Drury, 2003). This study aims to define the categories as clearly as possible to enable other researchers to duplicate the study. Du Plooy (2001a:123) identifies six methods that a researcher could use to ensure the reliability of qualitative as well as quantitative studies:

- *test-retest*: the data is measured twice to see if the results are consistent
- *alternate-forms*: parallels of the same measurement is given to the same group of people
- *split-half*: measurement items are divided, scored separately after which the consistency between the two halves is compared
- *item-to-total*: single items are compared to all the other items
- *intercoder*: the average correlation among codes are determined to make sure that the categories or themes were equivalently applied by the researcher
- *computers*

The intercoder reliability is usually applied in a content analysis research design. This method is used to determine the reliability of the researcher's interpretation. A researcher can also attain reliability in the following way (Morgan & Drury, 2003):

Qualitative research can attain an appropriate level of external reliability by documenting the succession of moves through the stages of data production, analysis and interpretation. This can be achieved by explaining the methodological framework and the range of strategies that have been used within the study.

In this study the methodology was well thought-through and the researcher aims to explain clearly the stages of data collection, analysis and categorization to increase reliability. Morgan and Drury (2003) further states that a similar outcome or a specific reproduction of the study does not, however, test reliability, but "...rather by the extent to which differences and contradictions can be explained by a combination of findings of different studies...". A study is also reliable if it enables us to predict and understand a certain phenomena (Morgan & Drury, 2003).

3.2.5.3 Triangulation

Triangulation entails that researchers use a variety of methods to collect data and refer to different sources (Du Plooy, 2001a:39; Maxwell, 1996:93). Triangulation is applied to the research design to test the theoretical assumptions and increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation can be utilized in a number of ways (Du Plooy, 2001a:38; Maxwell, 1996:76). These include:

- using different sampling methods
- using different sources for data collection (cf. paragraph 3.2.3)
- using different research methods (cf. paragraph 3.2.3 and 3.2.4)
- analysing data from different theoretical perspectives
- using more than one researcher to analyse the data

Only one sampling method was used in this study (cf. paragraph 3.2.4.1). Different sources are used for data collection (newspaper stories, the internet, books, articles and style guides) and two methods are applied: a literature study and a qualitative content analysis with the aim to increase the validity and reliability of the study. This study is also based on more than one theoretical perspective: that of media functions, the nature of newspapers as well as semiotics which also increases the validity and reliability of the findings.

In this study, triangulation is applied by using different sources of data collection (style guides, newspaper stories, and literature as well as expert opinions on journalism [Gaugele, 2006; Martin, 2006; Steenveld, 2006]). Different research methods are also used (a literature study as well as a qualitative analysis).

3.2.6 Analysing the data

Content analysis is used to determine "...the frequency with which certain symbols or themes appear in messages..." (Du Plooy, 2001a:191). The units of analysis in this study are *syntactic* (Du Plooy, 2001a:191). Datasheets that contain categories are developed to organise the data (or syntactic units) (Du Plooy, 2001a:194). These coding schemes enable the researcher to "...convert the content into analysable data..." (Du Plooy, 2001a:196).

This study aims to determine the various newspapers' writing styles and sign functions and types to ascertain whether language could be added to the other communication elements as a criterion for newspaper classification (cf. paragraph 1.2 and 1.5). Writing styles and sign functions and types also indicate *how* language is applied to fulfil audience needs.

3.2.7 Method of work

The researcher aims to establish how frequently and the manner in which the populist, MOR and serious newspapers apply selected signs. This will enable the researcher to determine what the characteristics and differences are in the newspapers' language usage (see paragraph 3.2.6). This data will be analyzed using datasheets (see Appendix C). The following categories of linguistic signs were created to organize the data and ultimately answer the research questions set out in chapter 1 (see paragraph 1.5.1):

- The length of signs and sign units
- Punctuation, style and format
- Types of signs
- Jakobson's sign functions

These categories and the datasheets are explained below.

3.2.7.1 Length of signs and sign units

In this category the researcher wants to determine what the length of linguistic signs and sign units are in the populist, MOR and serious newspapers are to establish whether the lengths

vary between the papers and if so, whether it can function to categorize the respective newspapers. The following sub-categories were created:

- a. the average length of words
- b. the average length of sentences
- c. the average length of paragraphs and
- d. the average length of stories

The length of words, sentences and paragraphs are significant markers of style (Hervey, 1982:220). The length of signs and sign units would give the reader insight into the readability and digestibility of the text. In journalism, especially in newspapers, space is valuable and information needs to be grasped instantly – therefore sentences, paragraphs and stories (except for in-depth and investigative articles) are (and should be) shorter (Bernstein, 1982:196; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:49-50). Longer stories and lengthier sentences would aim elaborate on and explain certain aspects while shorter sentences would satisfy the needs of a hasty reader, or one that merely seeks entertainment. Serious newspapers, aimed at more “intellectual readers” might, however, use longer and more complex signs and sign units. An American study, aiming to understand why one writer’s columns are more comprehensible than another’s, found that sentence length plays a major role in the comprehensibility of a text (Bernstein, 1958:112-115). In short, the results were:

Text	Number of words	Number of sentences	Average number of words per sentence	Students’ insight
Text viewed as more comprehensible	265	21	12	64%
Text viewed as less comprehensible	271	5	52	9%

Table 3.2: The relationship between sentence length and the comprehensibility of a text

It is evident that the shorter the sentences are (which obviously results in more sentences), the easier it is to interpret the message. Leiter *et al.* (2000:49) say, “News style calls for short sentences. They are easier to read than long, involved ones.” Greer (1999:98) says that longer sentences are more difficult to follow, “unlikely to flow smoothly and very likely to bore the reader to sleep.” Sentences should be simple and clear and consequently, short (Greer, 1999:98). Bernstein (1982:196) is of the opinion that shorter paragraphs make newspapers

more inviting, easier to read and the content more comprehensible (cf. Joseph, 2005; Leiter *et al.*, 2000:49) (see paragraph 1.3.3). The world-known Flesch's readability test devised by Rudolf Flesch agrees with this American study. He went further and determined that the length of words also plays a role in the reading difficulty of a text (Parker, 2006). Leiter *et al.* (2000:48) agree and say that: "Short words are usually best. The newspaper is written to be read hurriedly by persons of all levels of intellect." Populist newspapers might use shorter paragraphs and words – especially since they aim to entertain and also present information in bite-sized, digestible bits (cf. Joseph, 2005; paragraph 1.3.3). The sub-categories will now each be described:

a. The average length of words

In the light of the above the following assumption is made:

Assumption 1: Populist newspapers use shorter words than mainstream¹⁸ papers.

To test this assumption, the length of words was ascertained by counting the number of characters (*not* the number of syllables) in the stories and headlines, and dividing it by the number of words. Characters were used to determine the word lengths instead of syllables, since the researcher does not want to establish the complexity of the words, but merely whether the papers comply to the good practice in journalism to use words economically (Scheffenacker, 2006; Schuler, 2006). Economic word application applies the use of *short* words, and not necessarily simple words. Space is valuable in newspapers. Consequently every character matters.

The numbers were rounded off to the first decimal. For example, in the headline *Noam Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (Brockes, 2005:1) there are 30 letters and 8 words. The average word length in this headline is therefore 3.8 characters long. This method was used in stories and headlines throughout the study. The average word length in headlines and stories of a particular paper were then calculated by adding all the averages of the headlines/stories, and dividing it by the total number of stories/headlines. The *Son's* length of headlines is, for example, set out in the table below:

¹⁸ "Mainstream" refers to middle-of-the-road and serious newspapers collectively.

Length: headlines	
Son	Nature: populist
Story	Words
	N=letters
Front page 1: 4 Nov 2005	
Story 1	26
Story 2	31
Total issue:	57/12 (letters/words)
Average issue:	4.8
Front page 2: 11 Nov 2005	
Story 1	32
Story 2	22
Total issue:	54/12 (letters/words)
Average issue:	4.5
Front page 3: 18 Nov 2005	
Story 1	12
Story 2	17
Total issue:	29/6 (letters/words)
Average issue:	4.8
Total paper:	14.1/3 (average issues/ number of issues)
Average paper:	4.7

Table 3.3: Datasheet – Average length of words in headlines

b. The average length of sentences (Q)

Assumption 2: Serious newspapers use the longest sentences and the sentences in the populist newspapers are the shortest.

To test this assumption, the average length of sentences in each headline/story (C) was determined by calculating the number of words (X) and sentences (Y) in each story/headline, and then dividing X by Y ($X \div Y = C$). The Cs were then added to determine the total average length of sentences in each issue (Z), divided by the number of stories/headlines on each front page (A) (see table 7.1) to determine the average sentence length of each issue (N). These

averages were then added (W) and divided by the number of issues (P) – this equals the average sentence length of each newspaper (Q).

$$Q = X \div Y = C (+ C^*) = Z (+ A) = N (+ N^*) = W (+ P)$$

c. The average length of paragraphs (R)

Assumption 3: Serious and MOR newspapers use longer paragraphs than the populist papers.

In order to test this assumption, the average paragraph lengths of each story (C) was determined simply by counting the number of sentences (X) and paragraphs (Y) and then dividing the X by Y ($X \div Y$). These totals (Cs) were then added (Z) and divided by the number of stories (A) on each front page to determine the average paragraph length of each front page (N). These averages (N^*) were then added and divided by the number of issues (P) of the particular paper to give the average paragraph length of the newspaper (R).

$$R = X \div Y = C (+ C^*) = Z (+ A) = N (+ N^*) = W (+ P)$$

d. Average length of stories

Assumption 4: The stories in serious newspapers are longer than those in MOR newspapers. These, in turn, are longer than stories in the populist newspapers.

To determine whether this assumption is valid the words in each story were counted to ascertain the total number of words in a story. These totals were added and divided by the number of stories on each page. The averages were added yet again and divided by the number of issues which gave the researcher the average number of words per story on all the front pages of a particular paper.

3.2.7.2 Punctuation, style and format

Punctuation is a fundamental language tool a writer uses to convey his message as easy and comprehensible as possible. The sub-categories of punctuation are as follows:

- **Punctuation**
 - a. *inverted commas*
 - b. *dashes and colons*
 - c. *exclamation marks*

- d. question marks
- e. brackets

a. Inverted commas

Newspapers use inverted commas when quoting a source's direct words, which makes this punctuation mark applicable in the study (see Table 2.1). Some newspapers also prefer to print foreign words in inverted commas rather than in italics (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:55; see next paragraph). Inverted commas are also applied to indicate scare quotes. These are:

... quotation marks placed around a word or phrase from which you, the writer, wish to distance yourself because you consider that word or phrase to be odd or inappropriate for some reason (Anon, 2006e).

According to Steinmetz (2006) newspapers should never use quotation marks to put emphasis on signs that are not a person's direct words. One could argue that, since populist newspapers' stories are often based on rumours and they rarely use reliable (or even more than one) sources, they would have less direct and more scare quotes. Based on this, the following assumptions are made:

Assumption 5a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more inverted commas for direct quotes than populist newspapers.

Assumption 5b: Serious and MOR newspapers emphasize foreign and obscene signs with inverted commas. Populist newspapers do not.

In testing both of the above assumptions, inverted commas were counted in pairs since they always act together. The total number of inverted commas every newspaper used was determined. Three categories were created for inverted commas: *foreign words*, *quotes* and *scare quotes*. Inverted commas used to highlight foreign words or quotes fall in these respective categories while anonymous quotes (those of which the source is not clear) fall in the *scare quote* category. This will enable the researcher to distinguish between the different uses of inverted commas.

b. Dashes and colons

The colon and dash are usually followed by an explanation (Swan, 2003:467). In journalism these punctuation marks are used to emphasize important information or before a series of names/facts and/or explanation (Nel, 2001:388, 389; Leiter 2000:54). The researcher could

argue, and therefore assume, that serious newspapers would use more colons and dashes for their stories are more in-depth and informative.

Assumption 6: Serious newspapers use dashes and colons more often than MOR newspapers. Populist newspapers seldom use these.

The assumption was tested by counting the dashes and colons on each front page and the total number of dashes and colons in all the issues of a particular newspaper was calculated.

c. Exclamation marks

Exclamation marks are "... indispensable to convey proper meaning..." (Bernstein, 1982:196). This author states that it conveys strong emotion and excitement but adds the following:

But what place, pray, have any of these in detached, objective news writing? Let us, therefore, assume the exclamation mark to be guilty until proven innocent.

McLellan and Crump (2004), and Steinmetz (2001) agree. According to McLellan and Crump exclamation marks are used to convey strong emotions. They add that:

... a skilled writer will communicate strong emotion more effectively through the choice & arrangement of words & phrases than by an exclamation point. Instead of helping to emphasize a statement, the exclamation point causes the reader to focus on the mark itself. Exclamation marks are not used in stories.

Based on this the researcher assumes that the more serious newspapers, those that aim to inform and report objectively and balanced, will make less use of the exclamation mark. Populist newspapers will apply these punctuation marks to convey excitement, irony and strong emotion (Bernstein, 1982:196).

Assumption 7: Mainstream newspapers use fewer exclamation marks. On the other hand, populist newspapers often apply exclamation marks.

The total number of exclamation marks a newspaper made use of on its front pages was calculated to establish whether this assumption is valid.

d. Question marks

Question marks are usually placed at the end of a direct question (McLellan & Crump, 2004; Müller, 2003:444). Since newspapers, in particular MOR and serious papers, aim to inform, one can assume that they would not often use question marks, except in editorial commentary. Question marks could either function to indicate questions asked, to emphasize, to cleverly manipulate a receiver of a message to agree with the sender's views, to create doubt or to prompt the receiver to start thinking. Newspapers that aim to inform might use these with more discretion whereas newspapers that entertain (by causing excitement and curiosity among its readers) would use more question marks.

Assumption 8: Serious and MOR newspapers apply question marks less often than populist newspapers.

The number of question marks on the front page of every issue was established to ultimately calculate the total number of question marks each newspaper used on its front pages.

e. Brackets

During the preparatory study the researcher noticed the frequent use of brackets and this was consequently added as another punctuation sub-category. Brackets include parentheses (), box brackets [], braces { } as well as angle brackets < >. The use of these depends on what a publication prefers (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:55; Wikipedia, 2006).

Brackets are applied when a writer wants to add additional information, explain a concept or give the translation of a sign (Müller, 2003:425). The researcher thus assumes that the MOR and serious newspapers would make more use of brackets than the populist papers since they aim to inform.

Assumption 9: Contrary to populist newspapers, mainstream papers use brackets more often.

In this study a pair of brackets is seen as a unit. The total amount of brackets on all of the front pages of each paper was determined.

The following sub-categories fall under the main category *Style and format*. In all of these cases the signs on the front pages were counted to ultimately determine the total number of signs the newspapers used on all of their front pages.

- **Style and format**

- a. uppercase
- b. underlined
- c. italics
- d. bullets and paragraph headings
- e. foreign words
- f. offensive words
- g. deviations

- a. Uppercase**

Uppercase refers to words of which all the letters are in capital letters e.g. "UPPERCASE". Uppercase words, especially in headlines, grab the attention of newspaper readers. These are, however, more difficult to read (Garcia, 1993:63). The researcher thus assumes that populist newspapers would make more use of uppercase.

Assumption 10: Populist newspapers use uppercase signs, whereas serious and middle-of-the-road newspapers use these either discreetly, or not at all. .

All the uppercase words were counted on the front pages of all the issues of the respective newspapers. The totals were then calculated.

- b. Underlined**

Underlined signs, just as those in uppercase, are also noticed easier and used to emphasize. Again the researcher assumes that populist newspapers would apply these more than the MOR and serious papers.

Assumption 11: Serious and MOR newspapers do not make use of underlined signs. Populist newspapers apply underlined signs.

The underlined words in the headlines and the stories were counted to determine the total number of underlined signs each newspapers used on their front pages.

- c. Italics**

The use of italics could shed light on the mode of address (cf. paragraph 1.3.3; vide Branston &Stafford, 2003:21). Newspapers tend to, besides for their own names and those of other publications, print foreign words in italics to emphasize that they are foreign (see <e> below).

The researcher assumes that populist newspapers would not put these signs in italics since they write in the language of the readers. Quality newspapers would, however, use italics.

Assumption 12: Populist newspapers do not use italics to indicate foreign words. Serious and MOR newspapers do, however.

The number of italic words in the stories and headlines on the front pages was determined by counting all the italic signs. The totals were then added to show how many italic signs each newspaper used on all its front pages.

d. Bullets and paragraph headings

Newspapers sometimes use bullets and paragraph headings to make a text more comprehensible and easier to read. Paragraph headings are not common in newspaper stories, but populist newspapers have a tendency to make use of these, probably since they aid the reader in comprehending the message (Anon, 2000). The researcher assumes that populist newspapers would apply more bullets and paragraph headings:

Assumption 13: Populist newspapers use more bullets and paragraph headings than serious and MOR newspapers.

Every bullet in the headlines, as well as all the paragraph headings in the newspapers, was counted. These sub-totals were added to eventually give the total number of bullets and paragraph breaks every newspaper used.

e. Foreign words

For the purposes of this study, foreign words refer to any linguistic sign that do not form part of the newspaper's (i.e. its target audience's) language (Müller, 2003:650). Greer (1999:102) says that: "Although the use of foreign words impresses some audiences, there is no place for them in an English newspaper." He says that one should only use foreign words which have been accepted in the language e.g. *entrée*. Populist newspapers might make more use of these since they write in the language their audience speaks – this includes foreign and obscene words as well as slang. The researcher will also establish how many of these foreign words are printed in italics (see <c>). Based on this the following assumptions are made:

Assumption 14a: Populist newspapers use more foreign words than serious and MOR papers.

Assumption 14b: Populist newspapers do not use italics to indicate foreign words. Serious and MOR newspapers do.

All the signs that correspond with the abovementioned work definition were counted and the totals of all the front pages of each newspaper were calculated.

f. Offensive words

For the purposes of this study, offensive signs refer to the following:

A profanity (or swear words, or curse word, or foul language, or dirty word) under current colloquial use is a word, expression, gesture, or other usage which is generally considered insulting, rude or vulgar... term has been extended by non-scholars to include expressions with scatological, sexist, derogatory, racist, or sexual themes (Wikipedia, 2006b).

According to Branston and Stafford (2003:21) the use of these signs give insight into the mode of address. The ethics code of the American *The Daily Press* states offensive language does not belong in a newspaper. This paper judges offensive words against the standard of "reasonable taste and community standards". It states in its code that:

It's useful to keep in mind when you're thinking of community standards that some readers may be deeply offended by what others might consider mild exclamations. Many object to details of human sexual or excretory anatomy even in the straightest and most relevant of scientific terms, particularly if those terms come in large doses or large type. It should go without saying that our own prose should avoid even such mild terms as "hell" or "damn," or the unfortunately ubiquitous "sucks." We can exercise complete control over our own language.

In the South African context, Nel (2005:390) suggests a style guide in which he states the following about offensive language:

Obscenities should be avoided, unless used in direct quotations essential to a story... House styles differ, but obscene words are usually indicated with either full stops or asterisks corresponding with the number of letters in the words... As words of emphasis, expletives and obscenities quickly lose their impact and become clichés. Try to use original phrases instead.

Nel makes it evident that obscene words do not belong in newspapers. If it is absolutely “essential”, it should not even be written out fully. His view corresponds with the code of the *The Daily Press*: we are capable of, and should be, more original. Nel (2005:365) adds that “obscenity occurs in news writing when reporters use indecent or unacceptable words or expressions”. According to him, news should never offend people. The *Son* newspaper caters for a different audience which seeks entertainment. Because the *Son*, as is the case with most populist newspapers, *entertains* and aims to *sell* newspapers, one could argue that they would more likely use obscene language as opposed to more serious newspapers like the *Sunday Times*. The researcher assumes that populist newspapers would use more offensive signs than the MOR and serious papers.

Assumption 15: Populist newspapers use obscene words whereas serious and MOR newspapers do not.

All the linguistic signs in the headlines and stories that agree with the definition above were counted in order to establish how many obscene signs the respective papers used on their front pages.

g. Deviations

While conducting the preparatory study the researcher added the *Deviations* category. For the purposes of this study, deviation refers to:

- signs that do not conform to accepted grammar rules (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:46), e.g. “*polieste*”
- signs that do not appear in dictionaries

These words might for example, be used for the sake of clever word play. Because populist newspapers aim to entertain and to make the stories more attractive, it is assumed that these papers would use more deviations.

Assumption 16: Serious and MOR newspapers use fewer deviations than populist newspapers.

The deviations were simply identified and counted to determine the total number of deviations on all the front pages of a newspaper.

- **Types of headlines**

Bernstein (1958:213) and Leiter *et al.* (2000:517) compare the writing of headlines to art. Bernstein says "... the problem is one of cramming large ideas into small spaces... ". Headlines are of the most important elements a newspaper communicates with (Bowles & Borden, 2004:259). According to Froneman *et al.* (2005:136) headlines convey a newspaper's image or "personality". It is the most important words a newspaper prints (Bowles & Borden, 2004:259). It should attract, yet give an adequate, accurate, specific and clear summary of the respective stories (Leiter *et al.* 2000:517). It should, in short, tell the reader what the story is about (Froneman *et al.*, 2005:136; Bowles & Borden, 2004:259). Headlines also function to inform readers quickly (Bowles & Borden, 2004:259).

Newspapers could use any of the following types of headlines:

Headline	Description and study definition	Example
The verb headline	Verbs form the foundation of these headlines.	" <i>Boer in kokende water gegooi</i> " (Anon, 2006c:4). "Speed-dating study finds world's best pick-up line" (Sunday Times Foreign Desk, 2006:1).
The quote headline	These headlines are direct quotes from sources and generally put in single inverted commas in the headline. The headline quotes also appear in the story.	" <i>"God vervloek Amerika!"</i> " (Smith, 2006:18).

The word play headline	In this study word play headlines include alliteration and assonance ¹⁹ as well as headlines that contain symbols and association (see example).	"Too many wives spoil the broth for celebrity chef" (Huisman, 2006b:1).
The question headline	These headlines end with question marks.	" <i>Bêre DA dalk Zille se ou kantoor vir haar?</i> " (Pollux, 2006:17).
The atmosphere headline	These headlines create atmosphere, whether this is for example through a shocking statement, an exclamation or unsettling and devastating quote.	" <i>Here, so kan dit nie aangaan nie</i> " (Steenkamp <i>et al.</i> , 2006:1).

