THE LAYOUT OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN SABAH DURING THE JESSELTON ERA (1899 – 1967)



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS & HERITAGE UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH 2016

THE LAYOUT OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN SABAH DURING THE JESSELTON ERA (1899 – 1967)

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS &
HERITAGE
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except of quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Newspapers have always been a medium to disseminate information and emerge as one of the most important communication tools in the world. Despite the rapid growth of technology, it is undeniable that newspapers still receive overwhelming support from the household media. The aim of this research is to study the layout of English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era (1899 to 1967). There are four types of theories enclosed with the Gestalt Principle which are *Similarity*, *Proximity*, *Continuance* and *Closure*. These theories help to scrutinize every part of the Layout Design components, which are the *Balancing Act*, *Visual Rhythm*, *Grid*, *Path Layout* and *Photography*. Nowadays, archived newspapers are poor in visibility and durability as they have become obsolete, dusty, and easily torn. Prior to this, the researcher believes that this particular research will help to transcribe the old English newspapers into documentation, thus become more assessable when it is published into academic writings. In conclusion, it is hoped that the outcome of the study would be a fundamental guideline to those who need some reference on Jesselton and the newspapers printed in that era.



ABSTRAK

SUSUN ATUR SURAT KHABAR ENGLISH DI SABAH PADA ERA JESSELTON (1899 - 1967)

Surat khabar sentiasa memainkan peranan sebagai media perantaraan dalam menyebarkan maklumat dan menjadi salah satu alat komunikasi yang penting di dunia. Walaupun teknologi semakin berkembang pesat, surat khabar tidak boleh dinafikan masih lagi mendapat sambutan daripada pihak media. Tujuan kajian ini dilakukan adalah untuk mengetahui susun atur rekaan surat khabar Inggeris di Sabah sewaktu era Jesselton (1899 sehingga 1967). Prinsip Gestalt mempunyai empat jenis teori iaitu Persamaan, Kedekatan, Kesinambungan, dan Penutupan. Teori- teori ini membantu untuk mengkaji setiap komponen susun atur rekaan yang terdiri daripada keseimbangan, rima visual, grid, arah petunjuk dan fotografi. Pada masa kini, kualiti surat khabar yang diarkibkan adalah kurang dari segi kejelasan dan ketahanan kerana kebanyakannya sudah lapuk, berhabuk dan mudah koyak. Oleh itu, pengkaji berpendapat bahawa kajian ini dapat membantu dalam proses mendokumentasikan surat khabar Inggeris lama agar menjadi lebih mudah untuk diakses, khususnya apabila diterbitkan dalam bentuk penulisan ilmiah. Sebagai kesimpulan, adalah diharapkan bahawa hasil kajian ini boleh menjadi garis panduan asas kepada golongan yang memerlukan sumber maklumat mengenai Jesselton dan surat khabar yang dicetak pada era tersebut.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Years before the arrival of British, Sabah was a piece of unexplored land with the absence of modern technology, especially in Graphic Design. During this period of time, a large number of local people were practicing traditional lifestyles and settled in the rural areas. Forest, sea and river became their source of daily needs while animism has turned into their belief. It was a routine to collect vegetable and hunt animals. Then, people started to sell their crops and meat in a local market called *Tomu*¹.

The British explored North Borneo and decided to create a head capital. Soon, they founded Deasoka and changed the name to to Jesselton. When North Borneo officially agreed to join Malaysia and became Sabah, Jesselton was again renamed and this time to Kota Kinabalu. According to (Sabah State Archive, 2008: 1), the name 'Jesselton' was inspired by the name of the chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC).

Jesselton was originally named after the Managing Director & Chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC), Sir Charles Jessel on Sept - Oct 1899.²

Since then, buildings and infrastructure were built to accommodate people. Children were sent to missionary schools and churches were built to introduce Christianity. Post office was made for communication, offices for administration, local market and shop lots for business, hospital for the sick and media for communication. According to (Sabah State Archive, 2008: 25), the British colony

¹ A place for the local people to sell their products (food, clothes) and also to get their supply of daily needs.