Table 3.4: Types of headlines as identified by Froneman et al. (2005:139-146)

Ajaja (2002) also differentiates between quotation, straight (verb and noun), question and feature headlines (atmosphere, emotive and word play). One could make the assumption that populist newspapers, which aim to entertain, attract, shock and educe emotion, would prefer atmosphere and word play headlines. Newspapers that intend to inform and debate issues would, on the other hand, most probably use question, quote and verb headlines. Good headlines have the following characteristics: they are accurate; emphasize the main theme; are clear and comprehensible; use active verbs; are balanced and fair; tasteful; fresh and immediate (Bowles & Borden, 2004:260). The researcher does not attempt to determine whether the headlines are good and clear, though. This study only focuses on the *types* of headlines, since the aim is to determine the *differences* in the language application, and not the *quality* of the language.

While conducting the empirical study the researcher added three more categories to those identified by Froneman. These include noun headlines, emotive headlines as well as idiomatic expression headlines (see paragraph 4.2.3). Emotive headlines are used to evoke emotion from the readers, whether this is sadness, happiness or devastation. Noun headlines on the other hand are those that consist of no verbs and idiomatic expression headlines contain expressions typical to a particular language (Greer, 2001:100).

¹⁹ Assonance refers to the repetition of a vowel sound in successive words, whereas alliteration is the repetition of consonants. (Wikipedia, 2006c; 2006d).

Since brief and curiosity-arousing headlines are more accessible to an audience, the researcher assumes that these would more likely appear in the populist newspapers (noun, emotive, wordplay and atmosphere headlines) (Konrod & Engel, 2001).

Assumption 17a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more verb, noun and quotation headlines than populist newspapers.

Assumption 17b: Populist newspapers use more atmosphere, emotive, word play, question and idiomatic expression headlines than the MOR and serious newspapers.

The headlines were each categorized (a lot of headlines fell into more than one category). The totals were then determined.

3.2.7.3 Jakobson's sign functions and Peirce's sign types

The linguistic signs in the headlines and stories will be categorized according to Jakobson's model of sign functions (see paragraph 2.4.2) and the signs on the front pages will be categorized according to Peirce's sign types (see paragraph 2.4.1). The signs categorized include all word types (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) – all the words were thus used for the study in order to give a reliable picture of what their language application looks like. The researcher will determine which signs functions and sign types are dominant on the front pages of the respective categories of newspapers. It is assumed that populist newspapers would make more use of colour (symbolic signs) as well as icons (photographs) since these are more attractive and inviting (Steenveld, 2006; Garcia, 1003:116).

Establishing what sign types the newspapers focus on, will enable the researcher to ascertain whether these functions correlate with the functions of the respective newspaper categories, i.e. to inform entertain, debate, persuade or move readers (cf. Fourie, 2004b:267; Watson, 2003:104-105; see table 2.1). The researcher will consequently be able to determine whether the language functions reinforce the nature of these newspapers. The following assumptions are made:

Assumption 18a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more referential, poetic and metalinguistic signs than populist newspapers.

Assumption 18b: Populist newspapers use more expressive, conative and phatic signs than the MOR and serious newspapers.

Assumption 18c: Populist newspapers use more symbolic and iconic signs than serious and MOR newspapers.

Assumption 18d: Serious and MOR newspapers apply more arbitrary signs than populist newspapers.

The categorized signs were counted (see paragraph 3.2.1) to establish which sign functions the particular newspapers focus on. It will then be presented in simple tables (a qualitative research approach does not exclude counting [cf. Sandelowski, 2006]). The results will then be compared to the theoretical functions of populist, MOR and serious newspapers to determine whether the language supports the papers' characters.

3.3 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research approach, the research method as well as the material and time-period used for this study. In the following chapters the researcher aims to validate the assumptions made in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Qualitative analysis: punctuation, format and style

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the newspapers' format and use of punctuation will be discussed and compared. The researcher aims to answer the following research questions (see paragraph 1.8):

1.5.1.3 What are the characteristics of the use of punctuation, format and style in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*?

1.5.1.7 What are the differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and what is the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures?

The linguistic signs in the headlines as well as in the stories on the front pages of the respective newspapers were analyzed (see paragraph 3.2.7.2).

4.2 Description and analysis

This content analysis will be presented in two categories: punctuation, and style and format.

Punctuation is a fundamental language tool without which a writer cannot convey meaning to the reader (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). For the purposes of this study the use of the following punctuation marks were analyzed (see paragraph 3.2.7.2):

- a. inverted commas
- b. dashes and colons
- c. exclamation marks
- d. question marks
- e. brackets

Format and style, in this study, includes the following (see paragraph 3.2.7.2):

- a. uppercase

- b. underlined
- c. italics
- d. bullets and paragraph headings
- e. foreign words
- f. offensive words
- g. deviations

Each of the abovementioned sub-categories will be discussed separately.

4.2.1 Punctuation

The punctuation in the headlines and stories on the respective front pages was analyzed by determining how frequently, and in some cases *how*, the papers apply the following punctuation marks (see paragraph 3.2.7.2).

4.2.1.1 Inverted commas

The following assumptions are relevant in this paragraph:

Assumption 5a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more inverted commas for direct quotes than populist newspapers.

Assumption 5b: Serious and MOR newspapers emphasize foreign and obscene signs with inverted commas. Populist newspapers do not.

Newspapers mostly use inverted commas to indicate direct quotes from sources, as well as highlight foreign words (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). The empirical study has shown, however, that the mainstream papers, especially the MOR *Rapport*, use inverted commas to distance itself from certain harsh phrases and emotionally loaded linguistic signs – the sources of these are often anonymous (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). This decreases the paper's credibility to a certain degree. Quality newspapers should aim to name its sources since this ensures credibility.

In *Nóg verdagtes in die Leigh Matthews-saak* (Meyer, 2005:1) the journalist states:

Die vuurwapen het wel aan Moodley behoort en hy was stellig "die meesterbrein" agter die ontvoering en moord..... Moodley is na verneem word "n regte meneertjie" in die Diepkloof-gevangenis, waar hy sy straf uitdien. Hy is glo "komkommerkoel" en lyk nie soos 'n man wat wroeg met die Kainsteken van 'n gewetenlose moordenaar waarmee hy moet saamleef nie.

The newspaper does not name the source who apparently (“*na verneem word*”; “*glo*”) said that Donovan Moodley is a “*meesterbrein*”, “‘*n regte meneertjie*” and that he is acting “*komkommerkoef*”. It seems as if the other “source” is someone who is in prison with Moodley, but the reader can only guess. The paper defends itself against possible legal action not only by putting these words in inverted commas, but also by combining this with other signs such as “*glo*”, “*na verneem word*” and “*stellig*”. The fact that these signs are not only expressive and subjective, but also judgmental and conative (persuasive) (cf. paragraph 2.4.2), exacerbates the absence of a named source.

Newspapers should also never use inverted commas if not to indicate words from a direct source (cf. Steinmetz 2006). In this case, it is not clear whether the anonymous source is direct or indirect. This application was not found in any of the papers. It indicates that the populist, MOR and serious newspapers aim to inform factually and objectively. Newspapers are entitled to give judgment, but their views should be restricted to the editorial comment pages, of which the content functions to satisfy the readers’ motivational and persuasive communication needs (see table 1.1; paragraph 1.4 and 2.2.1). Readers often do not realize the absence of a source and interpret the sign, which is only subjective and emotional, as an objective, referential fact (see paragraph 2.4.2). A third use of inverted commas was thus added to the original *inverted comma* categories (*direct quotes* and *foreign words*) (see paragraph 3.2.7.2), namely *scare quotes* (see Appendix C; paragraph 3.2.7.2). Table 4.1 shows the total number of inverted commas that appeared on the front pages of the respective newspapers to either indicate direct source quotes, scare quotes or to highlight foreign words:

Punctuation: <i>Inverted commas</i>	Headlines			Stories		
	SQ	FW	Q	SQ	FW	DQ
SQ = scare quotes; FW = foreign words; DQ = quotes						
Populist						
<i>Son</i>	0	0	0	0	1	36
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	0	0	0	0	0	41
TOTAL: POPULIST	0	0	0	0	1	77
Middle-of-the-road						
<i>Rapport</i>	1	0	1	8	0	53
<i>Sunday Times</i>	0	0	0	2	0	112
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	1	0	1	10	0	165
Serious						
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	0	0	0	0	0	87
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	0	0	0	3	0	41
TOTAL: SERIOUS	0	0	0	3	0	128

Table 4.1: The use of inverted commas in front page headlines and stories

The researcher assumed that populist newspapers would use less direct quotes (meaning, less inverted commas) than the more serious papers. The assumption was also made that serious and MOR newspapers would use inverted commas for foreign words, whereas populist newspapers would not bother to indicate that the signs are in fact, foreign.

It is peculiar that the MOR newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, uses more than double the number of sources (112) than *Rapport* (53) and the *Sunday Independent* (41), that used almost as many sources as the populist newspapers the *Sunday Sun* (41) and the *Son* (36). This contradicts what the researcher assumed, namely that the MOR newspapers would, because of their more serious nature (which entails reliable sources and accurate and objective information), quote more named sources. The finding that *Rapport* used almost as many sources as the populist newspapers is surprising since the researcher assumed that the MOR papers, due to their more serious nature, would use more direct quotes. The *Sunday Times* (112), on the other hand used 56% more direct quotes than the *Mail&Guardian* (87). Since the assumption was that serious newspapers would make more use of these, the *Sunday Times* fall into a more serious class in this category. It is surprising to find that the MOR papers and the serious *Sunday Independent*

use more scare quotes (especially the *Rapport*) than the populist papers. One would suppose that this would be a characteristic of populist papers, since they rarely name sources.

Findings:

Assumption 5a: This assumption is valid. The serious and MOR newspapers do use more inverted commas for direct quotes than the populist papers.

Assumption 5b: None of the newspaper categories uses inverted commas to indicate foreign words. The assumption was thus not proven to be true.

4.2.1.2 Dashes and colons

Assumption 6: Serious newspapers use more dashes and colons than MOR newspapers. Populist newspapers use few.

Dashes, as well as colons, are used to explain concepts and to supply additional information to the reader (cf. Swan, 2003:467; see Appendix E and paragraph 3.2.7.2). The researcher assumed that the serious newspapers would use more dashes and colons since their stories are more informative and in-depth (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show how frequently dashes were used in the headlines and stories of the respective newspapers:

Punctuation: <i>Dashes</i>	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	0	0
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	0	1
TOTAL: POPULIST	0	1
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	0	7
<i>Sunday Times</i>	0	31
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	0	38
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	0	29
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	0	7
TOTAL: SERIOUS	0	36

Table 4.2: The use of dashes in front page headlines and stories

Punctuation: Colons	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	0	0
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	0	1
TOTAL: POPULIST	0	1
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	0	8
<i>Sunday Times</i>	1	21
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	1	29
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	3	18
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	0	8
TOTAL: SERIOUS	3	26

Table 4.3: The use of colons in front page headlines and stories

It is evident that the *Sunday Times* used more dashes than any of the other newspapers. One would rather expect this in a serious newspaper such as the *Mail&Guardian*. It is notable that the other serious paper, the *Sunday Independent*, used only 7 dashes in its stories and none in the headlines.

The MOR *Rapport* used only about 25% of the number of dashes than the MOR *Sunday Times*, similar to the usage in the serious *Sunday Independent*. However, *Rapport* still uses more dashes than the populist newspapers, which places firmly in the MOR class in this category.

There is only one dash in all seven headlines and stories in the populist newspapers. This correlates with the assumption the researcher made (see paragraph 3.2.7.2) as well as with the nature of these papers. They aim to entertain, and not to necessarily supply additional information or give descriptions or explanations (cf. Swan, 2003:467).

The *Sunday Times* also uses more colons than the other newspapers, though not significantly more than the *Mail&Guardian*. The *Sunday Independent* once again did not make use of many punctuation marks.

Only 4 headlines (one in a *Sunday Times* front page lead story, and 3 in the *Mail&Guardian*) contain a colon: *Autopsy: Kebble assaulted* (Philp, 2005:1); *Noam Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (Brockes, 2005:1); *Spy vs. Spy: How Kasrils ambushed Masetlha* (Sole & Letsoalo, 2005:1) and *Tsunami of sand: Removed to the middle of nowhere* (Merten, 2005:1). The *Sunday Times* is the only paper that used this punctuation mark in a main headline. The colon is functional in this headline, since it shortens it as well as gives a clear indication of the content of the story. The autopsy showed that Brett Kebble was assaulted, and the colon helps condense this information into three words. The *Mail&Guardian*, on the other hand, used colons in longer headlines, generally to add additional information or to give them room to play with words and create atmosphere, as is the case with *Spy vs. spy: How Kasrils ambushed Masetlha* and *Tsunami of sand: Removed to the middle of nowhere*.

In these two categories, as well as in the category inverted commas, the *Sunday Times'* application of the punctuation marks resembles the punctuation usage in the serious newspapers rather than that of the other MOR paper, *Rapport*, indicating no clear pattern in the use of dashes and colons in MOR newspapers.

Findings:

Assumption 6: The researcher's assumption is proven correct. Serious and MOR newspapers make significantly more use of dashes and colons than populist papers – especially in stories. These punctuation marks do not appear as frequently in headlines.

4.2.1.3 Exclamation marks

Assumption 7: The mainstream papers use fewer exclamation marks. On the other hand, populist newspapers often apply exclamation marks.

Exclamation marks are used to convey meaning and emotion (cf. Bernstein, 1982:196; paragraph 3.2.7.2; McLellan & Crump, 2004; Steinmetz, 2001. Bernstein does however, feel that the exclamation mark has no place in objective news writing (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). The researcher supports this statement since exclamation marks are used to convey strong emotion – and signs that function to evoke emotion are, according to Jakobson, subjective (cf. Guiraud, 1971:6-9; paragraph 2.4.2). The researcher therefore assumed that exclamation marks would more likely appear in populist headlines and stories than in serious or even MOR newspapers. Table 4.4 below, indicates how the newspapers applied exclamation marks in their front page texts:

Punctuation: <i>Exclamation mark</i>	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	0	5
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	0	1
TOTAL: POPULIST	0	6
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	3	1
<i>Sunday Times</i>	0	0
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	3	1
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	0	1
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	0	0
TOTAL: SERIOUS	0	1

Table 4.4: The use of the exclamation mark in headlines and stories

As the table above shows, the only newspaper that used exclamation marks in its headlines is the *Rapport*. In two of these cases the exclamation mark is in the main headline: *Vlieënde Bok! Habana ster in stewige Bok-Sege* (Harmse, 2005:1) and *Kers-bonanza! Koop-rekords gaan spat in die feestyd* (Tancred, 2005:1). Rugby is a big attraction in the Afrikaans community (the target audience of the *Rapport*) and a photograph of a Springbok player scoring, combined with an exclamation mark, is bound to draw readers and sell newspapers. The exclamation mark in this case clearly has the same function as the exclamation mark in a populist newspaper, i.e. to entertain, cause excitement and to sell the paper. The exclamation mark in the *Kers-bonanza!* headline is unmistakably applied to create excitement among its readers for the festive season. The other exclamation mark, even though it is not used in a main headline, is applied in combination with a very large main photograph of smiling Charlene Truter, one of the presenters of *Pasella* (an Afrikaans magazine programme on SABC2).

Contrary to what the researcher assumed, the populist newspapers did not use any exclamation marks in their headlines (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). This might be because they have no stories on their front pages, but only large, bold headlines and photographs. The headlines consequently do not need to “compete” with the text for attention. The *Son* does, however, use a few of these punctuation marks in its stories. Notably, these are, with the exception of one, not

in the introductions as one would expect, but in direct quotes: “Nee! Ek kan dit nie glo nie! Dis crazy!” het Jenny uit die veld geslaan oor die foon gesê. (Booyens, 2005:1) and “Die hond het ’n baby se kop in sy bek!” het haar vriendin histeries geskree. (Prinsloo, 2005:1). These exclamation marks are applied not to convey the newspaper’s view or attitude, but to indicate how upset the woman was in the first headlines and how appalled the other was when she saw a dog with a baby’s head in its mouth. It is interesting to note that four of these exclamation marks appeared in one issue (18 Nov 2005) of the *Son* and that none were noted in any of the other issues, except for in the introduction of *ROBBIE WILLIAMS KOM SUID-AFRIKA TOE* (Barnard, 2005:1). The one exclamation mark in the serious *Mail&Guardian* was also unexpected (see paragraph 3.2.7.2), especially since it is exactly the same number the *Rapport* and *Sunday Sun* used in their stories. The *Sunday Times* did not use any exclamation marks, which once again puts the newspaper into the serious category. The *Sunday Independent* did not use exclamation marks in either its front page headlines, or the stories, which correlates with its serious nature.

Findings:

Assumption 7: The assumption is not valid. Exclamation marks are not only a populist trend. The MOR *Rapport* uses exclamation marks, particularly in headings. The populist *Son* also makes frequent use of these punctuation marks. This might be due to the fact that MOR newspapers need to attract readers in order to compete with the growing prevalence of populist newspapers.

4.2.1.4 Question marks

Assumption 8: Serious and MOR newspapers apply fewer question marks than populist newspapers.

None of the newspapers studied made significant use of question marks in either their headlines, or their stories. The *Sunday Independent*, for instance, did not use this punctuation mark at all. The *Rapport* and the *Son* each used one question mark in headlines though neither used it in lead stories. It is worth noting that the *Mail&Guardian* used four question marks in its stories. One should add though, that is was used in the feature article about Noam Chomsky which was written from a first-person point of view by Emma Brockes (2005). She writes critically about her interview with him, and she questions his views on, among others, the Srebrenica massacre (seen as the worst mass killing since Word War II) and capitalism. The question marks in this case function to emphasize the doubt in the journalist’s mind and to give readers the opportunity to draw their own conclusions. This correlates with the paper’s serious character.

The *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Sun* and the *Sunday Independent* did not use any question marks in their headlines or stories. It is noteworthy that the three papers which did not make use of this punctuation mark include a populist, MOR as well as a serious newspaper.

Findings:

Assumption 8: This assumption could not be validated. Newspapers apply very few question marks. The serious *Mail&Guardian* uses these, especially in critical feature articles.

4.2.1.5 Brackets

Assumption 9: Serious and MOR, as opposed to populist newspapers, use more brackets.

Brackets, as is the case with dashes and colons, are used when the sender wants to explain something, or add more information (Müller, 2003:425; see paragraph 3.2.7.2).

The *Rapport* used more brackets (11) on its front pages than dashes or colons. These were mainly used to add, in the brackets, the abbreviation of company names (e.g. "*Buro vir Ekonomiese Ondersoek*" (BEO) [Tancred, 2005:1]), sometimes to help readers to interpret information (e.g. "\$500 000 (sowat 3 250 000)" [Van Wyk 2005:1]) or to supply additional information (e.g. "*Schoeman het twee goue medaljes (in die 50 m-vrystlag en 50 m-vlinderslag) en 'n silwermedalje (in die 100 m-vrystlag) gewen...*" [Van Wyk, 2005:1]). The *Mail&Guardian* also used many (14) brackets. Some were also applied to indicate abbreviations of terms (e.g. BEE for black economic empowerment [Davie, 2005:1]). It is also common practice in newspaper writing to add the age of people in brackets – the *Mail&Guardian* also applies this (Brookes, 2005:1). This serious paper did not use brackets to add extra information or to explain concepts. The *Sunday Independent* also made use of only one bracket: *...and that good analysis and research, rather than simplistic ("more police"), were necessary* (Gordin & Fabricius, 2006). This was thus used to supply additional information (i.e. a source's comment).

Findings:

Assumption 9: Serious and MOR newspapers make more use of brackets than populist newspapers. The assumption was thus proven to be true.

4.2.2 Style and format

The category *style* refers to linguistic signs that were selected because they reflect the language of the newspaper and its readers (see paragraph 1.3). *Format* on the other hand refers to the way in which the papers choose to present or “package” the linguistic signs. The writing styles and formats of the newspapers were established in this study to determine whether they correspond with the newspapers’ nature. The categories by which the styles were determined are discussed below.

4.2.2.1 Uppercase

Assumption 10: Populist newspapers use uppercase signs, whereas serious and MOR newspapers do not.

Newspapers, especially mainstream papers, rarely print words in uppercase. These are more difficult to read (cf. Garcia, 1993:63; paragraph 3.2.7.2). Populist newspapers do however, make use of uppercase words to grab the attention of the readers and to create excitement.

Only the *Sunday Sun* and the *Son* made noteworthy use of signs in uppercase, both in the front page headlines as well as in the stories. The *Son* had 23 uppercase words in its headlines, and the *Sunday Sun* 59. In the stories, the number of words in uppercase were 10 and 43 respectively. Almost all of the headlines in these two newspapers are in uppercase, only a few sub-headings are in printed in title case. This is typical of populist newspapers – uppercase words, though they are more difficult to read, are more noticeable. The *Sunday Times* is the only of the mainstream papers to have used uppercase in its headlines (2). One should note, however, that this was not a main headline, but a headline (*FOREST INFERNO* [Anon, 2005d]) accompanying a photograph with a reference to the story inside the newspaper. These findings correlate with the characters of the respective newspapers as set out in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.2).

Findings:

Assumption 10: Populist newspapers make significant use of uppercase signs whereas serious and MOR papers apply these rarely. The assumption is consequently true.

4.2.2.2 Underlined

Assumption 11: Serious and MOR newspapers do not make use of underlined signs. Populist newspapers apply underlined signs.

Underlining also emphasizes the linguistic signs without reducing the readability (which is the case with uppercase words or those in italics [cf. Garcia, 1993:63; paragraph 3.2.7.2]). The only newspaper that used underline signs is the *Son* (9). These were inside the newspaper, however, and not on the front page. It was consequently treated as text (see paragraph 3.2.4.1). Since these were inside the newspaper, the underlined format was most probably used to assist the reader in finding the story more easily after seeing the headline on the front page.

Findings:

Assumption 11: Populist newspapers use underlined signs. Serious and MOR newspapers do not. The assumption is therefore true.

4.2.2.3 Italics

Assumption 12: Populist newspapers do not use italics to indicate foreign words. Serious and MOR newspapers do, however.

Italics is usually applied to emphasize signs and to highlight foreign words. Except for the *Mail&Guardian*, none of the newspapers made major use of italics. The *Rapport* and the *Sunday Times* only used one each in their stories. The *Mail&Guardian* used italics when referring to its own name, and that of other publications. This finding was confirmed in the newspaper's style guide (see Appendix E). The *Sunday Times* and the *Rapport* do not do this, contrary to what the researcher assumed. The other italic signs the *Mail&Guardian* used, were for in-text by-lines (i.e. giving credit to another journalist within the text when using information he/she gathered). The italics in these cases functions to give credit to another journalist and indicate to the reader that it is another person's writing, *without* wasting space and interrupting the reading process. This is not uncommon in newspaper stories.

The *Son* did not make use of italics consistently. In the story '*JOU TERT*', *lees wat gay-skinderbekke oor Rian te sê het* (Barnard, 2005c:1) the name of the night club Senate is printed in italics in the third paragraph, yet only two paragraphs further down it is printed in regular mode.

The researcher can consequently not make any conclusion about the language usage based on the use of italics, except that the serious newspapers print their own names in italics, which is a matter of preference. Serious and MOR newspapers do, however, print foreign words in italics whereas the populist newspapers treat these as regular text (see paragraph 4.2.2.5).

Findings:

Assumption 12: Serious newspapers make the most use of italics to indicate foreign words. MOR newspapers use these less frequently and populist newspapers do not apply these punctuation marks to indicate foreign words. The assumption is thus proven true.

4.2.2.4 Bullets and paragraph headings

Assumption 13: Populist newspapers use more bullets and paragraph headings than serious and MOR newspapers.

In a text, bullets are used to distinguish between paragraphs and to make a lot of information easily readable and digestible. All the newspapers made use of bullets and paragraph headings in their stories, yet only the *Rapport* and the *Mail&Guardian* used bullets in their headlines, specifically in sub-headings. The table below indicates how frequently the papers used bullets and sub-headings in their stories:

Style and format: <i>Bullets and sub-headings</i>	
Populist	
<i>Son</i>	2
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	1
TOTAL: POPULIST	3
Middle-of-the-road	
<i>Rapport</i>	9
<i>Sunday Times</i>	17
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	26
Serious	
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	4
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	1
TOTAL: SERIOUS	5

Table 4.5: The use of bullets and sub-headings in stories

It is evident that the *Sunday Times* made the most use of bullets and paragraph headings. It made functional use of bullets in *Autopsy: Kebble assaulted* (Philp, 2005:1) by summarizing the autopsy report as well as in *North West schools riddled with racism* (Govender, 2005:1) in which the paper briefly names, and supplies reasons, why some schools in this province are under investigation concerning racism. The *Rapport* used subheadings in the text for no apparent reason in the story *Regstel-aksie vasgevat, Wye steun vir 'plan' teen vergrype* (Du Toit, 2005:1). The story mostly consists of names of influential leaders who support an anti-affirmative action plan. The bullets were probably applied to give the reader a chance to “breathe”. In the story *Kers-bonanza! Koop-rekords gaan spat die feestyd* (Tancred, 2005:1), bullets were effectively applied to summarize the festive season’s economic advantages.

Findings:

Assumption 13: The assumption is refuted. MOR newspapers use the most bullets and paragraph headings. Populist papers use the least.

4.2.2.5 Foreign words

Assumption 14a: Populist newspapers use more foreign words (see paragraph 3.2.7.2) than serious and MOR papers.

Assumption 14b: Populist newspapers do not use italics to indicate foreign words. Serious and MOR newspapers do.

Table 4.6 shows the newspapers’ use of foreign words:

Style and format: Foreign words	
Populist	
<i>Son</i>	18
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	2
TOTAL: POPULIST	20
Middle-of-the-road	
<i>Rapport</i>	4
<i>Sunday Times</i>	2
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	6
Serious	
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	1
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	1
TOTAL: SERIOUS	2

Table 4.6: The use of foreign words in stories

As the researcher expected, the populist newspapers (the *Son* in this case) made more use (18) of foreign words than any of the other papers. The *Sunday Sun* and the *Sunday Times* used the same number (2) whereas the *Rapport* used twice as many (4) as these two papers. The foreign words in the *Son* are mostly English and include words such as: *single* (Barnard, 2005:1); *commitment* (Sevenster, 2005:1); *shopping* (Eggington, 2005:1); *funk* and *body guards* (Barnard, 2005:1). The *Sunday Sun* used the Afrikaans, somewhat harsh, word *gatvol* in an inside headline (treated as part of the text in this study) (Somniso, 2005:1). The *Rapport* refers to a *lodge* (not italics) in its story *Olifant met kalf trap Yank-toeris* (Pelser, 2005:1). The newspaper did however, put the English word *deal* in italics in the story *Sonja, FC praat oor sy liefdeskind* (Steenkamp, 2005:1). The word *kaffertjie* appears in the *North West schools riddled with racism* story on the front page of the *Sunday Times* (this word also belongs to the *offensive language* category [see paragraph 6.2.2.6]). The other interesting foreign word in this newspaper is *Eish!* This has since a Klipdrift advertisement ran on television become a truly South African word, not linked to any specific language or culture. The *Sunday Times* does not put it in italics or inverted commas. The *Mail&Guardian* used the word *shethl* in *Noam Chomsky: as flaky as the next man* (Brockes, 2005:1). This finding was confirmed in the style guide of the *Mail&Guardian* (see Appendix E). This newspaper prints all foreign words in italics. The *Sunday Independent* used the word “*broedertwis* in the headlines *Broedertwis hits go-it-alone communists* (Monare *et al.*, 2006:1). It is not clear why this truly Afrikaans word is not in italics

however. In the headlines, only the *Son* made use of a foreign word in *Siesa Bok, Ricky vat my kind vir 'n ride* (Eggington, 2005:1). It is clear that all of the newspapers use foreign words, probably because we live in a multi-cultural society where the eleven languages all have influence on another.

Findings:

Assumption 14a: The assumption is correct. Populist newspapers use more foreign words than MOR papers. Serious newspapers use the least.

Assumption 14b: Populist newspapers do not use italics for foreign words. MOR newspapers and serious papers do, however. The assumption is thus true.

4.2.2.6 Offensive words

Assumption 15: Populist newspapers use obscene words (see paragraph 3.2.7.2) whereas serious and MOR newspapers do not.

The *Son* and the *Sunday Times* each used one offensive sign: *afgepis* (Sevenster, 2005:1), in the *Son* (not in italics) and *kaffertjie* appears in *North West Schools riddled with racism* in the *Sunday Times* (Govender, 2005:1). The *Sunday Times* put this in italics as well as in quotation marks to indicate that it is not the newspaper's words, but those of another source, as well as a foreign word. "*Afgepis*" is in accordance with the *Son*'s populist nature (see table 2.1). The newspaper wants to entertain, but also uses a shock-element to keep readers curious and interested.

Findings:

Assumption 15: Populist as well as MOR newspapers use obscene words (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). MOR newspapers indicate these with italics or inverted commas whereas populist newspapers do not.

4.2.2.7 Deviations

Assumption 16: Serious and MOR newspapers use fewer deviations (see paragraph 3.2.7.2) than populist newspapers.

The *Sunday Times*' headline *Harry Potter and the wyrd court motion* (SAPA-AP, 2005:1) uses a deviation clearly for the sake of clever word play. The *Rapport*, *Sunday Times*, *Son* and *Mail&Guardian* each had one deviation. The *Sunday Times* is the only newspaper to have used one in a small, *Lighter Side*, headline. It is clear that the respective newspapers do not make much use of deviations in their texts.

Findings:

Assumption 16: All the categories make use of deviations, yet they use these with discretion. The assumption is thus not true.

4.2.3 Type of headlines

Assumption 17a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more verb, noun and quotation headlines than populist newspapers.

Assumption 17b: Populist newspapers use more atmosphere, expressive, word play, question and idiomatic expression headlines than the MOR and serious newspapers.

The researcher analysed the newspapers' front page headlines according to the types of headlines (see paragraph 3.2.7.2): verb, quote, word play, question and atmosphere headlines. The researcher added another three types of headline while conducting the empirical research namely the noun, emotive as well as idiomatic expression headlines (cf. paragraph 3.2.7.2). The table below shows (in percentage) which type of headlines the newspapers made most use of. The researcher determined percentages instead of averages since most of the headlines fall into more than one category.

Style and format: <i>Type of headlines</i>								
	Verb	Noun	Question	Atmosphere	Quote	Word play	Emotion	Idiomatic expression
Populist								
<i>Son</i>	30	20	10	0	0	10	10	20
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	46.2	15.4	0	0	0	0	15.4	23
PERCENTAGE: POPULIST	38.1	17.7	5	0	0	5	12.7	21.5
Middle-of-the-road								
<i>Rapport</i>	50	16.7	5.6	11	0	0	0	16.7
<i>Sunday Times</i>	48.2	18.5	0	3.7	0	22.2	3.7	3.7
PERCENTAGE: MOR	49.1	17.6	2.8	7.4	0	11.1	1.85	10.2
Serious								
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	38.5	15.4	0	0	0	38.5	7.6	0
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	64.3	0	0	0	0	35.8	0	0
PERCENTAGE: SERIOUS	51.4	7.7	0	0	0	37.2	3.8	0

Table 4.7: The use of types of headlines

a. Verb headlines

Verb headlines are clearly used most often in all the newspapers. In journalism, verbs are seen as crucial elements of good headlines (cf. Bowles & Borden, 2004:260; see paragraph 3.2.7.2). The *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Independent* made the most use of verb headlines (48.2%; 64.3%). Examples of these are:

- *Sheriff foiled as MPs cower in parliament (Sunday Independent)* (Carter, 2006:1)
- *Churches join the war against crime (Sunday Independent)* (Gordin & Fabricius, 2006:1)
- *Charge Zuma, say police (Sunday Times)* (Ngobeni et al., 2005:1)
- *State calls for help from skilled whites (Sunday Times)* (Boyle, 2005:1)

b. Noun headlines

Noun headlines also appeared in all of the analysed newspapers, except in the *Sunday Independent*. Most of these were identified in the *Son* (20% of its headlines are noun headlines). *ROBBIE SE BOETIE* (Booyens, 2005:1) and *'JOU TERT'* (Barnard, 2005c:1) are

good examples of these. 18.5% of the headlines in the MOR *Sunday Times* also contained no verbs e.g. *Swim star's million dollar dilemma* (Isaacson, 2005:1), *Body of work* (Shean, 2005:1) as well as *Taxi driver's flawless act of honesty* (Sunday Times Foreign Desk, 2005:1) and the main headline on the November 6 front page *Zuma rape claim* (Ngonbeni *et al.*, 2005:1).

c. Word play headlines

Both these papers often used clever word play (*Sunday Times* [22.2%]; *Sunday Independent* [35.8]). Word play does not necessarily imply deviations. The only deviation in a word play headline is "wyrd" in the *Sunday Times* headline *Harry Potter and the wyrd court motion* (Sapa, 2005:1). The following are examples of word play headlines in the *Sunday Times*:

- *North West schools riddled with racism* (Govender, 2005:1)
- *Harry Potter and the wyrd court motion* (Sapa, 2005:1) – the wyrd, a play on *weird*, refers to the Wyrd Sister who tried to stop the release of the latest Harry Potter movie, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.
- *Sexy billboards drive men to distraction* (Sunday Times Foreign Desk, 2005:1)
- *Swim star's million dollar dilemma* (Isaacson, 2005:1).

The *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail&Guardian*, regardless of their serious nature, also used word play to make serious stories more appealing. Some examples are:

- *Santa spurns the chimney and comes to you online* (*Sunday Independent*) (Naidu, 2006:1)
- *El Nino serves up a scorching summer* (*Sunday Independent*) (Momborg, 2006:1)
- *Broedertwis hits go-it-alone communists* (*Sunday Independent*) (Monare *et al.*, 2006:1)
- *Tsunami of sand: Removed to the middle of nowhere* (*Mail&Guardian*) (Merten, 2005:1)
- *Noam Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (*Mail&Guardian*) (Brockes, 2005:1)

Contrary to what the researcher assumed, the *Son* and the *Sunday Sun* did not use as many word play headlines as the mainstream papers. In fact, the *Sunday Sun*'s front pages did not contain one of these headlines. The MOR and serious papers made use of 11.1% and 56.4% word play headlines respectively compared to the 5% in the populist *Son*. The one word play headline in the *Son* is not however, as clever as is the case with the MOR and the serious headlines, e.g. *BRAK MET KIND SE KOP BETRAP* (*Son*) (Prinsloo, 2005:1). It is therefore evident that word play headlines is a serious newspaper characteristic, even though it is also employed to a much lesser degree in the MOR papers. The application of word play headlines in serious newspapers might be a way to compensate for the more serious content and fewer

photographs – it could thus be an attempt to attract readers and make the more serious information more digestible.

d. Atmosphere headlines

Atmosphere headlines only appeared in the MOR newspapers: *Sunday Times* (3.7%) and the *Rapport* (11%):

- *Vlieënde Bok! Habana ster in stewige Bok-sege* (Harmse, 2005:1)
- *FOREST INFERNO* (Anon, 2005d:1)

The researcher can consequently only conclude that even though MOR newspapers do not apply atmosphere headlines frequently, they are more likely to use this than the populist or serious newspapers.

e. Emotive headlines

Emotive headlines (those that evoke sympathy and emotion), on the other hand, appear more in populist newspapers than in any of the others. The populist *Sunday Sun* in particular used emotive types of headlines to create a feeling of sympathy among its readers for the subjects in the stories – these subjects are usually broke and/or searching for their biological parents. Examples of these headlines in the *Sunday Sun*, are:

- *PLEASE HELP, I AM BROKE... says Thabang Lebeso* (Komane, 2005:1)
- *EX-PROSTITUTE WANTS MIKE MANGENA TO CARE FOR LOVE-CHILD, BUT HE SAYS... HE'S NOT MY SON* (Komane, 2005:1).

The MOR *Sunday Times* made use of one (3.7%): *Five die in station horror* (Mkhize, 2005:1). The serious *Mail&Guardian's* *Tsunami of sand: Removed to the middle of nowhere* (Merten, 2005:1) used in combination with a photograph of laughing children running around in an obviously poor township, creates atmosphere and evokes empathy. The iconic (photograph) and arbitrary signs (the text) convey meaning separately (cf. Anon, 2005a; see paragraph 2.4.3), but this meaning is strengthened when the sign units are applied in combination. This is an example of sign units acting together to communicate – thus forming a sign system (see paragraph 2.4).

f. Question headlines

Only the *Son* (10%) and the *Rapport* (5.6%) used questions as headlines. *ROBBIE SE BOETIE?* (Booyens, 2005:1) appeared in the *Son* and *Wie gaan die land se nuwe 'Idol' wees?* (Anon, 2005e:1) is the front page question headline in the *Rapport*.

g. Idiomatic expression headlines

The researcher also added an *idiomatic expression* category (see paragraph 3.2.7.2). These headlines contain expressions typical to a language such as:

- *Bloem-‘verleidster’ en haar man is skotvry (Rapport)* (Van Wyk, 2005:1)
- *Dis klaarpraat met Jacob Zuma (Rapport)* (Msomi, 2005:1)
- *Defrauder under police's nose (Sunday Times)* (Naidu, 2005:1)
- *RARE WIN FOR PULE... BUT SCARA NGOBESE MAY FACE THE MUSIC (Sunday Sun)* (Mabena & Malatji, 2005:1)
- *MORE CREDIT CARD BLUES FOR TWINS (Sunday Sun)* (Mabena, 2005:1)

The serious newspapers did not make use of any idiomatic expressions in their headlines, whereas these respectively appeared in the populist *Son* and the *Sunday Sun* 20% and 23%. On the other hand, 16.7% of the headlines in the *Rapport* were idiomatic expressions whilst the *Sunday Times* applied these in 3.7% of the cases.

h. Quote headlines

None of the newspapers used quote headlines. The *Rapport*'s headline '*Leigh was dae lank in lykhuis*' (Meyer & Jansen, 2005:1) was not categorized as a quote headline since it is not clear in the headline or the text who the source is. (The quote information is not repeated in the story).

When choosing a headline, the newspaper fulfils a specific audience need, whether it is to be informed, entertained, aesthetically pleased, emotionally moved, persuaded or motivated or ideologically supported (see paragraph 1.3.1 & table 1.1). All the papers succeeded to some degree to entertain its readers with word play headlines. Other headlines, such as the *Sunday Times*' *Autopsy: Kebble assaulted* (Philp, 2005:1) only informs the reader, but by using it, the newspaper fulfils its duty to supply information. The headline of the *Rapport*, *Dis klaarpraat met Zuma* (Msomi, 2005:1), does not only inform, but it is also satisfies the readers' ideological needs. Most of the Afrikaans community is not pro-Jacob Zuma, and if the newspaper reflects their views and proves that Zuma will not become the next president, they will buy and read the paper (see paragraph 1.3.1 & table 1.1). Most of the headlines in the *Sunday Sun* satisfy the emotional needs of their readers. These headlines, combined with photographs of sad-looking, broke and/or neglected celebrities and even readers, evoke sympathy from the audience. All these newspapers, by use of their headlines, comply with different audience needs and therefore succeed in keeping readers interested and entertained.

Findings:

Assumption 17a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more verb headlines than populist papers. The researcher cannot conclude on the use of quotation headlines, however. The assumption is thus true.

Assumption 17b: Populist as well as MOR newspapers make frequent use of noun and idiomatic expression headlines. Populist papers make the most use of questions in headlines. Atmosphere headlines appear only in MOR papers, whereas serious papers make the most use of word play headlines. The assumption is thus proven true with regards to populist and MOR newspapers' use of idiomatic expression headlines. The assumption that populist newspapers would use more word play headlines is refuted by the data – contradictory to what the researcher assumed, serious newspapers tend to use these.

4.3 Conclusion

No major conclusions can be drawn regarding the manner in which the newspapers apply punctuation. The table below summarizes the findings of this chapter according to the punctuation, and format and style characteristics of the newspapers:

Populist	Middle-of-the-road	Serious
Punctuation		
Inverted commas These are used to indicate direct quotes. The papers do not make frequent use of these which complies with their populist nature. Inverted commas are not used to indicate foreign words.	These punctuation marks are not applied to highlight foreign words. Inverted commas do indicate direct words.	The newspapers made the most use of inverted commas to indicate direct quotes. This is a serious characteristic.
Dashes and colons These are not used frequently – which strengthens the papers' populist nature.	The papers do apply dashes and colons, but not as frequently. This is in line with their MOR character.	These papers use the most dashes and colons and it is therefore a characteristic of serious newspapers.
Exclamation marks These are applied – particularly in stories.	Especially the <i>Rapport</i> makes use of exclamation marks in headlines.	The punctuation mark is not applied.
Questions marks Are used rarely.	No significant use of question marks.	Question marks are applied the most. It should be noted, however, that these appear in the critical feature articles.

Brackets No significant use of brackets.	Brackets are used a lot to supply additional information.	Brackets are used to supply additional information.
Style and format		
Uppercase Regular use of uppercase words, especially in headlines.	No significant use of uppercase.	No significant use of uppercase.
Underlined Underlined signs are used frequently, especially in the <i>Son</i> .	Do not make use of these.	Do not make use of these.
Italics Do not make use of these.	Italics are used with discretion. These indicate foreign words.	Italics indicate foreign words.
Bullets and paragraph headings The papers do apply these.	These newspapers make the most use of bullets and paragraph headings.	Bullets and paragraph headings appear rarely.
Foreign words Populist newspapers make the most use of these. They are not indicated with italics.	These do appear, but not frequently.	Foreign words are used and indicated with italics.
Offensive words Offensive words appear in these papers.	Offensive words are used, but appear in inverted commas and/or italics.	None are used.
Deviations These are used, yet very rarely.	Are rarely applied.	Are not applied frequently.
Headlines		
These papers make frequent use of verb , noun , idiomatic expression and emotive headlines. Question and word play headlines appear less frequently.	MOD papers use verb , noun , idiomatic expression and word play headlines. The first three types correlate with the populist trend. Atmosphere headlines appear the most in these papers. Questions do appear, but not as frequently.	Verb and word play headlines appear the most. The first type supports the papers' serious nature.

Table 4.8: Language application characteristics: punctuation, style and format

The *Sunday Times* is the paper that made the most use of quotation marks for direct quotes, which means it quotes the most sources in its stories. This increases its reliability and credibility which, in turn, strengthens its MOR character.

Based on the analysis of these newspapers, exclamation marks seem not to be just a populist trend. The MOR *Rapport* used the most in these respective front pages.

The use of uppercase signs in headlines is, however, still only seen in the populist newspapers and it can therefore be used to distinguish populist newspapers from MOR and serious papers. The use of foreign words and obscenities are not conclusive, since the *Sunday Times* and the *Rapport* both made use of obscenities and deviations appeared in almost all the newspapers. Obscene signs are thus not only restricted to populist newspapers. These signs can thus aid one to distinguish between populist and MOD, and serious newspapers.

It is also evident that certain types of headlines do not only belong in specific categories of South African newspapers. Word play headlines, which the researcher assumed would only be in populist newspapers, were present in especially the mainstream papers. Word play headlines, therefore, might be seen as a MOR and serious characteristic. The MOR and serious papers also used more verb headlines than the populist newspapers.

The researcher can conclude that newspapers cannot be classified based on their use of punctuation marks or their style formats, but types of headlines, inverted commas, the use of exclamation marks and offensive and underlined words can aid one.

Chapter 5

Qualitative analysis: length of linguistic signs and sign units

5.1 Introduction

Word, sentence, paragraph and story lengths are other important markers of style (see paragraph 3.2.7.1) and it was thus added as a main category to aid the researcher in establishing how the respective newspapers use language. This chapter aims to establish these by answering the following research questions (see paragraph 1.5):

1.5.3.4 What are the average lengths of linguistic signs and sign units in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

1.5.1.7 What are the differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and what is the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures?

Answering these questions will enable the researcher to verify whether the length of signs can be used to determine the nature of a newspaper (see paragraph 3.2.7.1).

5.2 Description and analysis

Newspaper stories, especially breaking news stories, in particular on the front pages, are usually shorter, since space is valuable. The lead news story on a front page is, however, usually a bit longer than the other stories. Feature articles (such as *Noam Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (Brookes, 2005:1) are longer, more in-depth and critically written, although they do not often appear on front pages. Space and time are not the only determinants of length. Shorter words, sentences and paragraphs are also less complex and easier to read and interpret (cf. Bernstein, 1982:196; Parker, 2006). Since shorter words, sentences, and paragraphs are easier to read, they are most probably applied to entertain (cf. Joseph, 2005; see paragraph 3.2.7.1). Based on this, the researcher assumed that populist newspapers would use shorter words, sentences, paragraphs and stories. The researcher also assumed that serious newspapers would use longer signs and sign units since this allows a writer to elaborate on issues and to supply more information.