Sabah State Archive, Jesselton dalam Kenangan, Sabah: Sabah State Archive, 2008, page 1.

has published North Borneo's first newspapers which was called The British North Borneo Herald (BNBH). The British North Borneo Herald (BNBH) became a medium to disseminate information about The British Royal Family, especially regarding to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The British North Borneo Herald (BNBH) was the pioneer of newspaper press in Jesselton. On 16th November 1899, BNBH published news about Jesselton for the first time.³

It was common to find bilingual or trilingual newspapers in North Borneo during the Jesselton era, as they were largely printed in English, Malay, Chinese and Kadazan Dusun languages.

English newspapers were printed more than Chinese, Malay and Kadazan Dusun newspapers. *The Herald* (1941), *The North Borneo News* (1949), *Kinabalu News Bulletin* (1951), *The Sabah Times* (1953), *Anak Sabah* (1956) and *The Kinabalu Sunday Times* (1965) were some of the early English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era.

This research arose from a desire to learn the Layout Design of newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era. The components of a layout consists of *Balancing Act, Visual Rhythm, Grid, Path Layout* and *Photography*. The researcher believes that studying the newspapers' layout could help to identify many graphic elements such as illustration, typography, columns, and margins. According to Against the Clock ⁴ (2002: 53), a layout is a combination of few elements that makes a visual composition.

The arrangement of the visual elements on a page (or throughout the publication) is called the layout. A printing page setup might be referred to as the board or the flat, a remnant from the (not-so-distant) past when

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³ Ibid., page 25.

⁴ Against the Clock is a mini journal that consists articles about Graphic Design. *Design Companion for the Digital Artist*, Upper Saddle River: New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 2002, page 53.

artwork was glued or pasted up on illustration boards in preparation for printing. This mechanical artwork is a very skilled craft that relies on the exact, clean placement of the many elements (text boxes, illustrations, captions, headlines, and so on) into the page design. The elements had to be painstakingly aligned by hand.⁵

Newspapers such as *The Herald, The North Borneo News, Kinabalu News Bulletin, The Sabah Times, Anak Sabah,* and *The Kinabalu Sunday Times* can be found at the Sabah State Archives, Sabah Museum, and Sabah Art Gallery today for reference. Meanwhile, old printing companies that are still operating in Kota Kinabalu could also help to provide information. Prior to this, the researcher hopes to find informants who were involved in printing during the Jesselton era.

Sabah State Library, University Malaysia Sabah Library and Malay for the Institute of Language and Literature, Sabah branch (*Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, cawangan Sabah*) provide quite a number of academic reference for the research.

1.2 Problem Statement

- a. Newspapers that are kept in a long period of time will get dusty as the quality of the paper is declining. Patches of yellow-brown hue will appear and the paper gets torn very easily.
- b. The structure of layout of English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era was fairly poor.

1.3 Objective of Research

- a. Create a documentation that provides information on English newspapers during the Jesselton era.
- b. To study the layout for graphic related educational purposes.

1.4 Research Question

a. How does a documentation provide information about English newspapers during the Jesselton era?

⁵ Design Companion for the Digital Artist, Upper Saddle River: New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 2002, page 53.

b. What are the importance of studying the layout of English newspapers?

1.5 Research Location

For fieldwork research, the researcher has chosen two locations to collect data, which are Kota Kinabalu and Penampang.

1.5.1 Kota Kinabalu

Chin Chi Printing Works Sdn Bhd⁶ and Tian Sing Printing Company Sdn Bhd⁷ are amongst the oldest press in Kota Kinabalu. Interview sessions will be conducted to gain information from the workers.

1.5.2 Penampang

Primary Research will be conducted at Sabah State Archives⁸ where the researcher is able to access microfilm and original copy of English newspapers during the Jesselton era. Secondary Research on the other hand, will be carried out at Sabah Museum⁹ and Sabah State Library¹⁰, as these places provide many articles about printing and the history of Sabah.