5.2.1 Word length

Assumption 1: Populist newspapers use shorter words than MOR and serious papers.

As mentioned above, shorter words are less complex, easier and quicker to read and also more comprehensible. Especially in headlines, sub-editors should aim to use shorter rather than longer, more difficult words (see paragraph 3.2.7.2).

The table below shows the average word lengths in headlines and stories:

Length: words	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	4.7	4.3
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	5	4.5
TOTAL: POPULIST	9.7	8.8
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	5.9	4.8
<i>Sunday Times</i>	5.4	5
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	11.3	9.8
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	5.3	5.1
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	5.5	4.9
TOTAL: SERIOUS	10.8	10

Table 5.1: The average word length in headlines and stories

Words in the headlines of the serious and MOR papers' are clearly longer than in those of the populist newspapers, though the difference is minimal. It is important to keep in mind that Afrikaans words are on average longer than English words. In Afrikaans, one concept is written as one word e.g. "*koffiemasjien*" vs. the English "coffee machine". However, compared to the Afrikaans populist newspaper, the words in *the Rapport* is still longer on average, probably because most of its main headlines are shorter (see paragraph 5.2.2). This allows for more space and consequently for larger, bolder headlines such as *Nuwe bikini-nooi* (Burger, 2005:1), *Kers-bonanza!* (Tancred, 2005:1) and *Regstel-aksie vasgevat* (Du Toit, 2005:1). The sub-

headlines in these cases function to give additional and supporting information. The average word length in the serious *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* and the MOR *Rapport* are almost the same (5.3; 5.5; 5.4). Some of the headlines on the front page of the *Sunday Independent* contained particularly long words. The average word length in the *Broedertwis hits go-it-alone communists* headline is 9 characters, and those in the *Govt vows to get tough with taxi hooligans* contain words that are on average 6.2 characters long.

The shortest words in headlines are on the front pages of the *Son*. Shorter, bolder and fewer words (see paragraph 5.2.2) easily grab the attention of a potential reader, like *JOU TERT* (Barnard, 2005c:1) or *ROBBIE SE BOETIE?* (Booyens, 2005:1).

Where the average word length in stories is concerned, the *Mail&Guardian* (5.1) and the *Sunday Times* (5) use the longest words. The words in the *Sunday Independent* (4.9), *Rapport* (4.8), *Son* (4.3) and the *Sunday Sun* (4.5) are marginally shorter. The words in the two Afrikaans newspapers are shorter than the words in the English *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Independent*, even though one would expect it to be longer because of Afrikaans' "once-concept-one-word" rule. This verifies to a degree the assumption made in paragraph 3.2.7.1 that populist newspapers prefer shorter words since they aim to entertain and not necessarily inform. There is, however, no clear distinction between the average word length in the serious and the MOR newspapers.

Findings:

Assumption 1: The assumption is not entirely true. Populist newspapers do use the shortest words – this correlates with the assumption. However, MOR papers use the longest words, and not serious newspapers.

5.2.2 Sentence length

Assumption 2: Serious newspapers use the longest sentences and the sentences in the populist newspapers would be the shortest.

Table 5.2 indicates how long the average headlines and sentences in the stories are (n=the average amount of words in a sentence):

Length: sentences	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	4.8	13.9
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	6.7	18
TOTAL: POPULIST	11.5	31.9
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	5	21.5
<i>Sunday Times</i>	6.8	20.9
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	11.8	42.4
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	4.9	25.3
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	8.6	25.5
TOTAL: SERIOUS	13.5	50.8

Table 5.2: The average sentence length in headlines and stories

The longer headlines are clearly in the *Sunday Sun* (6.7), the *Sunday Times* (6.8) and the *Sunday Independent* (8.6) while the *Rapport*, *Mail&Guardian* and the *Son* use more condensed headlines (5; 4.9; 4.8). This contradicts what the researcher assumed (paragraph 3.2.7.1). The longer headlines in the populist *Sunday Sun* do, however, create atmosphere and evoke sympathy in the reader (e.g. *EX-PROSTITUTE WANTS MIKE MANGENA TO CARE FOR LOVE-CHILD, BUT HE SAYS... HE'S NOT MY SON* [Komane, 2005:1]; *PLEASE HELP, I AM BROKE... SAYS THABANG LEBESE* [Komane, 2005:1]). These longer, emotive headlines (arbitrary signs) support the photographs (iconic signs) to interest the reader and to educe a feeling of empathy (cf. Oosthuizen, 2004a:451; Burton, 1997:33; see paragraph 1.2). The one-word main headlines of the *Rapport* nevertheless also create a lot of atmosphere (*Kersbonanza!* [Tancred, 2005:1]). It is thus apparent that longer *and* shorter headlines can create atmosphere and evoke emotion and that a newspaper's nature does not determine the length of its headlines.

There is, however, a clear distinction between the stories' sentence length. The *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent's* sentences on average contain 26 words, followed by the *Rapport* and the *Sunday Times* with 22 and 21 respectively. The *Son* used a mere 13.9 words in a sentence, whereas the *Sunday Sun's* sentences contain 18 words on average. When

comparing randomly selected sentences from newspapers in the different categories, the difference is evident:

Rapport	Mail&Guardian	Son
Ná 'n sukkel-oorwinning oor Argentinië twee weke gelede het die Springbokke gister hier in Wallis hul segetog met 'n oorwinning van 33-16 oor Wallis voortgesit en kan die span dit drie in 'n ry maak wanneer hy volgende naweek in Parys teen Frankryk speel. – 44 words (<i>Vlieënde Bok! Habana ster in stewige Bok-sege</i> [Harmse, 2005:1])	It might also be argued that “new facts” have come to light, flowing from the Shaik trial and, possibly, from the follow-up raids in the Zuma investigation. – 27 words (<i>Zuma’s French setback</i> [Sole, 2005:1]).	<i>Dit was die eerste keer dat hy daar was. – 9 words</i> (‘<i>JOU TERT</i>’, <i>Lees wat gay skinderbekke oor Rian te sê het</i> [Barnard, 2005c:1]).

<i>Sunday Times</i>	<i>Sunday Independent</i>	<i>Sunday Sun</i>
“Apparently Qatar has indicated I would not be required to change my religion and have suggested that I use an [Arabic] equivalent of one of my nicknames as my middle name – I would be Schoeman ‘Something Cool’ Roland... it would more than likely be the Arabic words for ‘rocket’.” – 49 words (Swim star’s million dollar dilemma [Isaacson, 2005:1]).	A previous president of the South African Chamber of Business and former Western Cape leader of the Black Management Forum, Khoza was employed by Shell Oil Sa as their director of corporate services and by Nestle SA as director of human resources before heading the Independent Electoral Commission’s communications division for South Africa’s first democratic election in 1994. – 58 words (Lotto pioneer Khoza will be sorely missed [Momborg, 2006:1]).	Their split comes after Bjorn went to London for three months earlier this year, a trip Jackie claims he did not tell her about. – 24 words (Popstar in trouble [Somniso, 2005:1]).

Table 5.3: A comparison of sentence length

The sentences in the *Mail&Guardian* and in the *Sunday Independent* are also more complex. The journalist writes “it might also be argued” and “possibly”. These are all words with which one can compose an intricate, critical and argumentative sentence, typical of words one would expect in serious newspapers. These markers of genre are, however, a topic for a subsequent study for which this research can serve as a basis.

Based on these results, sentence length in stories could serve as a language element to determine the character of a newspaper: the longer the average sentence length, the more serious the newspaper.

Findings:

Assumption 2: The assumption is true. Serious and MOR papers use the longer sentences. The sentences in serious newspapers are the longest.

5.2.3 Paragraph length

Assumption 3: Serious and MOR newspapers use longer paragraphs than the populist papers.

Shorter paragraphs improve readability and comprehensibility (see paragraph 3.2.7.1). Newspaper paragraphs are therefore usually no more than two sentences or 40-50 words long (Leiter *et al.* (2000:49). The table below shows how long the average paragraphs are in the respective newspapers (regarding sentences as well as words).

Length: <i>paragraphs</i>	N=w	N=s
w=average amount of words; s=average amount of sentences		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	18	1.3
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	24.4	1.5
TOTAL: POPULIST	42.4	2.8
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	37.5	1.7
<i>Sunday Times</i>	27.8	1.3
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	65.3	3
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	42.1	1.8
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	35.1	1.5
TOTAL: SERIOUS	77.2	3.3

Table 5.4: The average paragraph length in stories

The *Rapport*, *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail&Guardian*'s paragraphs contain considerably more words (37.5; 35.1; 42.1) than those in the other newspapers. The serious newspapers' paragraphs are longer concerning words (77.2) compared to those in the other newspapers (MOR [65.3] and populist [42.4]). The *Son*, true to its nature, uses the shortest paragraphs (words [18] *and* sentences [1.3]). All of the newspapers' paragraphs are on average, almost two sentences long. This is good practice in any newspaper, regardless of its nature (Leiter *et al.*, 2000:47-50). This table verifies the information in table 5.3 – although all the newspapers' paragraphs are only about two sentences long, the *Mail&Guardian*, *Sunday Times* and *Rapport*'s paragraphs consist of more words, given that their sentences are longer (see paragraph 5.2.2).

Based on this analysis the researcher can conclude that paragraph length as well as sentence length (see previous paragraph) can aid in establishing the character of a newspaper.

Findings:

Assumption 3: Serious and MOR papers use longer paragraphs. The assumption is valid.

5.2.4 Story length

Assumption 4: The stories in serious newspapers are longer than those in MOR papers. These in turn, are longer than the populist stories.

The researcher assumed that MOR and serious newspapers would publish longer stories (i.e. more sentences and words) (see paragraph 3.2.7.1). It is evident in table 5.5 that the stories in the serious newspapers are much longer than those in the populist and MOR papers:

Length: stories	N=w	N=s
w=average amount of words; s=average amount of sentences		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>	433.8	31.7
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	445.4	27.3
TOTAL: POPULIST	879.2	59
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>	489.3	24.3
<i>Sunday Times</i>	393.6	74.4
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	882.9	98.7
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	1180	51.3
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	557.6	23.1
TOTAL: SERIOUS	1737.6	74.4

Table 5.5: The average story length in newspapers

The stories in the *Mail&Guardian* are by far the longest (words=1180; sentences=51.3), followed by the *Sunday Independent* following with an average of 557.6 words per story. The

latter's stories do not contain many sentences compared to the other newspapers. The sentences are longer, however and this explains why there are fewer (see paragraph 5.2.3). The *Sunday Times* stories contain less words than those of the other newspapers (393.6), but its sentences are more (and consequently shorter [see paragraph 3.2.2]) than those of the *Mail&Guardian* (51.3) and the *Rapport* (24.3). There is no clear distinction between the story lengths (regarding the average number of words per story) in the populist and MOR newspapers. Populist newspapers (and MOR papers to some degree) entertain and therefore they present stories in bite-sized, comprehensible format (cf. Joseph, 2005; see paragraph 1.3.3) – this study verifies Joseph's statement.

It is evident, though, that the stories in the serious newspaper the *Mail&Guardian* contain more words. One should keep in mind though that these stories aren't breaking news stories, but in-depth, critical and investigative articles which are automatically longer. The number of paragraphs is also more in this newspaper compared to populist and MOR newspapers. This confirms the results in table 5.3: the paragraphs in all the studied newspapers are on average the same length, which are approximately two sentences. If the *Mail&Guardian's* stories comprise of more words, and the paragraphs are only about two sentences long, the stories should have more paragraphs.

However, these findings are not conclusive and the researcher can only deduce that the stories in serious newspapers are almost three times longer than those in MOR and populist newspapers. This supports its serious nature and verifies the assumption the researcher made (see paragraph 3.2.7.1). There is, however, no significant difference between the story lengths in the populist and MOR newspapers and story length can therefore not be used as a criterion to *establish* a newspaper's character – it can only be used to distinguish between serious and "other" newspapers.

Findings:

Assumption 4: Longer stories appear in serious newspapers. MOR and populist papers use shorter stories. The assumption is thus partly proven to be true.
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5.3 Conclusion

The findings of the length of signs and sign units can be summarized as follow:

Populist	Middle-of-the-road	Serious
Length of signs and sign units		
Length of words Words are shorter.	Words are the longest.	Words are of average length.
Length of sentences The sentences are the shortest.	Sentences are of average length.	Uses the longest sentences.
Length of paragraphs Uses the shortest paragraphs.	Paragraph length resembles the length of those in serious papers.	Paragraphs are fairly long.
Length of stories Stories are not as long.	Stories are about the same length as the stories in populist newspapers.	Stories are significantly longer than in populist and MOR newspapers.

Table 5.6: Language application characteristics: length of signs and sign units

After calculating the average word, sentence, paragraph and story lengths of the respective newspapers, it is evident that word length in stories and headlines cannot determine a newspaper's nature. The sentence and paragraph lengths do however, differ significantly in the respective newspaper categories and the researcher concludes that this does *support* a newspaper's character. On the other hand, only serious newspapers publish very long stories and because the length of stories in the populist and MOR newspapers do not vary considerably, this factor can only help one distinguish between serious, and MOR and populist newspapers. This might indicate that MOR newspapers publish shorter stories in an attempt to attract readers and make the content more digestible for its target audience.

Chapter 6

Qualitative analysis: Sign types and functions

6.1 Introduction

Newspaper stories are formal linguistic sign systems (cf. Anon, 2005a; Sonderling, 2001:110; see paragraph 2.1 and 2.4). In this chapter, the researcher aims not only establish to which types of signs as identified by Peirce (see paragraph 2.4.1), but also which sign functions according to Jakobson's model see paragraph 2.4.2) on which the newspapers choose to base their communication. By answering the following research questions (see paragraph 1.8), the researcher could establish each newspaper's type of communication. The aim is to ascertain whether the *type* of communication supports the nature and correlates with the unique functions of the newspaper category (i.e. to inform, entertain, debate, persuade or motivate [see paragraphs 1.3.1 & 4.2.7.2; cf. Fourie, 1983:5, 6]):

1.5.1.5 Which sign types do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on?

1.5.1.6 Which sign functions do the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on?

1.5.1.7 What are the differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and what is the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures?

6.2 Description and analysis

The sign types and functions will be discussed separately.

6.2.1 Sign types

Assumption 18c: Populist newspapers use more symbolic and iconic signs than serious and MOR newspapers.

Assumption 18d: Serious and MOR newspapers apply more arbitrary signs than populist newspapers.

For the purpose of the sign type analysis, the researcher organized the various sign types (graphic and linguistic) on the front pages, into *units*. The *units* were then categorized according to Peirce's model of sign types (see paragraph 2.4.1). This will aid the researcher in establishing what the relationship between the linguistic signs (text) and the graphic²⁰ signs (photographs and colour) are and whether the newspapers rely more on linguistic or visual sign systems to communicate. The researcher assumed that serious newspapers would put stronger emphasis on the former, whilst populist newspapers would focus more on visual systems. Each of the following is seen as a sign *unit*:

Graphic signs	Linguistic signs
Photographs	Headings/sub-headings
Colours	Photo captions
Graphics	Stories
	Pull quotes
	Teaser headings
	Teaser texts
	Banners

Table 6.1: Graphic and linguistic sign units

The researcher excluded advertisements on the front pages, since newspapers have very little influence on what these look like. The table below shows which sign unit types the newspapers concentrate on when communicating and complying with the needs of its particular audiences:

²⁰ The researcher acknowledges that linguistic signs (the text) in newspapers are also graphic signs. However, for the purposes of this study, these (linguistic) signs were categorized only as linguistic signs since the researcher wants to establish what the balance is between the linguistic and the "other" signs on the front page. These other signs are consequently categorized as graphic signs (non-linguistic).

Sign types: <i>front pages</i>				
	Linguistic signs	Graphic signs		
	A	IX	S	IC
A=arbitrary; IX=index; S=symbolic; IC=iconic				
Populist				
<i>Son</i>	8.3	0	4.7	8
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	8.5	0	3.8	5.8
TOTAL: POPULIST	16.8	0	8.5	13.8
Middle-of-the-road				
<i>Rapport</i>	14.3	0	2	5.5
<i>Sunday Times</i>	19.8	0	1	4.3
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	34.1	0	3	9.8
Serious				
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	17.7	0	2.7	8.3
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	11.3	0	3	3
TOTAL: SERIOUS	29	0	5.7	11.3

Table 6.2: The use of sign types on newspaper front pages

The table shows that newspapers do not use index signs to communicate with²¹. Unlike arbitrary signs, indexes are not conventional (i.e. culturally bound), but are learnt through experience (see paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.5). For example, a wind and gathering clouds are indications of rain, and thus, indexes.) The other sign types are discussed separately below:

6.2.1.1 Arbitrary signs

According to Saussure (1959:67) all linguistic signs are arbitrary. The table shows clearly that all the studied newspapers base their communication on arbitrary signs – in particular the *Sunday Times* (19.8), the *Mail&Guardian* (17.7) and the *Sunday Independent* (11.3). The little available space (A3 size [tabloid]) on the front page of the *Sunday Sun* is used effectively. On average 8.5 arbitrary units appear on these front pages every week. About seven headlines, including banners and teasers, fill these pages on a weekly basis. The *Mail&Guardian* also packs its front pages with a lot of arbitrary information: usually three teasers, two or three headlines as

²¹ A headline, photograph or page number with an arrow prompts the reader to turn the page and indicates that there is a story inside. This is, therefore, an example of an index sign on a front page.

well as all the headlines in the *M&G Business* section are fitted onto this page. The *Rapport* (14.3) also applies many linguistics sign units on its front page. The *Son* does not use as many arbitrary signs (8.3) on its front page as the other newspapers. It does have teasers in every issue. Yet, unlike the *Sunday Sun*, it does not use banners to attract readers (see above).

6.2.1.2 Symbolic signs

It is evident that all the newspapers rely on arbitrary signs to communicate – yet they also make use of colour²² on their front pages (these exclude the colours in the photographs). Of all the newspapers, the *Sunday Sun* used the most symbolic signs (colours) on its front pages: the 27 November 2005 issue has five different colours (other than black and white) on the first page. These include green, yellow, black, red and orange. The *Son* (4.7) also uses a lot of symbolic signs on its front pages – this is typical of populist newspapers (see paragraph 2.2.1). These findings correlate with Steenveld's (2006) opinion that colour and layout play a considerable role in the appeal of populist newspapers (see paragraph 2.2.1 & table 2.1).

The serious *Mail&Guardian* (2.7) and the *MOR Rapport* (2) also make use of different colours on their front pages, but to a lesser degree than the populist newspapers. The researcher expected the *Mail&Guardian* to use colour with more discretion (see paragraph 2.2.1). However, even though the newspaper applies the same colours as the *Sunday Sun* and the *Son* (blue, yellow and especially red), these colours are less bright and more subdued. The *Rapport* makes use of mainly yellow and red. The banners on all four the studied front pages are uppercase red-on-yellow (these two colours one usually associates with populist newspapers). The *Sunday Times*, the paper with the least average symbolic signs (1) only uses red besides black and white, and then always in the teasers (with white-on-red-headlines). It should be noted, however, that the populist newspapers are the only papers to use headlines in colour. The other newspapers either employ colour only for backgrounds of teasers, or, as is the case on the front pages of the *Mail&Guardian*, colour is used for the *M&G Business* section at the bottom of the pages to distinguish it from the rest of the paper and to indicate that it is a separate supplement. Colour (symbolic signs) consequently plays a major role in the attractiveness of the populist newspapers and one can thus assume that populist newspapers would make use of more symbolic signs, and consequently less arbitrary (linguistic) signs than the serious newspapers. The *Sunday Independent* used few (3) symbolic signs and it is noteworthy that the colours on its front pages are subdued blue and gold and these are the same in every issue of the paper.

²² Colours are categorized as symbolic signs since the meanings they convey in journalism are based on convention (i.e. they are culturally bound [Decker, 2006]) (see paragraph 2.4.1).

6.2.1.3 Iconic signs

It is evident that the serious *Mail&Guardian* (8.3) and the populist *Son* (8) use the most iconic signs (photographs and pictures). The *Mail&Guardian*'s strong focus on iconic signs might be because it uses a photo or picture with each of its headlines as well as with every teaser at the top of the page (the *Son* also tends to do this). The *Sunday Times*, probably because it publishes many stories on a front page, rarely use more than one photograph with the main headlines. It does, however, also print photographs with each teaser headline.

The *Sunday Sun* and the *Son* tend to use large²³ iconic signs with the main story – the *Sunday Times* and *Rapport*, however, rarely combines the main picture with the main story. The *Rapport* in particular has the tendency to use photographs of either rugby or pretty girls (the issues of 6, 13 and 20 November 2005). These photographs do not support stories that are particularly newsworthy (like the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*). The latter uses photographs to report on the latest of the Zuma rape case (13 November 2005), a destructive fire in Plettenberg Bay (6 November 2005) as well as the finals of the Idols 2005 competition (27 November 2005). The *Body of work* photograph (of a painted model) taken at a fashion show is not, however, as newsworthy, but more aesthetically pleasing in order to satisfy this particular audience need (see paragraph 1.3.1).

The researcher can thus deduce that populist newspapers make use of more iconic signs. Other categories of newspapers do not, however, rely only on arbitrary signs and also know the importance of iconic signs to attract readers. Especially the *Rapport* uses appealing photographs to get readers' attention. They do not aim to shock or create sympathy (as the populist newspapers do on some of the front pages [e.g. the photograph of the rejected-looking man accompanying the headline *EX-PROSTITUTE WANTS MIKE MANGENA TO CARE FOR LOVE-CHILD, BUT HE SAYS HE'S NOT MY SON* in the 20 November 2005 issue]), but to entertain and excite (e.g. the photograph of Bryan Habana scoring in the rugby match against England [20 November 2005]).

Findings:

Assumption 17a: Populist newspapers do apply more iconic and symbolic signs than serious and MOR papers. The assumption is thus true.

Assumption 17b: Serious and MOR newspapers use more arbitrary signs than populist papers. This assumption is also valid.

²³ In this study "large" iconic signs are seen as photographs that take up at least half of the front page, regardless of the format of the newspaper (i.e. tabloid [A3] or broadsheet [A2]).

6.2.2 Jakobson's sign functions

Assumption 18a: Serious and MOR newspapers use more referential, poetic and metalinguistic signs than populist newspapers.

Assumption 18b: Populist newspapers use more expressive, conative and phatic signs than the MOR and serious newspapers.

Guiraud (1971:6-9; see paragraph 2.4.2) states that the sign functions a sender focus on determine its type of communication. The researcher thus determined the *type* of communication by establishing what linguistic sign *functions* the respective newspapers concentrate on. All the separate linguistic signs in the headlines and the stories were categorized according to Jakobson's model of sign functions (see paragraph 2.4.2). In some cases, phrases were categorized as *one* sign, since they only convey meaning as a unit. Each of the sign functions will be discussed separately under the following headings:

6.2.2.1 Headlines

Table 6.2 shows, in percentage, which sign functions the newspapers focused on in their front page headlines:

Sign functions: <i>headlines</i>	R	E	C
R=referential; E=expressive; C=conative			
Populist			
<i>Son</i>	79.5	20.5	0
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	83.8	16.2	0
TOTAL: POPULIST	163.3	36.7	0
Middle-of-the-road			
<i>Rapport</i>	76	21.9	2.1
<i>Sunday Times</i>	87.1	12.9	0
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	163.1	34.8	2.1
Serious			
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	70.8	29.2	0
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	90.4	9.6	0
TOTAL: SERIOUS	80.6	19.4	0

Table 6.3: Sign functions in the front page headlines

a. Referential signs

The *Sunday Independent* (90.4) *Sunday Times* (87.1) and the *Sunday Sun* (83.8) used the most referential signs in their headlines. These are, according to Jakobson, objective signs that define the relationship between the message and the receiver (see paragraph 2.4.2). It forms the basis of all communication and this table clearly confirms this. It shows that the newspapers are intent on giving clear, objective and accurate headlines for their stories e.g. *Zuma in bid to stop trial, Mbeki and Zuma still deadlocked on eve of key ANC meeting* (*Sunday Times*, 11-17 Nov 2005); *Zuma dalk dié week voor oor verkragting* (*Rapport*, 27 Nov 2005); *Katar wil Roland hê vir R500 miljoen* (*Rapport*, 27 Nov 2005) and even the populist *Son's* *ROBBIE WILLIAMS KOM SUID-AFRIKA TOE* (4 Nov 2005). The *Rapport* and the *Mail&Guardian* apparently used the least referential signs in their headlines. The researcher did not expect the *Mail&Guardian* to use the lowest percentage of referential signs, yet its serious (and thus inquisitive, critical, investigative and debating) nature could explain its use of more expressive signs (see below).

b. Expressive signs

Expressive signs, unlike referential signs, are subjective and function to communicate the attitude of the sender (see paragraph 2.4.2). Since these signs function with referential signs to form the basis of our communication, it is inevitable that newspapers would employ expressive signs to convey their messages. As the researcher assumed (see paragraph 3.2.7.3), the *Sunday Independent* (a serious paper) used very few expressive signs in its front page headlines (9.6). The *Mail&Guardian*, however, using the least referential signs, applied the most expressive signs (29.2) on its front page. The *Rapport* and the *Son* also use a fair percentage of expressive signs in their headlines (21.9; 20.5). The researcher did not expect these results. Based on its character, one would assume that the populist newspapers would use more subjective signs. The *Mail&Guardian*, in order to fulfil its function of a serious newspaper, does however need to use subjective signs to practice critical and investigative journalism (see paragraph above). In the article on Noam Chomsky (Brookes, 2005:1) journalist Emma Brookes exposes Chomsky, seen as one of the greatest intellectuals of our time, as a hypocrite and an ordinary person with biases. The headline, *Noam Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (*Mail&Guardian*, 11-17 Nov 2005) gives a clear and adequate summary of the content of the story and, despite its expressive signs, it is analytical and not misleading. With this headline the newspaper fulfils its serious function and complies with its audience's need for intellectual stimulation – the paper does not merely report, it also interprets.

The same cannot be said of the populist headlines. *PLEASE HELP, I AM BROKE... SAYS THABANG LEBESE* (*Sunday Sun*, 13 Nov 2005) does not give a true representation of the

content of the story: it is not informative, summarizing and the expressive signs do not function to communicate critically, but to upset and alarm the reader. The headline '*JOU TERT*', *Lees wat gay skinderbekke oor Rian te sê het* (Son, 11 Nov 2005) also communicates with expressive signs – these being *TERT* and *SKINDERBEKKE*. The *Rapport*'s emotional headlines also aim to entertain and excite the reader e.g. *Vlieënde Bok! Habana ster in stewige Bok-sege* (*Rapport*, 20 Nov 2005). This headline is filled with expressive signs such as "vlieënde", "ster", "stewige" and "sege". This newspaper clearly knows its audience and complies with its needs – rugby sells Afrikaans newspapers.

The *Sunday Times*' expressive headlines are usually those of the *Lighter Side* stories like *Sexy billboards drive men to distraction* (27 Nov 2005) or *Harry Potter and the wyrd court motion* (6 Nov 2005). These headlines are clearly humorous and aimed at entertaining the reader. The front pages are thus balanced – the reader gets the necessary breaking and serious news at the top of the front page, and then has a laugh reading the short *Lighter Side* stories.

c. Conative signs

The *Rapport* is the only one of the newspapers to use conative signs in its front page headlines. These are not just (like expressive signs) subjective, but also aimed at convincing and motivating the reader (see paragraph 2.4.2). *Dis klaarpraat met Jacob Zuma* (20 Nov 2005) tries to convince the reader that the Zuma rape trial will be the cause of the leader's downfall. The signs in the headline and story on Noam Chomsky (Brockes, 2005:1 [*Chomsky: As flaky as the next man*]) was not categorized as conative signs in view of the fact that this is a feature article which allows for interpretation from a journalist (Lombaard, 2002:61). Conative signs were thus categorized within the context of the *type* of story. The researcher also took into account the ideologies the different newspapers support.

6.2.2.2 Stories

The table below indicates (in percentage) which signs functions the newspapers make most use of in their stories:

Sign functions: stories	R	E	C
R=referential; E=expressive; C=conative			
Populist			
<i>Son</i>	91.6	8.4	0
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	97	3	0
AVERAGE: POPULIST	94.3	5.7	0
Middle-of-the-road			
<i>Rapport</i>	95.5	4.4	0.1
<i>Sunday Times</i>	96.5	4.5	0
AVERAGE: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	96	4.6	0.1
Serious			
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	95.6	4.4	0
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	93	7.1	0
AVERAGE: SERIOUS	94.3	5.8	0

Table 6.4: Sign functions in the front page stories

a. Referential signs

As mentioned in paragraph 6.2.2.1, these signs are the foundation on which a sign system (a language) is built and all of the studied newspapers have, as expected, applied these signs most of all. The *Sunday Sun*, surprisingly, used the most referential signs (97). The two MOR newspapers (the *Sunday Times* and the *Rapport*) as well as the serious *Mail&Guardian* also used a considerable number of these signs (96.5; 95.5; 95.6). This illustrates that, despite their natures, these newspapers all aim to inform as objectively as possible.

b. Expressive signs

All of the newspapers make use of expressive signs (the serious papers included). The use of expressive signs is inevitable since these also form the basis of communication and serve to support the referential signs (see paragraph 6.2.2.1). It is not possible to communicate without expressive signs. Devoid of these, a language is dead and insipid, and given that newspapers aim to not only inform, but also to entertain and inform in an interesting and appealing way, these signs are essential in language (cf. paragraph 2.4.2). As mentioned in paragraph 6.2.2.1, critical discussions of current affairs and breaking news imply the use of “stronger” words –

these are usually either conative or expressive. It should be noted, however, that these critical articles, especially in the MOR newspapers (due to their nature), belong on the editorial comment pages. The readers of the *Mail&Guardian* buy the newspaper and read it knowing that its nature is serious and therefore it would publish more analytical and in-depth articles. *Chomsky: As flaky as the next man* (Brookes, 2005:1) is a good example of where the journalist used expressive signs to expose Noam Chomsky as prejudice:

And so it goes on, Chomsky fairly vibrating with anger at Vulliamy and company's "tantrums" over his questioning of their account of the war. I suggest that if they are having tantrums it's because they have contact with the survivors of Srebrenica and witness the impact of the down-playing of the experiences. He fairly explodes.

Further on in the article she writes:

You could pick any number of other conflicts over which to have a barney with Chomsky. Seeing as we have entered the bad-tempered part of the interview, I figure we may as well continue and ask if he finds it ironic that, given his views on the capitalist system, he is a beneficiary of it.

The story *Spy vs. spy: How Kasrils ambushed Masetlha* (Sole & Letsoalo, 2005:1) also contain expressive signs because of its interpretive and investigative angle – it reports on how Minister Ronnie Kasrils cleverly set up Billy Masetlha, the NIA director general, which caused his dismissal by President Thabo Mbeki. The article not only supplies all the facts, but, true to the newspaper's serious nature, also tries to unravel the situation – this is not possible without expressive signs. The following extract clearly shows how these signs are applied to do exactly this:

Mbeki then asked Masetlha if he had anything to say. Clearly dumbstruck, Masetlha replied he would need to study the contents of Kasrils letter..... That much is clear from the terms of his challenge to the suspension, in which he queried Kasrils, who does not have the formal authority to suspend the director general, was indeed acting on the instructions of the president.

The same applies the *Sunday Independent's* usage of expressive signs (it has, after the *Son*, the second largest percentage of expressive signs [7.1]):

The government has pressed the button for scrapping old and unroadworthy taxis declaring its intent to pursue the recapitalization programme and crack down on taxi hooliganism (Carter & Seale, 2006:1).

It is evident when comparing these three expressive extracts from the *Mail&Guardian* with the following from the *Son* (*SIESA BOK, Ricky vat my kind vir 'n ride* [Eggington, 2005:1]), that they function to communicate on different levels and to comply with different audience needs:

Enrico Januarie is uit die Bokke se toerspan, maar hy speel glo alte lekker die veld vol onder die jong meisies van die Weskus. En as 'n haan so lekker onder die henne scrum, dan is dit seker te verstane dat hy sy meisie en die ma van sy kind so bietjie afskeep.

The language in the *Son* is evidently more reader friendly, entertaining and enjoyable to read – it supports the newspaper's populist nature. There are, however, noticeable resemblances between the expressive language in the *Son* and the *MOR Rapport* when one compares it:

Hier is die vrou wat die land aan die praat het. Nannie, die aanvallige rooikop van Bloemfontein wat glo getroude mans verlei en daarna seks met hulle het. Dit terwyl haar man, 'n oud-Grootvlei-gevangene, steelvideo's uit 'n hangkas van die kapperjolle maak (Van Wyk, 2005:1).

Comparing this to the *Lighter Side* stories on the front pages of the *Sunday Times* clearly indicates that the *Rapport* tends to have a more populist and sensationalist style than this English MOR newspaper. In the extract below (The Sunday Times Foreign Desk, 2005:1a), the *Sunday Times* also report on sex, but, even though it too plays with words, it has a less sensational approach:

Billboards that use sex to sell are diverting drivers' attention from the work at hand. A UK study for an insurance company found that one in five male drivers were so diverted by billboards with scantily clad models that they have veered dangerously out of their lanes, Sky TV reports.

It is clear that even though all of the newspapers use expressive signs, they apply it differently to comply with the needs of their diverse audiences.

c. Conative signs

In the stories too, the *Rapport* is the only newspaper that made use of conative signs. If the MOR newspaper readers view the front page stories as factual and objective, this is not acceptable. According to Nel (2005:365) the interpretation and opinions of the newspapers are “reserved for the opinion columns such as news features, including editorials”. Using conative signs in news stories misleads the reader – these signs should be reserved to the editorial comment pages in which the reader expects to find opinions (cf. paragraph 2.2.1; Lombaard, 2002:61).

The most obvious conative signs are in the story *Regstel-aksie vasgevat, Wye steun vir ‘plan’ teen vergrype* story (Du Toit, 2005:1):

Bekende Suid-Afrikaners sê nou die stryd aan teen buitensporige regstelende aksie in die werkplek... 'n Goeie praktykkode wat riglyne aan werkgewers sal verskaf oor die korrekte wyse om regstellende aksie toe te pas, vorm die grondslag van die veldtog.

With these conative signs, the journalist implies, and thus tries to convince the reader, that affirmative action is “excessive” and that the campaign against it is “good”. These communicate the newspaper's attitude and it a clear indication of what its view is on affirmative action – this is not appropriate in an “objective”, “factual” front page main story.

Findings:

Assumption 18a; Assumption 18b: This assumption is refuted. Populist and serious newspapers apply referential signs evenly whilst MOR papers use these the most. MOR papers also apply the least expressive signs whereas the application of expressive signs in populist and serious papers correlate. In the front page headlines and stories analysed in study, only the MOR papers used conative signs.

6.3 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter are summarized in the table below:

Populist	Middle-of-the-road	Serious
Peirce's sign types		
Make frequent use of iconic and symbolic signs and the least use of arbitrary signs.	Applies the most arbitrary signs and also makes use of iconic and symbolic signs.	Makes use of arbitrary , symbolic as well as iconic signs.
Jakobson's sign functions		
These papers use referential and expressive signs as frequently as serious papers to convey messages.	Referential signs are applied the most, whereas expressive signs appear the least. Only these papers use conative sign functions.	Referential and expressive sign applications resemble that of the populist papers.

Table 6.5: Language application characteristics: sign types and functions

Arbitrary (linguistic) signs form the basis of all the newspapers' communication. The *Rapport* used the least arbitrary signs and made frequent use of iconic and symbolic signs on its front page. It noticeably uses yellow and red (the traditionally populist colours). The *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Sun* and the *Mail&Guardian* applied the most arbitrary signs. It is interesting to note that the serious *Mail&Guardian*, together with the *Son*, made the most use of iconic signs. The serious newspaper's use of these might be due to the available space on the front page since its stories are published inside. It might also be a way to compensate for the serious content and act as a means to attract readers. All the newspapers used colour to attract their readers. It is evident that even though all the newspapers base their communication on arbitrary signs, they also realize how important symbolic and iconic signs are to attract readers, present information in attractive and entertaining ways, to keep the readers interested and to support the arbitrary information.

The newspapers all use referential signs as the foundation for their communication – expressive signs also play a huge role in the conveying of their messages. Nonetheless, the respective papers do apply these signs differently to create different effects (sensational, entertaining or humorous) and to fulfil the different needs of their audiences, whether these are to be intellectually stimulated (as in the case of the *Mail&Guardian*), entertained and moved (the *Son* and to a certain degree the *Sunday Sun* and the *Rapport*) or to entertain while informing (the *Sunday Times*) (see paragraph 1.3.3 & table 1.1). The only newspaper to use conative signs in

its front page stories and headlines is the *Rapport*. This indicates that the newspaper does not always separate objective facts from subjective opinions, and based on this, it tends to fall in the populist category.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher concludes on the most important findings based on the research aims as set out in the first chapter (see paragraph 1.5.2). First, the findings from the literature study (chapters 1 and 2) and then the findings from the empirical study (chapters 4, 5 and 6) will be summarized.

7.2 Conclusion

7.2.1 Literature study

7.2.1 In chapters 1 and 2 the researcher aimed to establish the following (see paragraph 1.5.2):

1.5.2.1 The functions of language in the print media.

1.5.2.2 The nature and functions of newspapers as described in the literature.

The media uses five elements to present messages: text, production, context, reception and technology (cf. Watson, 2003:3; Fourie, 2004b:327; Oosthuizen, 2004a:451; Faure 2001:347; Fourie, 1983:101-103; Steenveld, 2006; paragraph 1.2). Language is thus a communication element newspapers use to communicate with. The first aim (cf. 7.2.1.1; 1.5.2.1) was reached by establishing that language plays an imperative and powerful role in the communication process – without language we are not able to communicate. Language is an essential communication tool which we use to express our thoughts, emotions, meaning. It enables us to reflect our realities and to comprehend the world around us (cf. Bowles & Borden, 2004:10; Oosthuizen, 2004a:448; Sonderling 2001:106; paragraph 1.1). The importance of language in the print media (7.2.1.1; 1.5.2.1) is described in the literature (cf. Kress, 1983:121; paragraph 1.1):

Thus, a newspaper reader's attempt to reconstruct events experienced by journalists – to read the messages – relies entirely on language.

Consequently, language in the print media enables journalists to *construct* (encode) messages, as well as to aid the reader in *deconstructing* (decoding) these messages to ultimately understand and interpret the news events. According to Wilson (cf. 2003:38; paragraph 1.2) journalists are *mediators*. They *perceive* and *observe* events, which are then interpreted and

processed into message form. Individuals perceive events differently, however, and as a result they also employ language differently to present these happenings.

Aims 7.2.1.2 and 1.5.2.2 were also reached and it was determined in the literature study that the functions of newspapers entail to “inform, entertain, educate, interpret and comment, persuade, maintain cultures and values and mobilize audiences politically, socially and economically” (cf. De Beer, 1998:14, 15, 16; see paragraph 2.2.1).

McQuail’s model differs somewhat and shows that the media functions to inform, to correlate (explain, interpret and comment on news events), continue (maintain values), entertain and mobilize (cf. Fourie, 2004b:267; Watson, 2003:104-105; paragraph 2.2.1). Depending on their nature, newspapers put emphasis on different functions. The populist newspapers would where content is concerned, for instance, focus more on the entertainment functions, whereas the serious and MOR papers educate, interpret, persuade and mobilize to a greater extent (see paragraph 2.2.1).

7.2.2 Empirical study

The empirical study entailed the analysis of the front page stories and headlines of the November 2005 issues of the *Sunday Sun*, *Son*, *Sunday Times*, *Rapport* and the *Mail&Guardian*, as well as the October 2006 issues of the *Sunday Independent*. These were studied in order to determine the following:

1.5.2.3 The characteristics of the use of punctuation, style and format in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

1.5.3.4 The average lengths linguistic of signs and sign units in the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*.

1.5.2.5 The sign types the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on.

1.5.2.6 The sign functions the populist *Son* and *Sunday Sun*, the middle-of-the-road *Rapport* and *Sunday Times* and the serious newspapers the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent* focus on.

1.5.2.7 The differences and/or similarities in the way in which the populist *Sunday Sun* and *Die Son*, the middle-of-the-road *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* and the serious newspapers *Sunday Independent* and the *Mail & Guardian* utilize language, and the relation between the language use in these papers and their respective natures

The results of the empirical study were presented in three chapters (chapters 4-6). The conclusions of each will subsequently be presented and discussed.

The number of front pages and front page items analyzed is shown in table 7.1:

	<i>Son</i>	<i>Sunday Sun</i>	<i>Rapport</i>	<i>Sunday Times</i>	<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	<i>Sunday Independent</i>
Number of issues	3	4	4	4	3	3
Number of items ²⁴	6	10	16	20	8	9

Table 7.1: Number of issues and items included in empirical study

• Punctuation, format and style

This component of the study focused on the punctuation, format and style with which the newspapers choose to communicate (cf. 7.2.2.1; 1.5.2.3). The study focused on specific punctuation marks, selected markers of style and format (cf. paragraph 3.2.7.2). Based on the analysis, the researcher could not draw any definite conclusions about the application of the abovementioned. It was noticeable, however, that the MOR *Rapport*, unlike the other newspapers, is inclined to put poignant, and subjective signs in inverted commas without clearly indicating the name of the source. This is not a practice in newspapers which aim to be informative, objective and accurate, especially on the pages which report on news (cf. paragraph 6.2.1.1). The researcher established that the *Sunday Times*, even though it is not a

²⁴ A story and its headline are seen as one item.

serious paper, uses the most direct quotes in its stories. This complies with its MOR character – it aims to be objective, reliable and credible. The use of brackets, dashes and colons is a MOR and serious trend. This could thus be used as criteria to distinguish between MOR and serious, and populist newspapers.

Despite the assumption that populist newspapers are prone to the use of exclamation marks, the *MOR Rapport* uses these more than any of the other newspapers studied. The characteristic can therefore, not be attributed to only populist newspapers – all the papers tend to make use of these now (this supports Gaugele's (2006) statement that even more serious newspapers now apply populist elements (see paragraph 2.2.1).

Uppercase headlines and underlined signs in stories are, however, still only employed by the populist newspapers and could consequently serve as a determinant of these papers (cf. 6.2.2.1). MOR newspapers make significant use of bullets and paragraph headings. These are therefore a characteristic of the language application of these papers.

The *Sunday Times* as well as the *Rapport*, two MOR newspapers, use obscenities and deviations similar to the populist papers.

Style and format, and punctuation could thus aid one to establish the nature of a newspaper, especially where the use of dashes, colons, brackets, uppercase and underlining as well as bullets and paragraph headings are concerned. The researcher can conclude that there are differences in the application of style and format, as well as punctuation, in the various types of newspapers.

Word play headlines seem to be applied by serious newspapers, whereas MOR and populist papers tend to use more idiomatic expression and noun headlines. Atmosphere headlines on the other hand, are a MOR trend.

- **Length of linguistic signs and sign units**

The researcher aimed to determine whether there are differences in the length of words, sentences, paragraphs and stories in the populist, MOR and serious newspapers (cf. 7.2.2.2). The assumption was made that the abovementioned will be shorter in populist newspapers since these function to amuse and divert readers (see paragraph 3.2.7.1). The serious newspapers are more critical in their interpretation of news events. The researcher therefore assumed that their sign lengths would be longer.

However, word length is not an indicator of a newspaper's character, regardless of the language of the newspaper (Afrikaans or English). On the contrary, the length of sentences and paragraph do differ significantly, and the researcher concludes that this is an element by which one can identify a newspaper. The conclusion can also be made that long stories are a characteristic of serious newspapers.

Story, paragraph and sentence length could then serve as indicators of a newspaper's nature. The longer these are, the more serious the paper.

- **Jakobson's sign functions**

The researcher established (and therefore reached aim 7.2.2.4; 1.5.2.6) what sign functions the newspapers focus on in order to determine the communication style of newspapers (cf. Guiraud, 1971:6-9; paragraph 2.4.2). In the literature study it was determined that referential and expressive signs form the basis of communication (cf. Guiraud, 1971:6-9) and this is reflected in the study. The newspapers make the most use of these, yet they apply the expressive signs differently to comply with audience needs. The *Rapport* uses conative signs in its headlines and stories and this too places it in a populist category. Conative signs should be restricted to editorial comment pages, since these aim to persuade the receiver and are therefore not objective and factual. Front page stories are supposed to represent reality in an objective, clear and accurate way as these pages consist mainly of news stories (cf. Lombaard, 2002:61; paragraph 2.2.1). The MOR papers do however, apply the most referential signs and they do not use as many expressive signs.

The use of sign function in the serious papers correlates with that of the populist newspapers. Both categories base their communication on expressive and referential signs.