1.6 Graphic Design

There are few important roles of Graphic Design such as being a tool of identification (signs, banners and shields, marks, publishers' and printers' symbols, company logos, labels on packaging), to say what something is, or where it came from, information and instruction (maps, diagrams and directional signs), indicating the relationship of one thing to another in direction, position and scale, presentation and promotion (posters and advertisements), where it aims to catch the eye and make its message memorable. According to Hollis (1994: 69), Graphic

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⁶ Chin Chi Printing Works Sdn Bhd is located at No. 8. Ground Floor, Lorong Dewan, 88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Tian Sing Printing Company Sdn Bhd is located at No. 17, Lorong Dewan, 88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Sabah State Archives is located at KM 4, Penampang Road, Locked Bag No.2017, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Sabah Museum is located at Museum Road, 88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Sabah State Library is located at Locked Bag No. 2023, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Design helps to create images or typography by all means, the strokes of lines and a joint of dots could create illustration. For instance, a visual typography project is able to create images by using different kind of typeface and font size.

Graphics can be signs, like the letters of the alphabet, or form part of another system of signs, like road markings. Put together, graphic marks — the lines of a drawing or dots of a photograph — form images. Graphic design is the business of making or choosing marks and arranging them on a surface to convey an idea. Graphic design has overlapped the work of the agencies and studios and now embraces not only advertisements, but also the design of the magazines and newspapers they appear in. Graphics were essentially black and white, print on paper.¹¹

Graphic Design is widely used in printing due to its flexibility in combining color, typography, and illustration to form a Layout Design. Graphics help to place the elements in place and effortlessly turning the artwork into something interesting to look at. According to (Bowers, 2011: 29), businessman tend to advertise their products and services using promotional items such as corporate manual, billboard, brochure, flyer, and poster.

Printed items can be posters, advertisement, leaflet, booklet, magazine, and books. A poster might both inform and enlighten the viewers of an exhibition, while an advertisement might persuade and encourage consumers to purchase a product. The most common support is paper.¹²

1.7 History of Print

The English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era were printed using Lithography method. It was a printing process where the plates of zinc, iron, brass and copper were ground with pumice and chalk, and later wrapped around a cylinder to substitute stones. The printing industry in Sabah progressed rapidly. The British has imported printing machines, paper and ink to produce gazette, newspapers, books, bulletins and reports. According to (Hollis, 1994: 10), the

Bowers, *Introduction to Graphic Design Methodologies and Processes: Understanding Theory and Application*, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2011, page 29

Hollis, Graphic Design: A Concise History, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1994, page 69

evolution of machine enabled the press to print or copy limited amounts of books and document, not much of a production but adequate enough for public distribution. The printing process used printing plates to transfer an impression (image or letters) to a substrate.

Hollis, has also mentioned that the history of print began when the primitive men went hunting and tracked the animals by following the animals' footprint. While the Chinese civilization printed symbols by dipping a stamp (made out of marbles or wood) into a black ink and pressed it over to a piece of paper.

The story of print started from the early production of multiple copies of a document, book, etc., by the use of plates or other surface to transfer an impression to a substrate. When early man hunted for food, and spotted the imprint of an animal in the mud, he was looking at a graphic sign. The printing process may date back as far as 100 AD. By inking covered marble surfaces and placing paper on them, the Chinese were able to "print" designs and symbols. By the year 500, wood blocks were used in some parts of the Orient to reproduce ideographic symbols. Blocks may have been used to print textiles in India as early as 400 BC. Books were block printed in China about the 9th century AD.¹³

Xylography was the first invented printing method. According to Jubert (2006: 34), Letters or symbols were carved on woods, and by dipping the ink on these carved blocks, images were created. Papyrus initiated the first paper prints that led to the printing of books.