7.2.3 Conclusion

In this paragraph the main research question is answered and discussed:

1.5 How do selected South African populist, middle-of-the-road and serious newspapers utilize selected linguistic signs to reinforce their respective nature?

Newspapers cannot communicate without language. The study focused on the type and functions of the signs newspapers apply when conveying their different messages. It is clear that there is no apparent difference in the application of these signs by the respective

newspapers – regardless of their nature. The study showed that serious newspapers use the “traditional”²⁵ populist elements such as colour, large and many photographs, exclamation marks, obscenities and foreign words on their front pages. Populist newspapers, on the other hand, also apply serious elements (e.g. their firm arbitrary and referential foundations). The MOR newspapers also make use of emotional and, in the case of the *Rapport*, conative signs.

Based on the results, the *Rapport* tends to fall in the populist category, whereas the *Sunday Times* has a more serious nature, similar to that of the *Mail&Guardian* and the *Sunday Independent*. The *Mail&Guardian*, surprisingly, employed many populist elements, yet one should view these within the context of the serious nature of the publication. It is a newspaper set on critically informing and interpreting. This requires the use of stronger and less compliant signs.

It is evident that in each of the categories studied the *Rapport* applies more populist elements than the other MOR newspaper the *Sunday Times*. The greatest differences in language application in the newspapers of the same category were found in the two MOR papers. The *Sunday Times* employs more serious language elements than the *Rapport*. However, the differences in the language application in the populist and serious newspapers were not as significant. The researcher therefore suggests a similar study analysing the language application in the other newspaper genres. If the results correlate with these findings, the MOR category could be refined by dividing it into a (i) more serious MOR and (ii) a more populist MOR. The content of these two newspapers’ front page stories still comply with the characteristics of MOR newspapers, yet they “package” this content differently.

This trend might be due to the fact that they aim to present serious news in a more attractively manner. They must also now compete with the successful populist newspapers (cf. Gaugele, 2006; Martin, 2006).

It is evident that the different categories of newspapers apply language elements in various ways. These applications do overlap in certain cases. It is therefore evident that language can to a degree be used as a criterion for classifying newspapers along with the other communication elements. It consequently plays a role in reinforcing and conveying a newspaper’s nature.

²⁵ Elements that one usually associates with populist newspapers.

7.2.4 Suggestions for further studies

This study focused on the application of selected sign functions, sign types and stylistic language elements to determine how newspapers use language to reinforce their nature. The study is thus limited to the *encoding* process, i.e. interpretation and decoding did not form part of the analysis.

This research, which concentrates on the *how*, could consequently serve as a foundation for research to determine *which* messages the senders (newspapers) communicate to their audiences (i.e. what meaning the senders want to convey as well as how the receivers interpret and respond to this). Research regarding meaning, interpretation and decoding – especially concerning the editorial comment pages of the newspapers, could give insight into the ideologies the different newspapers with their diverse audiences want to establish. However, since meaning is important in this context, such a study would require more refined measurement instruments.

A study similar to this one, but investigating newspaper street posters could result in interesting findings since these are, even more so than front pages, used to market and sell newspapers.

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Appendix D

Data sheets

A1. Punctuation

- Inverted commas

Punctuation: <i>Inverted commas</i>	Headlines			Stories		
	O	FW	Q	O	FW	Q
O = other; FW = foreign words; Q = quotes						
Populist						
<i>Son</i>						
<i>Sunday Sun</i>						
TOTAL: POPULIST						
Middle-of-the-road						
<i>Rapport</i>						
<i>Sunday Times</i>						
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD						
Serious						
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>						
<i>Sunday Independent</i>						
TOTAL: SERIOUS						

Data sheet A1.1 The use of inverted commas in front page headlines and stories

- Dashes

Punctuation: <i>Dashes</i>	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		

TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A1.2: The use of dashes in front page headlines and stories

- Colons

Punctuation: Colons	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A1.3: The use of colons in front page headlines and stories

- Exclamation mark

Punctuation: Exclamation mark	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		

<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A1.4: The use of the exclamation mark in headlines and stories

A2: Styles and format

- Bullets and subheadings

Style and format: <i>Bullets and sub-headings</i>	
Populist	
<i>Son</i>	
<i>Sunday Sun</i>	
TOTAL: POPULIST	
Middle-of-the-road	
<i>Rapport</i>	
<i>Sunday Times</i>	
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	
Serious	
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	
TOTAL: SERIOUS	

Data sheet A2.1: The use of the bullets and sub-headings in stories

- Foreign words

Style and format: <i>Foreign words</i>	
Populist	
<i>Son</i>	

<i>Sunday Sun</i>	
TOTAL: POPULIST	
Middle-of-the-road	
<i>Rapport</i>	
<i>Sunday Times</i>	
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	
Serious	
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>	
<i>Sunday Independent</i>	
TOTAL: SERIOUS	

Data sheet A2.2: The use of foreign words in stories

- Types of headlines

Style and format: Type of headlines								
	Verb	Noun	Question	Atmosphere	Quote	Word play	Emotion	Idiomatic expression
Populist								
<i>Son</i>								
<i>Sunday Sun</i>								
AVERAGE: POPULIST								
Middle-of-the-road								
<i>Rapport</i>								
<i>Sunday Times</i>								
AVERAGE: POPULIST								
Serious								
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>								
<i>Sunday Independent</i>								
AVERAGE: POPULIST								

Data sheet A2.3: The use of types of headlines

A3: Length of signs and sign units

- Length of words

Length: words	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A3.1: The average word length in headlines and stories

- Length of sentences

Length: sentences	HL	S
HL=headlines; S=stories		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		

<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A3.2: The average sentence length in headlines and stories

- Length of paragraphs

Length: <i>paragraphs</i>	N=w	N=s
w=average amount of words; s=average amount of sentences		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		

TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A3.3: The average paragraph length in stories

- Length of stories

Length: stories	N=w	N=s
w=average amount of words; s=average amount of sentences		
Populist		
<i>Son</i>		
<i>Sunday Sun</i>		
TOTAL: POPULIST		
Middle-of-the-road		
<i>Rapport</i>		
<i>Sunday Times</i>		
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD		
Serious		
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>		
<i>Sunday Independent</i>		
TOTAL: SERIOUS		

Data sheet A3.4: The average story length in newspapers

A4: Sign Types

Sign types: front pages				
	Linguistic signs	Graphic signs		
	A	IX	S	IC
A=arbitrary; IX=index; S=symbolic; IC=iconic				
Populist				
<i>Son</i>				
<i>Sunday Sun</i>				
TOTAL: POPULIST				
Middle-of-the-road				
<i>Rapport</i>				
<i>Sunday Times</i>				
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD				
Serious				
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>				
<i>Sunday Independent</i>				
TOTAL: SERIOUS				

Data sheet A4.1: The use of sign types on newspaper front pages

A5: Jakobson's sign functions

- Headlines

Sign functions: <i>headlines</i>	R	E	C
R=referential; E=expressive; C=conative			
Populist			
<i>Son</i>			
<i>Sunday Sun</i>			
TOTAL: POPULIST			
Middle-of-the-road			
<i>Rapport</i>			
<i>Sunday Times</i>			
TOTAL: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD			
Serious			
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>			
<i>Sunday Independent</i>			
TOTAL: SERIOUS			

Data sheet A5.1: Sign functions in the front page headlines

- Stories

Sign functions: <i>stories</i>	R	E	C
R=referential; E=expressive; C=conative			
Populist			
<i>Son</i>			

<i>Sunday Sun</i>			
AVERAGE: POPULIST			
Middle-of-the-road			
<i>Rapport</i>			
<i>Sunday Times</i>			
AVERAGE: MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD			
Serious			
<i>Mail&Guardian</i>			
<i>Sunday Independent</i>			
AVERAGE: SERIOUS			

Data sheet A5.2: Sign functions in the front page stories

Appendix E

AA

This is not an acceptable abbreviation for affirmative action — it can easily be confused with Alcoholics Anonymous or the Automobile Association.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Do not use full stops or spaces in abbreviations.

Spell out less well-known abbreviations on first mention; it is not necessary to spell out **Aids, ATM, BBC, BEE, CBD, CD, CIA, CE, CEO, CV, DNA, DVD, FBI, GDP, HIV, ID, IQ, IT, ICT, KGB, LP, LSD, MD, MP, MPL, Nato, Nasa, NGO, PC** (except when it means politically correct), **PIN, PR, QC, R&B, RDP, SAA, SABC, Sapa, SC, SIM, SPCA, Swapo, UFO, Unisa, Zanu-PF, VAT** (*See computer terms and degrees and diplomas*).

It is also not necessary to write out **ANC, DA, SACP** or **IFP** — they are always referred to by their acronym only. The names of other political parties must be written out in full on first mention. *See political parties*.

An acronym with fewer than four letters is all upper case: **VAT, WHO**.

When an abbreviation can be pronounced, the first letter is capped with the following letters lower case — **Asgisa, Cosatu, Sanco, Numsa, Naledi, Gear, Nedlac, Scopa**. Note that none of these examples needs to be written out in full — the acronym can be used on first mention, but in some cases a qualifier or explanation may be needed. For example, mining union Numsa or Parliament's finance committee, Scopa.

In general, keep acronyms to a minimum in text and headlines: acronyms such as PPWAWU look terrible dotted all over text. It is better to refer to the union, council, commission, federation, agency, et cetera.

about

rather than **around, some** or **approximately**. Remember, it must refer to a rounded-off number — “about 2 000 people”, not “about 471 people”.

actor

male and female

acting

always lower case — acting minister, acting president, acting judge

Acts

Acts and Bills are always capped (even when they are draft Bills), regardless of whether the full name is used. Sections of Acts are lower case. For example, section 6 of the Police Act.

AD, BC

AD goes before the date (AD66); BC goes after (200BC).

addresses

30 Newport Road, Parkwood, Johannesburg.

Spell out the names of streets if they are numbers: **58 Fifth Avenue**.

Old Mutual Building, **corner Smith and Long streets**.

adverbs

Adverbs ending in **-ly** that qualify a verb to form one adjectival phrase must not be hyphenated: a **recently listed company**, not “recently-listed company”; a **fully fledged company**, not “fully-fledged company”.

adviser

not advisor

affect/effect

To effect means to bring something about: for example, “To effect changes in the workplace.” **Affect** as a verb means to have an effect on or pretend to have or feel something.

affinity

exists **between** or **with** things, not to or for them

African renaissance

African Union

thereafter the AU (no need to write AU in brackets after first mention)

ages

Joe Bloggs (52); Jimmy is four years old; four-year-old Jimmy; Jimmy (4); the woman was in her 30s; but twentysomething, thirtysomething

ageing

not aging

agree

things **are agreed on, to** or **about**, not just agreed

Aids/HIV

Refer to “people with Aids”, “people with HIV” or, if the person is receiving treatment, “Aids patient” — never “Aids sufferers” or “Aids victims”.

airports

Cape Town International Airport (airport forms part of the name, so it takes the upper case)

AK-47

al-

In names “al” is not capitalised (Ahmad **al-Saqqaf**) and is dropped after the first mention (**Saqqaf**). But note, **al-Jazeera** and **al-Qaeda**.

Ali, Muhammad

Alternate

as an adjective, means every other. **An alternative** is one of two, not one of three, four, five or more — which may be **options**.

America

Avoid referring to the United States as “America”, though as an adjective American is acceptable.

amid

not amidst

among

not amongst

ampersand

use in company names when the company does: Ernst & Young; *Mail & Guardian*

Antichrist

antiretroviral

one word, no hyphen. Abbreviate to ARV in brackets after first mention

anti-Semitic

apostrophes

If a word is singular, the possessive takes an apostrophe as well as an extra *s*, even if the word ends in *s*: **the worker’s wife; the oasis’s palms**. If a word is plural, and ends in *s*, the possessive takes an apostrophe, but no extra *s*: **the workers’ wives; the oases’ palms**.

Those plurals that do not take an *s* in the plural form do take an apostrophe and an extra *s*: **the men’s ties, the children’s cots**.

The rule about singular words taking an apostrophe as well as an extra *s* also applies to names of people, countries and companies: **Moses’s tablets** — NOT Moses’ tablets — the **United States’s** law, the **United Nations’s** fund.

(Note, though, that these last two examples could as well be used without any apostrophe — United States law, United Nations fund; so too the Scorpions investigation).

The same rule applies to words ending in a silent *s*: **Jacques’s book**.

appal

not appall; but **appalling**, not appalling

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

One is an archbishop for life so, although retired, he retains his title.

Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane

artefact

rather than artifact

Articles

The indefinite article **a** is used before consonants when the **h** is aspirated, as in **a hospital** or **a historical instance**. When the **h** is not aspirated (that is, if it cannot be heard), use **an** — an hour or an honest person.

Use **a** before the **u** vowel or the **u** sound in **eu**, as in a utopia or a euphemism.

Note, **an** R8 fee.

Asgisa

The accelerated shared growth initiative for South Africa (note lower case). The acronym does not need be spelled out on first mention, but it may need a qualifer: “The government’s growth initiative, Asgisa”

as of, **as on** and **as from** in dates should be avoided, as in “as of August 4” — **on**, **after** or **since** is preferred.

as to

must be avoided.

Attorney General

Always upper case, regardless of whether it is followed by name of person who holds the position. Note that it is two words, not hyphenated.

Auditor General

Always upper case, regardless of whether it is followed by name of person who holds the position. Note that it is two words, not hyphenated.

Awards

If the full name of the award is used, it is capped: for example, Nobel Prize for Literature, but Nobel prize. Academy Award (upper case), but an Oscar for best actress (lower case)

Ba’ath

BAe Systems

babbelas

Baghdad

Bahrain

Balk

not baulk

bands / band names

These are treated as plural: “Oasis have released their final album.”

Bangladesh

Bar and Bench

upper case

BEE

Black economic empowerment never needs to be written out, unless reference is being made to the full name of the Act — for example, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act.

Beijing

bestseller, bestselling

no hyphen

Bhagavad-Gita

biannual

means twice a year and **biennial** means once every two years. Try to avoid using either, unless you are dealing with the sort of fine art exhibitions that have “biennial” or “biennale”, in some language or another, in the title. In all other cases, it would be better to write “twice a year” and “every two years”.

Bible

It is not italicised; neither are any of its subsidiary books (the **Book of Job**) nor the adjective **biblical** (which is not capped). The same goes for the **Torah**, the **Qur'an**, the **Bhagavad-Gita** and the **Vedas**.

Bills

All Bills, including the **Bill of Rights**, are capped, even when they are draft Bills.

blond (male) / **blonde** (female)

Bo-Kaap

bookkeeper

book titles

Note that in titles of books, films, paintings and so on, not all the words are capped. Conjunctions, prepositions and articles (a, an, and, of, on, the) are lower case, unless they are the first word of the title: *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Flight of the Eagle*. **Titles** and **subtitles** are italicised, but **chapters** are not — for example: “Landscapes” is a chapter in *Grand Designs: Travels in Tuscany* (Note, colons are always used between main title and subtitle, never dashes or fullstops.)

Brackets

If the sentence is grammatically complete without the information contained within the parentheses, the punctuation stays outside the brackets. (A complete sentence in brackets starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.) **Square brackets** in the middle of a quotation signify that something has been added to the quote for clarity: “This is what I told [police National Commissioner Jackie] Selebi at the briefing.” Do not use round brackets for such interpretations.

Brand names

are capped — for instance, **Coke** (where it refers to the drink). But brand names that have become nouns or verbs — **hoover** or **to google** — are lower case.

Britain

comprises England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Britain or United Kingdom can be used interchangeably.

the budget

Is always lower case, regardless of whether it is the national budget or a provincial budget.

Business terminology

GDP is used as an abbreviation only.

GNP (gross national product); **CPI** (consumer price index); **CPIX** (consumer inflation less mortgages); and **PPI** (production price index) are used as abbreviations followed by an explanation in brackets

CAPITALISATION

Heads of state and government ministers (national and provincial)

The **president**, the **deputy president** and **premiers** are capped if the title precedes or follows the person's name: For example: “The president is coming to town”, but “President Thabo Mbeki is coming to town”.

The same rule applies to **national** and **provincial ministers** and **deputy ministers**, even if an abbreviated version of the title is used: Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Environmental Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk or Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk. [See a complete list of ministers, deputy ministers and premiers at the end of the guide — search for ‘government ministers’ or ‘premiers’ .]

Reserve Bank governor, speaker, deputy speaker, national director of public prosecutions (or **prosecutions chief**), **director general** and **deputy director general** (in national office), and **the UN secretary general** also go upper case if the title precedes or follows the person's name. (Note, secretaries general of unions and political parties take the lower case, regardless of whether they precede or follow a name.)

Politicians in other countries: In the US, a **governor** is equivalent to a South African **premier**, and a **senator** is equivalent to an **MP**. They take the upper case if the title precedes or follows the person's name.

When a politician loses his job he loses his capital letters — for example, former president FW de Klerk.

Government institutions, ministries and departments

Parliament, Cabinet, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces are always capped.

Names of **ministries** and **departments**, national or provincial, are lower case. For example, the **presidency**, the **national treasury**, the **energy and minerals department**.

Note, it is not necessary to write out the full name of the department on first mention — the **justice department** is sufficient for the department of justice and constitutional development, or the **agriculture department** for the department of agriculture and land affairs.

Never use acronyms such as DEAT (for the department of environmental affairs and tourism) or DWAF (for the department of water affairs and forestry).

Other countries' government institutions, including their Cabinets and Parliaments, are capped. For example, the **Knesset**, the **Senate** (US), the **House** (as in House of Representatives in the US) and **Congress** (US). But **state departments** are lower case.

For example, the US state department; the British foreign ministry.

Government agencies, commissions and committees

If the full name of an **institution**, **agency** or **commission** is used, it is upper case. For example: the **National Prosecuting Authority**, the **National Intelligence Agency**, the **Human Rights Commission**, the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** (thereafter referred to as the truth commission or the TRC).

Committees are lower case, even when the full name is used, such as the **national executive committee** or the **joint finance committee**.

Job titles

- **Ranks** or **titles below that of deputy director general** (in national government) are never capped.
- **Chairperson, editor, director** and so on are never capped.

- **Ombuds** are never capped.
- **Police** and **military ranks** before a name are always capped.
- **Acting officials**, for example, acting director general, are lower case.
- The **pope**, a **rabbi**, a **priest** or a **minister** are not capped unless they precede a name. For example, Pope Benedict, Rabbi Warren Goldstein.
- All **royals**, dead or alive, retain their caps if the title appears before their names: King Goodwill Zwelithini, Queen Elizabeth (thereafter referred to as the queen), Princess Diana, King Shaka. Also capped are traditional formulations such as the Earl of Spencer, the Prince of Wales.

Museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, parks, stadiums and buildings

These go upper case if the full name is used: the National South African Museum, the Goodman Gallery, the Civic Theatre, the Sandton Library, Ellis Park, Wembley Stadium, Shell House.

Hotels and hospitals

If the word forms part of the name, it is upper case: The **Rosebank Hotel** but **The Michelangelo hotel**; the **Milpark Hospital**

Churches and cathedrals

These are capped: the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, St John's Cathedral, St Columbus Church, Rhema Church.

Police stations and police units

Take the lower case: Parkview police station, the child protection unit.

Schools and universities

- **School** is upper case if the word forms part of the name
- For **matric**, use lower case. For **grades**, also use lower case, spelling out the word and the figure if it is between one and nine: **grade nine**.
- All **university departments, faculties** and **schools** are lower case: for example, the faculty of law, the department of mathematics, Wits graduate school for the humanities and social sciences.
- **Education policy units** are lower case.
- Separately constituted **academic institutions** — usually **business schools** — are upper case. For example, the Wits Business School.

• **University-affiliated institutes** and **academic centres** are capped.

For example, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (Cals).

Geographical features, bridges, dams, rivers

These are upper case: Table Mountain, Nelson Mandela Bridge, Hartbeespoort Dam, Orange River.

Place names

The **Natal Midlands**, the **South Coast** (of KwaZulu-Natal), the **South**, the **Midwest**, **East Coast**, **West Coast** (of the US) are capped.

Adjectives derived from proper nouns

These are capped: Indian, Asian, African, Marxist, Nazi.

café

note the accent

Cameroon

canvas

tent, painting

canvass

solicit votes

Caribbean

cellphone

Cell C

centre on

not around (confused with revolve around)

century

sixth century, 21st century, 21stst-century book

chairperson / chair

rather than chairman or chairwoman

Chaskalson, Arthur

Refer to him as former chief justice Arthur Chaskalson, thereafter Chaskalson (he does not retain the title of judge)

Chávez, Hugo

Chechnya

church

lower case for the established church, for example, "The church is no longer relevant today"; but Roman Catholic Church, Church of England

Collective nouns

These take the singular verb: "the group **is** leaving"; "the company **has** made a profit"; "the DA **has** denied the rumour".

Organisations take a singular: "Anglo **has** denied ...", and are referred to as **it**, not "they".

Teams are plural: "Western Province **are** on their way", as are **bands**: "Oasis **have** moved on, at last." But **orchestras** are treated as singular.

The **United States** and **United Nations** are both singular: "The US **is** preparing to invade Iraq."

The **media** are always plural: "The media **are** up in arms"

Colombia

(South America)

Columbia

(university of, district of, and British Columbia)

Colons

A **colon** signals that what is to follow it directly explains or expands on what precedes it.

When used to distinguish between the title and the subtitle of a book, as in *Going Home: Ideas about Parochialism*, there is a cap after the colon.

When using a colon, DO NOT use a capital letter for the first word following it, unless the colon is followed by quote. The same rule applies in **headlines and captions**: A colon followed by a capital letter in a headline implies that what follows colon is a quote: For example — Mbeki: We will fight this scourge.

Commas

One may write: "President Thabo Mbeki said ..." or "The President, Thabo Mbeki, said ..."

One must use two commas when inserting a clause in the middle of a sentence. There is a tendency among writers and subs in a hurry to forget the second comma — to write, incorrectly, for example, "Sandton City, the largest shopping mall in Gauteng is also the most expensive." The correct way is to write: "Sandton City, the largest shopping mall in Gauteng, is also the most expensive." When listing a series of single-word items, the last one is not preceded by a comma: "The market sells carrots, cabbages, leeks, peas and beans."

CCMA

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration does not need to be written out in full on first mention. Depending on the context in which it appears, it may need a qualifier: "The state's mediation body, the CCMA, will rule on the matter."

committees

are never capped, even when the full name is used

communist

lower case unless it forms part of the name of a political party

Company names

We use the names that the companies use themselves: **eBay, e.tv, Yahoo!, kulula.com, loveLife**

However, when a company name that is all lower case is used in a headline, capitalise the first letter.