It was there that xylography (woodblock printing) and movable-type printing were invented — roughly five hundred years before these twin techniques developed in the West, with the first known dated printed book going back to the ninth century. Although many images are created by designers themselves, many more are ready-made, like the old woodblocks re-used by medieval printers from earlier jobs, old engravings or stock photographs from a picture agency. The idea of using carved reliefs to print multiple images on surfaces such as paper originated in China. Seals from various substances had been common in China from earliest time, but one

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¹³ Hollis, Graphic Design: A Concise History, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1994, page 72

crucial invention set the Chinese apart from other cultures-the technique of papermaking.¹⁴

According to (Romano, 1998: 642), printing press was not created as one invention as it took an accumulative of technology to generate the whole process. A respectable German inventor, Johannes Gutenberg has developed and improvised an earlier invention that has already been used in Holland and Prague. Therefore, the printing process developed by Gutenberg was considered to be an innovation and not an invention.

The printing press was not a single invention. It was the aggregation of technologies known for years before Johannes Gutenberg, who gets credit for an invention that is thought to have been developed simultaneously in Holland and Prague. Gutenberg was working on an invention that had something to do with metal casting, a press with a screw mechanism, and paper. Johannes Gensfleish zur Laden zum Gutenberg (1400-1468) was born in Germany.¹⁵

1.7.1 Types of Printing

Letterpress was the earliest printing of all time. The process involved the use of black ink dipped onto carved woodblocks that contained images, symbols or letters, which would later be printed on paper or cloth. According to (Hollis, 1994: 11), Alois Senefelder was the pioneer of Lithography printing. While searching for a method that he would like to apply on his music lessons, he decided to do an experiment on Bavarian limestone that somehow led to the discovery of new printing method. He found out that the application of ink and the right chemicals on polished stones was able to transfer images onto paper.

Alois Senefelder (1771-1834) was the inventor of Lithography. His invention of a new printing process came about by chance while he was seeking a method of reproducing plays and musical scores. Writing in reverse on a piece of limestone with greasy chalk and then dampening the stone, he found that an inked roller would deposit ink only on the

¹⁴ Jubert, *Typography and Graphic Design*, Paris: Flammarion, 2006, page 34

¹⁵ Romano, *Encyclopedia of Graphic Communications*, London: Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, 1998, page 642

chalk. Later in the development of Lithography, plates of zinc, iron, brass and copper were ground with pumice and chalk and wrapped around a cylinder to substitute for stone.¹⁶

Another type of printing was the Linotype. Wood block printing was gradually replaced when typewriter was invented. According to (Romano, 1998: 642), James Clephane invented typewriter to make his work more convenient and faster. Clephane however, believed that another machine should be connected to the typewriter to accelerate the copy process, the machine was called a printer. Since typewriter and Linotype were introduced, noble men began to improve and try to create better version of type machine.

James Clephane was the godfather of the Typewriter and the Linotype. Clephane sought a way to transcribe his notes quickly and in the multiple forms that cases in the highest tribunal demanded. Clephane thought it would save time if somehow a machine could link with Lithographic printing or make stereotypes to cast metal type.¹⁷

Mechanical typesetting was a modern printing that emerged in the 18th century. According to (Romano, 1998: 642), Lynn Boyd has started the idea that typesetting machine worked with inch measurement. Boyd continued to make a machine that was generated by electrical appliances, hoping that his invention could adjust the size of the font and also the space between the characters which allowing more characters to be printed on the paper.

Lynn Boyd (1844-1932) invented the enabling technology for mechanical typesetting. He completed his self-instruction in type founding and had a mind that could deal with decimal fractions and measurements of tenthousandths of an inch. He began to work on a typesetting machine with automatic justification. His devised a system, based on his "self-spacing type" that shortened the time required for justification by reducing the number of character widths in a font of type.¹⁸

Hollis, Graphic Design: A Concise History, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1994, page 11

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Monotype was a printing that was very similar to typewriter. The printing process started when a keyboard and a type caster were linked to each other. A keyboard is used for typing while the function of a type caster is to keep the type setting always in required adjustment.

Photography was another form of printing. It highlighted one of the greatest achievements in the printing history, where designers started using photography to capture realistic images. According to (Romano, 1998: 642), Joseph Nicephore Niépce has invented photography by studying the work of Senefelder. He used tin plates to form Photolithography that led into the invention of camera.

Photography was created by a French noble, Joseph Nicephore Népce (1765-1833). Studying the work of Alois Senefelder, Népce tried to improve the process by using tin plates to perfect a form of photolithography. He later made it possible to fix and image onto a photosensitive plate by exposure through a negative. A breakthrough came in 1822 when he made a permanent image using a camera obscura. 19

Capturing a photo required camera and a film to take photographs, while emulsion was needed in the production process. A double-coating process allowed the emulsion to be removed from the paper after development and transferred to a durable gelatin-collodion film. According to (Romano, 1998: 644), William H. Walker took Photography a step further by inventing rolled paper film and later developed by Eastman. At this point, Eastman created the earliest Kodak portable box camera that had both paper roll and emulsion installed as major components. Therefore, the print result was sharper and free from paper grain distortion. Frederich Eugene Ives then developed the halftone process that allowed photographic images to be printed on newspapers and magazines.

With William H. Walker, he invented rolled paper film which became the model for contemporary roll films. A year later, in 1885, Eastman patented a machine that coated a continuous roll of paper with an emulsion. Eastman wanted a camera that anyone could use. In 1888 he introduced the Kodak

¹⁹ Romano, *Encyclopedia of Graphic Communications*, London: Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, 1998, page 642

portable box camera with the marketing slogan, penned by Eastman himself, "You press the button, we do the rest". The turn of the century also saw the development of the halftone process by Frederich Eugene Ives, which permitted newspapers and magazines to add photographic images to their pages.²⁰

As the printing mechanism and process progresses, people started experimenting with color. According to (Romano, 1998: 644), printers were using a film of ink (cartridge) that was uniform in thickness and color.

The printed reproduction of a continuous-tone image, one that, as in a photograph, has a range of light and dark values that blend seamlessly together, is created by patterns of minute dots too small for the human eye to resolve individually, but which together appear as tonal gradations of gray. Dot patterns are opaque lines at right angles to each other. Halftone plates are made in relief for letterpress printing.²¹

1.8 Limitation of Research

The researcher finds it difficult to study the layout of English newspapers because the quality of paper is poor.

1.9 Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to learn about the layout of English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era.

1.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research is about studying and creating a documentation about the layout of English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era from year 1899 to 1967. The components of a layout consists of *Balancing Act, Visual Rhythm, Grid, Path Layout* and *Photography*.

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²⁰ *Ibid.*, page 644

²¹ *Ibid*.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the newspapers and its terminology, Layout Design and its components, and also the English newspapers in Sabah during the Jesselton era.

2.2 Newspapers

According to Rodman (2012) in oral cultures, town criers were the first professional deliverers of news. This tradition started with the ancient Greeks and was well established in early colonial America. The town crier²² was often a well-educated and respected member of the community who would read the news in front of the tavern and then nailed it to a doorpost. This is the derivation of the expression (posting a notice), and it is why so many newspapers today are called the 'Post'.

The first newspapers appeared in China, printed from woodcuts, more than 1,200 years ago. In Europe, Johannes Gutenberg's printing press, developed in the 15th century, eventually allowed documents of all kinds to be mass produced. Gutenberg's fellow Germans pioneered newspapers production in the early 1600s. As other European countries began developing newspapers in the following years, the word 'News' referred to the information that a large audience would be interested in, although a large audience at that time would be 100 or 200 literate people in a good-sized city. By the 1640s, newspaper editors have discovered the sales potential of human interest stories, and Italian newspapers were already covering local fires and murders. These newspapers sold for a small coin called the Gazetta which is where the word 'Gazette' came from.

²² Also known as the bellman whose job is to make public announcement as required by the court.