Always drop **Ltd** and **plc** from company names

Competition Commission

comprise

"The book comprises 350 pages" — *not* "The book is comprised of 350 pages."

Computer terms

- Accepted spellings for computer terms: **barcode, database, email, online, inkjet, interface, laptop, toolbar, multimedia** (no hyphen), **home page** (two words) and **program** (spelled in the American way).
- One writes **GB, MHz, MB** or **KB** in computer stories. NOT gigabytes, megahertz, megabytes and kilobytes.
- The plural of **mouse** is **mice**.
- One writes **internet, net, cyberspace** and **world wide web** (note that this is three separate words) or the **web** with **no caps**.
- Names of **websites** are not italicised.
- There are never any spaces in **web addresses**. If such an address needs to break at a line-ending, DO NOT insert a hyphen or a space. Such an address should be broken after a slash by the insertion of a soft return.
Example of a **website address** and an **e-mail address**: www.cnn.com or subsdesk@mg.co.za.
- The names of **computer games** are italicised: For example, *Tomb Raider*.
- **PlayStation** takes an upper S.

Condoleezza Rice

confidant (male) / **confidante** (female)

Constitution

Only South Africa's national Constitution is upper case, all other constitutions — final, draft or interim — are lower case.

consult

not consult with

Continuous

describes something uninterrupted. **Continual** admits of a break. If your neighbours play loud music every night it is a continual nuisance; but it isn't a continuous nuisance unless the music is never turned off.

Contractions

It is important to know the difference between "its" and "it's".

Its is the possessive pronoun (something belonging to it) and does not take an apostrophe: "The organisation will open **its** offices tomorrow."

It's is the shortened (contracted) form of "it is": "**It's** no secret."

An apostrophe is usually used in contractions, indicating that letters have been left out of a word or phrase, as in **don't** (from "do not") or **can't** (from "cannot"). It often reads better to use the full phrase, rather than the contraction, which can sound too colloquial, as in "It is the case" rather than "It's the case". But in direct speech, such as quotes in stories and answers in Q&A interviews, use the compressions that people use when they are speaking, as this adds authenticity. For example, "I won't give in" rather than "I will not give in", "It's not right" rather than "It is not right".

Rock'n'roll is to be used instead of "rock and roll", **R&B** instead of "rhythm'n'blues" and **drum'n'bass** instead of "drum and bass".

Jo'burg can be used in headlines, opinion pieces and arts coverage. Remember, it takes an apostrophe. **'Maritzburg** can be used in headlines.

Convince

one can't convince people to do something. "Mandela was persuaded to call an election; he was convinced of the wisdom of doing so only after he had won."

cooperate, cooperation, cooperative

no hyphen, but the store is the **co-op**

coordinate

Côte d'Ivoire

not Ivory Coast. Nationals are **Ivorians**.

courts and court terms

- Courts are upper case if full name is used: **Constitutional Court**, **Supreme Court of Appeal** (thereafter referred to as the appeal court), **Labour Appeal**

Court, the **Labour Court**, the **Land Claims Court**, **Cape Town High Court**, **Johannesburg Magistrate's Court** (note the apostrophe).

- If the court is used as a generic — for example, a **high court** decision, the **magistrate's court** or an **appeal court** decision — it is lower case.
 - The **small claims court** is always lower case.
 - **magistrate**, **advocate**, **attorney**, **defence** and **state** are lower case.
 - **Bar** and **Bench** are upper case.
 - The letters **SC** and **QC** after an advocate's name do not take a comma before or after.
 - Prisoners are **remanded**.
 - Cases are **postponed** or **adjourned**.
 - Beware of the word **jailed** — a person may not be in prison if an appeal is pending — and never use **gaol** instead of **jail**.
 - Court stories can be difficult enough to get a grip on, so try not to make them entirely impenetrable; avoid using terms like "depose a statement", except where necessary. Try to avoid calling someone a plaintiff, respondent, accused, defendant or deceased unless it enhances understanding. Usually using the person's name instead makes the story clearer.
 - Remember that actions are **alleged** and people are **suspects** until the court's presiding officer has given **judgement** (note the spelling).
 - **Documented court cases**, for example, *State v Smith*, are italicised.
 - Note the spelling of the column **Serjeant at the Bar**.
 - **Judges**: First reference to a judge uses the honorific Judge and the name: for example, **Judge Edwin Cameron**. Thereafter only the person's surname is used. For example, **Judge Herbert Msimang** will preside over the corruption trial. **Msimang** will commence proceedings on Monday.
- The same rule applies to **acting judges**. For example, acting judge Joan Smith.
- **Chief Justice Pius Langa** is so identified, but second and subsequent references would be **Langa**.

Cosatu

The Congress of South African Trade Unions never needs to be written out in full.

Countries

United States, Britain or United Kingdom, which are used as first reference, may be followed by **US** (not USA) and **UK** as second reference. It is not necessary to put UK or US in brackets after the first full mention.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is abbreviated to DRC after first mention.

Credible

means to be believable; **credulous** means too ready to believe.

currencies

See *money*

Credits on foreign copy

All news sources must be credited at the end of copy. For example,
— © Guardian Newspapers 2006 or — Sapa

DaimlerChrysler

Daniel arap Moi (Moi is surname)

Dar es Salaam

Dashes

The **dash** (—) is used as a punctuation mark in a sentence. It has two uses: one, when it defines a sub-clause that could also be placed between commas or brackets, as in “Dick — who was very short — could not reach the shelf”; two, for dramatic purposes, where it indicates a pause (often for dramatic effect), as in “He was ugly — and not very polite.” In the second case, it should be used sparingly. Sometimes, though, a dash can break up an otherwise confusing sentence, and should be used to do so.

data

takes a singular verb

Days, dates and decades

Avoid using “yesterday”, “today” or “tomorrow” in stories. Thursday, Friday or Saturday should be used.

If we're talking about the Friday on which the newspaper appears, we can say “this Friday”. If it's the following week, one can say “next Saturday”.

In the rare case where this is still unclear, add the date: this Friday, November 13; next Saturday, November 21; on Saturday, November 2.

Note style: Friday November 13 1998 (no commas).

When referring to the opening of plays, exhibitions and so forth in *Friday*, please specify the date to avoid confusion.

21st century; fourth century BC; AD2006 but 1000BC

1960s or the Sixties — never the '60s

decimals

A comma is used in decimals: **0,3cm**.

Degrees and diplomas

Degrees and diplomas do not take a capital letter when they are spelled out:

bachelor of arts degree, an honours degree in town planning.

The following are usually written as abbreviations: **BA, MA, MBA, BCom, LLB,**

PhD, CA, BSc, MBBCh (or MBChB, depending on the university), HDip.

When written out: **bachelor's degree** and **master's degree**. (Note, master's always takes an apostrophe, even if not followed by degree.)

demonstrator

deputy director, deputy secretary

no hyphen

developed / developing world

rather than First/Third World

different from

not to or than

director general

no hyphen, plural is directors general

disinterested and uninterested

Uninterested is a lack of interest. Disinterested is a lack of bias.

dotcom

draconian

drugs

not capped, except where the brand name is used: **speed, acid, dagga, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, cat**— but **Mandrax** and **Ecstasy**.

drum'n'bass

due to/owing to

due to is a time reference: "The woman is due to give birth."

owing to must be avoided — rather use **because of**.

de rigueur

italics

Earth

the planet, is upper case, but "to move heaven and earth" is lower case

Eastern Europe, Western Europe

Ekurhuleni

ellipsis

Always leave a space before and after the ellipsis (...), even if the ellipsis doubles as a full stop.

e-mail

embassies and consulates

always lower case, for example: Italian embassy or Greek consulate. High commissions are also lower case

emigrate: leave a country; **immigrate** arrive in one

eThekwini

et cetera and et al

Avoid using these words; they leave unspoken queries in the mind of the reader. If you must use et cetera, do not abbreviate the word.

European Union

used in full on first mention, thereafter EU

euro

alt 2 on your keyboard gives you the symbol

eurozone

every day

noun and adverb: it happens every day

everyday

adjective: an everyday mistake

eyewitness

never use eyewitness — but **witness** is correct.

farmworker

FBI

No need to spell it out

festivals

National Arts Festival, but the national festival
Cannes film festival
Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees

Fewer

not less, with items you can count: "fewer than 200 people in the hall".

Less is used for measured quantities or proportions, or for abstractions: "Less than R200", "less than a third".

fiancé: male, **fiancée**: female

filmmaker

financial years and sports seasons

2004/05

firm

preferable to use company

First World/Third World

Avoid use of First/Third World. Refer instead to the **developed world** and **developing world**.

Flaunt

is often used when **flout** is meant. **Flaunt** means to show something off ("if you've got it, flaunt it"), whereas **flout** means to ignore something, as in: "**She flouted the regulations.**"

focused

not focussed

forever

continually: he is forever changing his mind

for ever

for always: I will love you for ever

formula one

lower case, always written out in copy, but **F1** in headlines

fractions

If fractions are written out they take a hyphen: **two-thirds**. When expressed as part of a figure, they are written as decimals: **4,25** and not "four and a quarter".

Franschhoek

Fundraiser/fundraising

G7

Group of Seven leading industrial countries (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US), but there is no need to spell it out.

G8

the G7 plus Russia

Gadafi, Moammar

Gandhi

Gear

The growth, employment and redistribution strategy is not capped and it does not need to be written out in full on first mention. It may, however, need a qualifier: The government's growth strategy, Gear ..."

GM crops, GM food

No need to write out acronyms on first mention.

Same applies for **GMOs**.

God

God by any name is capped, but when referred to as **he**, it is lower case.

gods

Greek and Roman mythological deities are not capped, unless mentioned by name, such as Zeus.

government

does not always have to be preceded by the indefinite article **the**. For example: "The government is fighting back" or "Government is fighting back". Both are acceptable.

Graaff-Reinet

grades/standards

lower case, spelling out the word and the figure if it is between one and nine, as in **grade nine** — or we use the number if it is 10 or over, as in **grade 10**. For **matric**, use lower case.

grand prix

lower case, but if reference is made to a specific grand prix, then upper case: the German Grand Prix. Note, the plural is **grands prix**.
Green Point

guerrilla**Guevara, Che**

no accent

Guguletu**Hartbeespoort****healthcare****hectares**

always abbreviated to **ha** after number

high-tech

not hi-tech

hip-hop

hyphenated and lower case

HIV-positive

always hyphenated

Hizbullah**Holocaust**

upper case when referring to World War II

homosexual

comes from the Greek word **homos** (same), not the Latin word **homo** (man), and thus applies to people of either biological gender. It can be used as an adjective (**homosexual men and women**) or a noun (**there were many homosexuals in the bar**). By contrast, **gay** has come to imply men rather than women, so one should pair it with **lesbian** when necessary (**Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand**). “Gay” should be used as an adjective only, not as a noun — **gay men** rather than “gays”, yet “lesbian” can be used as an adjective or a noun.

Honorifics

The person's full name is given when he or she is mentioned for the first time, and no honorific is used unless it is relevant, for instance, a “Dr Tom Jones” in a medical report. Thereafter use the **surname only**, without any honorific (such as **Professor, Lord, General, Chief, Induna**).

Where a number of people have the same surname, one can (in consultation with the chief sub-editor) use in subsequent references the first name of the relevant person: **Walter Sisulu, Albertina Sisulu, Zwelakhe Sisulu, Max Sisulu** and thereafter, **Walter** and **Albertina** won the vote.

As a general rule, however, adults are not to be referred to by their first names only. Often one can make distinctions among family members in subsequent references by referring to relationships: **Nkondo's daughter, Matabane's wife**. (**Consult the chief sub-editor if following this rule seems awkward.**) The use of the first name only in second and subsequent references can be used when one is writing about a **child**.

When a person holds an earned **doctorate from a university**, or is a **medical doctor**, give that person the title the first time round; thereafter use surname only. Honorary degrees are not acknowledged in this way.

Don is capped when used as an honorific before a name.

Police and **military ranks** are not lifetime titles. When people holding these titles retire, they lose them. The same rule applies to **judges**.

When **Reverend** is used — as in “Reverend Allan Boesak” — it is spelled out.

If a person was born before **1950**, and is easily recognisable by surname only, first names can be omitted. For example, Shakespeare, Picasso, Machiavelli,

Verdi, Brahms, Hitler, Stalin.

hot spot

two words in Oxford 11th edition

Hyphens

The hyphen (-) is used in compound words, for example, **long-term detention**. Only hyphenate when used adjectivally. "In the long term" does not have a hyphen, but **long-term policy** does.

Some words that begin with prefixes like **co**, **ex**, **anti**, **non**, **neo** and **post** take hyphens, but please note that there are many exceptions: **co-opt** (but **coordination**) **non-combatant**, **non-existent**, **non-payment**, **neo-conservative**, (but **neoliberal**, **neolithic**, **neologism**); **post-war** (but **postmodern**, **postpone**). **PLEASE CONSULT THE DICTIONARY FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE.**

A sum followed by the word "worth" needs a hyphen: **R25-worth of goods**.

Hyphens can also join two words to make an **adjectival phrase**, as in **a little-used car**; if the hyphen is not used, it might mean the car is small and second-hand. **Note, avoid overuse of hyphens — hyphens should only be used to avoid confusion.**

AK-47, Mig-23, DC-10, R-1 are hyphenated.

Hyphens are also used to separate identical letters that occur together when two words have been joined to form one term or a prefix has been added. This applies particularly where the clashing letters are vowels:

pre-eminent, pre-empt, re-emerge, re-entry. There are many exceptions: **overrule, override, underrate, withhold**. **PLEASE CONSULT THE DICTIONARY FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE.**

Most words that end in "maker" are hyphenated: **car-maker, decision-maker**. Exceptions include **filmmaker, troublemaker, winemaker, holidaymaker, policymaker**.

Certain two-word compounds are hyphenated when they are nouns, but not when they are verbs: **build-up, call-up, get-together, round-up, roll-out, set-up, shake-up**. For example: To **build up** the military. The military **build-up**.

The points of the compass are hyphenated: **north-east, south-west**.

Two-word terms that are not hyphenated include: **coal miner, steel worker, shop**

steward, hostel dweller, shack dweller, air base, ballot box, oil field, on to, vice versa, video cassette, business people.

Some cases of three-word terms are hyphenated: **brother-in-law, commander-in-chief, no-man's-land, prisoners-of-war, second-in-command**.

There are also various terms used as one word, without a hyphen, as in:

subcommittee, subhuman, subcontract, workforce, worldwide, worthwhile, nonetheless, offshore, handpicked, airfield, semifinal, quarterfinal, fullback, flyhalf, scrumhalf, healthcare and macroeconomy, farmworker, mineworker.

Note that, in terms of people's ages, we say **Maisie is three years old**, without hyphens, but if it is adjectival it is hyphenated: **Three-year-old Maisie**. One also uses hyphens when the age is used without the name: for example, "The **three-year-old** went to school." Otherwise, style is to write **Maisie (3) was at home**.

Icasa

The Independent Communication Authority of South Africa does not need to be written in full on first mention, but it may need a qualifier. For example: "Icasa, the communications authority ..."

imbizo

immigrate

to arrive in a country; **emigrate** to leave one

impact

events **have an impact on**. "Impact" is not a verb. It is better to say things have been **affected**.

Impinge on

You **impinge on** a right, not **infringe on** a right.

impostor

ends with or not er.

infer/imply

One **infers from** and **implies that**.

Infinitives

An infinitive is “to” plus the verb. Thus “to the ship” is not an infinitive; but “to ship [oranges to Madagascar]” is. It is preferable to avoid splitting the infinitive where possible, but if it is confusing or awkward to keep the infinitive together, then split it. Perhaps the best-known split infinitive is the description of the mission of the starship *Enterprise* in *Star Trek*: “**To boldly go** where no man has gone before.” To unsplit the infinitive, one would write “**To go boldly** where no man has gone before.”

initials

no spaces or points

inquiry

not enquiry

install, instalment, installation

intifada

not italicised

Inverted commas

Punctuation marks go inside inverted commas when the quotation is a full sentence: “**The journalist misquoted me,**” he said. (This also applies when a quote is made up of more than one sentence, if the final part is a full sentence: **He said that he was “unhappy. The journalist misquoted me.”**)

But when it is just a phrase — not a sentence beginning with a capital letter — enclosed by inverted commas, the punctuation goes outside: **The journalist “misquoted me”, he said.**

Single inverted commas are only used inside double inverted commas, and never on their own. For example: “**The journalist misquoted me as saying ‘I ran away’, which I did not say,**” he said.

Single inverted commas are used instead of double inverted commas in headlines, captions, endnotes and standfirsts. Double inverted commas are used in pull-quotes.

-ise

not -ize at end of word

Italics

Avoid overusing italics for emphasis.

Italics can be used for emphasis in headlines, but not in captions, quotes and blurbs.

Never use capital letters for emphasis in a story: all such instances should be changed to italics.

The titles of **books, newspapers, magazines and other publications** are italicised and capped, as are **radio** and **television programmes**. **Film** and song titles are **italicised** and **capped**.

Names of conferences are treated as titles; for example, *Shakespeare and Postcolonialism*. Don’t use the word “theme” when you mean “title”. Names of **columns** are capped, but not italicised; for example, With the Lid Off, A Second Look. Section heads are merely capped, not italicised; for example, Monitor, Letters.

Note that in titles of books, films, paintings and so on, not all the words are capped. Conjunctions, prepositions and articles are not capped, as in *The Flight of the Eagle*.

In titles of **arias from operas**, however, only the first word is capped, unless someone’s name appears in the title: *O mio bambino caro*.

Poems, short stories, individual pictures in art reviews and the **overall title of an exhibition** go in italics: for instance: *Big Pig* is one of the most interesting paintings on the *Full House* exhibition.

The names of orchestral works are italicised, as in Beethoven’s *Symphony No 6* (an exception, please note, to the rule about spelling out numbers under 10) or *Symphony No 4 Op 3 in A Minor*, as are musical terms such as *andante* and *pianissimo*.

The names of **ships, aeroplanes** and **spaceships** are italicised. (Space hardware, such as the Soyuz rocket, are lower case.)

Names of **food** and **musical genres** are NOT italicised.

Title are not italicised in headlines, captions, standfirsts or endnotes.

jihad

lower case, no italics

JSE

not the Johannesburg Securities Exchange

judgement

junior
abbreviate to Jnr

Khayelitsha

King William's Town

KwaMakhutha

KwaZulu-Natal

largesse
not largess

the left
the political left and right are always lower case

left wing
used on its own is not hyphenated. But left-wing is hyphenated when it is adjectival, as in "left-wing groups". It does not take a hyphen when used as a noun, as in "the left wing of the party" or "the far left wing".

Lekgotla (not italicised)
licence
is a noun (a car licence)

license
is a verb (it is the law that you must license your car, have your car licensed).

like
rather use **such as**

loose
is not tight

lose
is to misplace something

lottery, national lottery
but **Lotto**

loveLife

machiavellian
lower case

Mafia
upper case when referring to the Italian Mafia, The Mob is also upper case.

Manenberg

Mail & Guardian
Thereafter the *M&G*

Mail & Guardian Online
Thereafter M&G Online

mayor
always lower case, even if followed by name

McDonald's

Médecins sans Frontières

meet,
not meet with

Metrication, weights and measures

Convert length, weight, volume, pressure, area and temperature to the metric system. Such quantities are never written out — except for tons and litres, which are always written out, as the abbreviations are confusing. Note another exception: 1 000m³, but 3,5-million cubic metres.

Metric abbreviations do not take a space: **89kg** and **49,6m**

millimetres: mm; **6mm**

square millimetres: mm²; **6mm²**

cubic millimetres: mm³; **6mm³**

centimetres: cm; **6cm**

metres: m; **6m**

square metres: m²; **6m²**

kilometres: km; **6km**

kilometres per hour: kph; **6kph**

milligrams: mg; **6mg**

grams: g; **6g**

kilograms: kg; **6kg**

millilitres: ml; **6ml**

litres: litre; **six litres** — note this exception to the rule

volts: V

kilovolts: kV

megavolts: MV

watts: W

kilowatts: kW

megawatts: mW

kilowatt hours: kWh

kilohertz: kHz

megahertz: MHz

hectares: ha

millibars: mbar

metric tons: ton. The plural is **tons**. Convert to the metric ton

Pascals: P

Celsius: C

Figures given in pounds, miles and all other imperial measures should be converted

to metric measures unless they're in a quote or constitute an idiom or colloquialism. Here are some other handy conversions into metric:

If you know	Multiply by	To get
inches	2,54	centimetres
feet	30	centimetres
yards	0,91	metres
miles	1,6	kilometres
sq inches	6,5	sq centimetres
sq feet	0,09	sq metres
sq yards	0,8	sq metres
sq miles	2,6	sq kilometres
acres	0,4	hectares
ounces	28	grams
pounds	0,45	kilograms
ton	0,9	metric ton
fluid ounces	30	millilitres
pints	0,47	litres
gallons	3,8	litres
cubic feet	0,03	cubic metres
cubic yards	0,76	cubic metres
stone	6,36	kilograms

One fathom is equal to 1,8m.

To convert Fahrenheit into Celsius: subtract 32, then multiply by 5 over 9.

Military ranks

*Military ranks are not abbreviated. Nor are they hyphenated, except for **able-bodied seamen**, **rear-admiral** and **vice-admiral**. Military ranks are treated as honorifics; they are used when relevant at first mention and thereafter dropped. Thus one writes: **Lieutenant John du Preez**; **the French lieutenant**. Military ranks are not lifetime titles. When people holding these titles retire, they lose them.*

millennium

Mitchells Plain

no apostrophe

Money/currencies

Commas are used for figures in rands and cents, as in the following:

90c

R9

R9,50

R90,50

R999,50

R9 999,50

When the word for a currency is used it is lower case: **rand, dollar, euro, pound**. A number of countries use **dollars**. If they are US dollars, there is no additional specification. Otherwise: **Z\$50 (Zim dollars); Aus\$50 (Australian dollars); HK\$50 (Hong Kong dollars); C\$50 (Canadian dollars); NZ\$ 50 (New Zealand dollars), N\$50 (Namibian dollars)**

Well-known currencies are abbreviated and their symbol is placed before the figure: **R3-million** or **£5-million**. In headlines: R3m, not R3-m.

Lesser-known currencies have to be written out: **three million riyals**. Note the different ways the figures are treated in either case.

The symbol for **pounds (£)** and the symbol for **euros (€)** are found at shift-3 and alt-2 respectively on your keyboard.

One does not need to convert all figures in foreign currency to rands. In most cases, it is all right to leave them as they are, but if it is necessary in order to understand the story, they should be converted, at a rate in the region of the current exchange rate. Such conversions do not need to be exact to the last decimal, as the exchange rate fluctuates constantly. But you should put **about** before the converted figure, as in **£7 000 (about R70 000)**.

more than

generally preferable to over

Motoring terminology:

0-100kph: not nought to 100

2,0-litre: indicating engine capacity

8,2s: don't need to write out seconds

18-inch: indicating tyre and alloy size

ABS: anti-lock braking system, but one doesn't need to write it out on first mention

airbag (one word)

ASR: anti-skid regulation

BAS: brake assist system

DSC: dynamic stability control

EBD: electronic brakeforce distribution, but one doesn't need to write it out on first mention

formula one: write out, lower case

grand prix: lower case, but upper case if reference is to the German Grand Prix (note, the plural is grands prix)

kph: as in the Golf's top speed was 225kph (no need to write out)

kW: kilowatt (no need to write out)

motorsport (one word)

MPV: multi-purpose vehicle (such as the Honda FR-V)

Nm: Newton metre (a measurement of torque)

supercharged (one word)

SUV: sports utility vehicle, but you don't need to write this out

turbocharged (one word)

VVT: variable valve timing

Bear in mind that the terminology changes from one manufacturer to another so Mercedes-Benz's DSC is the same as Porsche's PTM (Porsche traction management).

MPs

not members of Parliament

mujahedin

lower case, not italicised

MultiChoice

multicultural, multimedia, multimillion

multimillion-rand deal

Musical genres

Musical genres are not italicised. For example, **kwaito**, **mbaqanga**, **maskanda**, **isicathamiya**, **marabi**, **kwasa kwasa**, **R&B** (instead of rhythm'n'blues)

MWeb

naive, **naively**, **naivety**
no umlaut

Nasa

No need to spell out

National Prosecuting Authority

Nato

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, but no need to spell out

nevirapine

Nazi

but **nazism**

Nepad

New Partnership for Africa's Development, but there is no need to write out the name in full on first mention.

Nedlac

The National Economic and Development Labour Council, but there is no need to write out the name in full on first mention.

Naledi

No need to write out the acronym, but it must have a qualifier: "Cosatu's think-tank, Naledi" or "Naledi, the federation's policy unit".

neoliberal

Newspapers and magazines

Local

Beeld

Business Day

Business Report

Cape Argus

Cape Times

City Press

Daily Dispatch

Daily News

Diamond Field Advertiser

Die Burger

Eastern Province Herald (EP Herald)

Evening Post

Fairlady

Financial Mail

Finance Week

The Mercury

Natal Witness

noseweek (lower case n)

Post

Rapport

Saturday Star

Sowetan

Sunday Times

Sunday Tribune

Sunday World

The Citizen

The Herald

The Independent on Saturday

Mail & Guardian

The Star

The Sunday Independent

Sunday World

The Weekly Mail

The Weekender

International

Daily Mail

Daily Star
The Economist
Ha'aretz
International Herald Tribune
Life
Le Monde
Los Angeles Times
National Geographic
Newsday
Newsweek
Time
The Daily Telegraph
The Guardian
The Guardian Weekly
The Independent
The Mirror
The Namibian
The New Yorker
The New York Times
The Observer
The Spectator
The Standard
The Sun
The Washington Post
Zimbabwean Independent

News agencies:

AP
 AFP
 African Eye News Service
 IPS
 Sapa
 Irin

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika

no one

not no-one

North West

The province

northern hemisphere

Numbers

Spell out from **one to nine**, unless they are used in dates, times, temperatures, street numbers, money, lengths, heights, distances, percentages and weights. Numbers **greater than nine** are written as numerals unless the sentence begins with a figure. The same applies when they are used adjectivally, as in the **20th century**. Use the word **to** and not a dash or hyphen between figures: **1993 to 1994** and **30 to 40**. Remember, **from** takes a **to**; **between** takes an **and** — for example: from 1920 to 1940; between 1920 and 1940.

(

Thousands, millions and billions

There is a space between numerals indicating figures over 1 000 (for example: **27 000**), but millions, billions and trillions are written out, and hyphenated, as in **27-million**. When the first figure is below nine, however, and it is not a figure in rands, dollars or another currency, one writes it without a hyphen: **two million**, but **R2-million**. Such figures should never split over a line-break. Use an unbreakable space to ensure it doesn't break, or use the soft return (shift-return) to force it over to the next line.

A **billion** is a thousand million (1 000 000 000), a **trillion** is a thousand billion.

Non-English words

Most words in languages other than English are italicised, though exceptions are words and phrases that are considered to be sufficiently familiar to have become anglicised. They are: **absentia**, **ad nauseam**, **ad hoc**, **aide de camp**, **à la**, **à la carte**, **bosberaad**, **braai**, **chutpah**, **cul-de-sac**, **de facto**, **déjà vu**, **dorp**, **en route**, **imbizo**, **inyanga**, **intifada**, **interahamwe**, **impi**, **induna**, **jihad**, **kraal**, **laissez-faire**, **matériel**, **modus operandi**, **modus vivendi**, **moffie**, **mujahedin muti**, **per capita**, **per se**, **platteland**, **sangoma**, **spaza**, **status quo**, **stokvel**, **sub judice**, **tsotsi vis-à-vis**, **vice**

versa, versus, veld, viva, *[This is in no way a complete list. If you come across a word that you believe is familiar enough to the average reader not to be italicised, please raise it with the chief sub-editor.]*

Latin and French plurals

These keep their original plurals:

appendix, appendices

criterion, criteria (well, actually, that one's Greek)

focus, foci ("focuses" is the verb)

index, indices

medium, media ("media" is already a plural)

nom de plume, noms de plume

phenomenon, phenomena (that's Greek too)

radius, radii

stratum, strata

But these are treated as if they were English:

arpeggio, arpeggios

bureau, bureaux

conundrum, conundrums

forum, forums

milieu, milieus

phallus, phalluses

podium, podiums

referendum, referendums

rostrum, rostrums

stadium, stadiums

syllabus, syllabuses

terminus, terminuses

oceans, seas

upper case: Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea

on to

is always two words; **into** is always one word

oil field

Opec

Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries does not need to be written out in full on first mention.

opposition, the

Olympic Games

Upper case: the Summer Olympics, the Winter Olympics, the Athens Olympic Games, the Gay Olympics or the Games

orient

not orientate

owing to

avoid — rather use **because of**

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

Pan African Parliament (PAP)

Parliament

upper case, but parliamentary is lower case

Also cap up those parliaments referred to by their name in the relevant language, for example Knesset, Folketing, Duma

party

upper case if part of name of organisation: the Democratic Party

percent

For percentages, use the % sign plus the figure, even if the figure is less than 10: as in 2%. If the percentage starts the sentence: **Five percent** (write the figure out in full and percent is one word).

Petersen, Hector

plc

drop from name of company

police ranks

The ranks of the **South African Police Service (SAPS)** are listed below, with old ranks in brackets. When dealing with historical events, we stay historically accurate. For example, General Johan Botha *not* National Commissioner Johan Botha

National Commissioner (General) — police National Commissioner Jackie Selebi
Deputy National Commissioner (Lieutenant General)
Divisional Commissioner (Lieutenant General)
Provincial Commissioner (Lieutenant General)
Assistant Commissioner (Major General)
Area Commissioner
Commissioner
Director (Brigadier)
Senior Superintendent (Colonel)
Superintendent (Lieutenant Colonel or Major)
Captain (Captain or Lieutenant)
Inspector (Warrant Officer)
Sergeant (Sergeant or Lance Sergeant)
Constable (Constable)

policymaker

Political parties

ANC, DA, IFP, SACP, United Democratic Movement, Independent Democrats, African Christian Democratic Party, Freedom Front Plus (FF+), National Democratic Convention, Pan Africanist Congress, United Christian Democratic Party, Minority Front, Azanian People's Organisation, New National Party, National Democratic Convention (Nadeco), United Independent Front, Federation of Democrats, United Party of South Africa and the Progressive Independent Movement.

Plurals

Compound words formed by a noun and an adjective or by a preposition joining two nouns form their plurals by a change in the chief word: **mothers-in-law**, **directors general**, **courts martial**. If in doubt, consult the dictionary.

The United Nations is singular. So is **a government, a party, a company and a partnership** — and all are referred to as **it**.

See collective nouns

postgraduate

practice

noun

practise

verb

Precipitous

means extremely steep; a rash or hasty action is **precipitate**.

presently

means **soon** — not **at present**

pressurised

use **pressured**; “put pressure” on or “pressed to” mean apply pressure

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Protest

One protests **against** something. “Protest” on its own is an Americanism. Similarly, one demonstrates **for** or **against** something.

protester

Public Protector

Always upper case, regardless of whether it is followed by the name of the person who holds the position.

Quotations

Quotations must be authentic, not rewritten into a bland style. South African expressions should be retained. Be sensitive: if the person interviewed is speaking ungrammatically because he is not being interviewed in his home

language, then errors of grammar should be corrected.

Qur'an

Radio

5fm
94.7 Highveld Stereo
Cape Talk
Classic FM
East Coast Radio
Good Hope FM
KFM
Kaya FM
Ofm
Radio 702
RSG
SAfm
Yfm
Metro FM

Race and racism

We refer to **Africans** (not blacks), **whites**, **Indians** and **coloureds**. ("Blacks" may be used if reporting on research that uses the term.)

A person's race, colour or creed should be mentioned only when relevant. We do not use racial epithets. When these words, and vulgar terms in any language, occur in direct speech, each case will be treated on merit.

RDP

Reconstruction and Development Programme does not need to be written out in full on first mention.

realpolitik

lower case, no italics

reins/reigns

When a political party takes up the **reins** of power it **reigns**.

Richards Bay

right wing

is hyphenated when it is adjectival, as in "right-wing groups" or "the right-wing Newt Gingrich". It does not take a hyphen when used as a noun, as in "the right wing of the party" or "the right wing has proclaimed ..." or "the far right wing".

Rightwinger is not hyphenated. **Right wing**, used on its own, is not hyphenated either.

rock'n'roll

Roman numerals

These are used for monarchs, popes, the two World Wars and sequels: Louis XIV, World War II, *Rambo III*

rouble

not ruble

Royalty

First mention would be to **King Goodwill Zwelithini** (thereafter Zwelithini) or **Queen Elizabeth**, thereafter the king or the queen. All royals, dead or alive, retain their caps if the title appears before their names; for example, **Princess Diana**, **King Shaka**. Also capped are **traditional formulations** such as **the Earl of Spencer**, **the Duke of Westminster**, **the Prince of Wales**. However, we write: "The earl was seen in Sandton."

SAA

No need to write out South African Airways on first mention.

SABC1, SABC2, SABC3

Sara Baartman

Avoid reference to "Saartjie", unless used in a quote.

Sars

can stand for the **South African Revenue Service** or **severe acute respiratory syndrome** — both must be written out on first mention.

Satanist is capped when it refers to someone of that persuasion (as is the persuasion itself, **Satanism**), but **satanic** is not capped when it refers simply to a generally evil tendency.

sceptic, sceptical

Sea Point

seas, oceans

upper case: Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea

sector education and training authorities (Setas)

lower case, but if the full name of a Seta is used, it takes the upper case. For example, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Seta (Merseta).

scientific names

All Latin scientific names of living organisms are italicised if the full, specific name is used. For example, *Australopithecus africanus*.

But there is no need to italicise E coli (*Escherichia coli*), for instance.

self-control, self-defence, self-esteem, self-respect

Semicolons

are used to **balance two sentences**, implying equivalence. For example: "Black-market tickets are reputedly going for R50, but they're all too few; the idea is to get inside, not to take the money and run."

Semicolons are also used to **distinguish phrases** if commas will not do the job clearly. As an example: "At the conference I was introduced to freedom fighter Joe Sizwe; Hendrik Visagie, a member of the Freedom Front; Piet Skiet, a former security policeman; and several other interesting people." (Remember to include a semi-colon before "and".)

senior

abbreviation is Snr

September 11

9/11 is acceptable

sex workers

not prostitutes

Shi'ites

sheikh

not sheik

Sexist language

Use "**spokesperson**" not "spokesman", "spokeswoman" or "representative". But note that a **United Nations representative** is a specific position that is not equivalent to a UN "spokesperson".

Use "**a 10-member delegation**" instead of "10-man" or "10-person".

When gender is not an issue, use **he or she, his or her** — but one does not take this to ridiculous lengths.

Using the plural can help prevent sentences becoming complicated: "Instruct the reader without lecturing him" can be put as "Instruct readers without lecturing them".

Do not use chairman and chairwoman — use **chairperson** or **chair**.

Do not use words that make unwarranted assumptions about the sex of an interest group. Do you mean "housewives" or "consumers", "mothers" or "parents"?

Refer to **women**, not girls (unless they are under 18). "Ladies" is to be avoided, except when referring to ladies' night.

Use **business people** where possible, instead of businessmen.

shoo-in

not shoe-in

Simon's Town

single quotes

in headlines (but sparingly), standfirsts and captions

slang

Slang should be retained when used in a direct quote, and explained if necessary. In copy, however, it should be used sparingly.

SMMEs

Small, medium and micro-enterprises, but the acronym does not need to be written in full on first mention. The same rule applies to **SMEs**. Where possible, though, refer to **small business**.

socialist

lower case unless used in the title of political parties

Sol Plaatje**South-East Asia****Southern African Development Community**

referred to as the SADC on second mention.

soundbite**South Africa**

can be abbreviated to SA in headlines only

Southern Africa**southern hemisphere****spokesperson**

not spokesman or spokeswoman

stadium

plural **stadiums**

state of emergency

lower case

State of the Nation address**struggle**

must be **for** or **against** something — for example, “the struggle for liberation” or “the struggle against apartheid”.

sub-Saharan**Suffixes**

The suffix “-ise” is preferred to “-ize”: so **civilise**, not “civilize”; **recognise**, not “recognize”; **fertiliser**, not “fertilizer”.

Sun International and **Southern Sun** are often confused. Please double-check which one you mean.

takeoff

noun

take off

verb

talk show**team-mate****teams**

sports teams take plural verbs

telephone numbers

Telephone numbers of more than four digits take a space: **4 0371, 40 3711, 403 7111** — the space falls before the last four digits.

The area code must be placed in brackets: **(011) 403 7111**.

Cellphone numbers: **083 425 6598**.

Toll free numbers: **0800 202020**.

Television

al-Jazeera

BBC

CBS

Channel 4

CNN

e.tv

DStv

KykNET

M-Net

SABC1, SABC2, SABC3

Supersport

VH1

temperatures

30°C (degree sign found at alt+shift+8)

Use the hyphen to indicate a temperature of less than zero: **-3°C**. Make sure that the line does not break between the minus sign and the number.

Tenses

Slavish adherence to tense agreement, where everything in a story is written in past tense to accord with “he (or she) said”, is not *M&G* style.

Here is an example of tense agreement:

Ratcliffe said that information about the fund was freely available.

Here is the same sentence without any effort at tense agreement:

Ratcliffe said that information about the fund is freely available.

In the first version, it is not clear whether information was available in the past but is no longer to be found, or whether it is still available. In the second version, it's clear that information is available at the time the reader is reading about it. This kind of tense agreement is not, however, outlawed; the *M&G* is flexible on the subject.

Terre'Blanche, Eugene

terrorist

We follow *The Guardian's* rule, which is: Be careful about using this term — it is a subjective judgement (one person's terrorist may be another person's freedom fighter). Try to use alternatives such as **militant**, **radical** or **separatist**, which may be more appropriate and less controversial, but this is a difficult area: references to the “resistance”, for example, imply more sympathy to a cause than calling such fighters “insurgents”. The most important thing is that, in news reporting, we are not seen — because of the language we use — to be taking sides.

Tertiary institutions

The merged institutions are:

University of KwaZulu-Natal (Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville)

North-West University (University of North-West, Potch University, Vista Sebokeng campus)

Tshwane University of Technology (Northern Gauteng, North-West and Pretoria technikons)

Unisa (Unisa, Technikon SA, Vista Distance Education Campus)

Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Cape and Peninsula technikons)

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Vista Port Elizabeth)

University of Johannesburg (Rand Afrikaans University, Technikon Witwatersrand)

Limpopo University (University of the North, Medical University of South Africa)

Walter Sisulu University (University of Transkei, and Eastern Cape and Border technikons)

Durban Institute of Technology

Central Free State University of Technology

Test

cricket or rugby Test takes the upper case

that, which

Use **which** to qualify things: **The laser printer, which was old, broke.**

To decide when to use “which” and when to use “that”: if it follows a comma, use **which**. If there is no comma, you can use **that**. In other words, “**which**” **qualifies** and “**that**” **specifies**.

think-tank

time

1am, 6.30pm

Use **noon** or **midday** or **midnight** instead of 12am or 12pm

When the 24-hour clock is used (as in TV schedules), use a colon not a period:

21:30

time frame

toe the line

not tow the line

trade names

Trade names are often confused with the generic term. The generic is preferred: for example, a Hi-Ace or a Kombi should be called a **minibus**.

Translations

Translations within a quotation are written in square brackets after the text.

Not every word need be translated if it is well known — for example, **Boer**.

The translation would not be italicised when following a non-English phrase, as in the following: **Terre'Blanche told journalists: “Vat jou goed en trek [take your things and go].”** Note that the inverted commas encompass the translation as well.

Translations of non-quotations take round brackets — for example: **He almost single-handedly engineered the arms agency away from its image of apartheid *kragdadigheid* (forcefulness).**

Translations of titles should be italicised; for example: ***Notre-Dame des Fleurs* (*Our Lady of the Flowers*)**

Trengove, Wim

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

thereafter the **TRC** or, better still, the **Truth Commission**

try to

never **try and**

T-shirt

Tuynhuys

tsar

not **tzar**, **csar** or **czar**

über-

no italics

Umkhonto weSizwe

abbreviated to **MK** after first mention

Unesco

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; there is no need to spell it out

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; not commission

Unicef

No need to write it out, but it may need a qualifier: “Unicef, the United Nations children's fund ...”

UN Security Council

under way

not **underway**

U-turn

v for court cases: For **documented** (as opposed to ongoing) court cases, drop the **s**: for example, ***State v Smith*** (note italics).

vs for headlines and sport coverage only: **SA vs Australia**

vice-president, vice-chairperson, vice-chancellor, vice-admiral

volkstaat

is lower case and italicised, as is ***volk***

Wars

World War I and II (not roman numerals)

South African Anglo-Boer War

Cold War, Gulf War, Vietnam War, Falklands War are capped. Refer to the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Gulf War

The US **war on terror** is lower case, no italics

websites

Name of websites are not italicised and there is no change of font for website address

wellbeing

The **West** and Western ways are capped, but **western** (cowboy film) is lower case

whether is sufficient, not **whether or not**

while, not whilst

whistle-blower

Wi-Fi

Wines

Names of wines are lower case. Only the brand of wine would go upper case — for example, a **merlot** and a **Nederburg shiraz**.

World Bank

World Cup

Always upper case, whether referring to Football, Cricket or Rugby

world heritage site

always lower case

World Health Organisation

WHO (caps) on second mention

worldwide

WWF

No need to write out the name of the organisation, but it must have a qualifier: "The WWF, the global wildlife fund ..."

Deng Xiaoping

Xmas

Use only in headlines; write Christmas in copy.

X-ray

Yahoo!

Zanu-PF

Mao Zedong

zeitgeist

lower case, no italics

Zwelithini, King Goodwill

thereafter referred to as Zwelithini or the king

Government ministers and deputy ministers

Note that department names follow the title of the minister, for example, minister of health, department of health. Also note that not all ministers have deputies, while some have two.

President: Thabo Mbeki

Deputy President: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Minister in the Presidency: Essop Pahad

Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs: Lulama Xingwana

Deputy Minister: Dirk Cornelis du Toit

Minister of Arts and Culture: Pallo Jordan

Deputy Minister: Ntombazana Botha

Minister of Communications: Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri

Deputy Minister: Roy Padayachie

Minister of Correctional Services: Ngconde Balfour

Deputy Minister: Loretta Jacobus

Minister of Defence: Mosiuoa Lekota

Deputy Minister: Mluleki George

Minister of Education: Naledi Pandor

Deputy Minister: Mohamed Surty

Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: Marthinus van Schalkwyk

Deputy Minister: Rejoice Mabudafhasi

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

Deputy Ministers: Aziz Pahad and Susan van der Merwe

Minister of Health: Manto Tshabalala-Msimang

Deputy Minister: Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge

Minister of Home Affairs: Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula

Deputy Minister: Malusi Gigaba

Minister of Housing: Lindiwe Sisulu

Minister of Intelligence: Ronnie Kasrils

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development: Brigitte Mabandla

Deputy Minister: Johannes (Johnny) de Lange

Minister of Labour: Membathisi Mdladlana

Minister of Minerals and Energy: Buyelwa Sonjica

Minister of Finance: Trevor Manuel

Deputy Minister of Finance: Jabu Moleketi

Note: There is no department of finance — it's the national treasury

Minister of Provincial and Local Government: Sydney Mufamadi

Deputy Minister: Nomatyala Hangana

Minister of Public Enterprises: Alec Erwin

Minister of Public Service and Administration: Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

Minister of Public Works: Thoko Didiza

Deputy Minister: Ntopile Kganyago

Minister of Safety and Security: Charles Nqakula

Deputy Minister: Susan Shabangu

Minister of Science and Technology: Mosibudi Mangena

Deputy Minister: Derek Hanekom

Minister of Social Development: Zola Skweyiya

Deputy Minister: Jean Benjamin

Minister of Sport and Recreation: Makhenkesi Stofile

Deputy Minister: Gert Oosthuizen

Minister of Trade and Industry: Mandisi Mpahlwa

Deputy Ministers: Rob Davies and Elizabeth Thabethe

Minister of Transport: Jeff Radebe

Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry: Lindiwe Hendricks

Premiers

Eastern Cape: Nosimo Balindlela

Free State: Beatrice Marshoff

Gauteng: Mbhazima Shilowa

KwaZulu-Natal: S'bu Ndebele

Limpopo: Sello Moloto

Mpumalanga: Thabang Makwetla

North West: Edna Molewa

Northern Cape: Dipuo Peters

Western Cape: Ebrahim Rasool