

Australopithecus sediba

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



Analysis of a Scientific and Two Press Articles on Australopithecus Sediba

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1. What made the scientific paper more difficult to read than the popular article? How were you able to work through it despite those difficulties?

Reading the scientific paper was more difficult than reading the press articles because of the tone used and overuse of specialized vocabularies.

The article is written in an objective tone primarily to avoid any likelihood of biases during interpretation. Removal of the first person pronouns from the paper makes it impersonal, boring and limits creativity, thus making it more difficult to read. Moreover, the paper has many scientific vocabularies that make the paper more technical, thus difficult to understand. However, I was able to work through it despite those difficulties because I have over time gained reading and analyzing skills of scientific materials. At the same time, I applied the piecemeal approach which involves reading key sections of the paper and skimming the figures first.

2. What kind of information was in the science article? What kind of information was in the supplemental material?

There is a lot of information about Australopithecus sediba among other pre-humans in the scientific article while the press articles emphasized on the key features of the fossils. The two press articles are like a summary of the scientific article written in a more-easy-to understand language. The science article also has details like the actual size of the various parts of the fossil while such information is omitted in the press articles.

3. Compare and contrast the take home message of the scientific paper to the popular press articles.

The message in the scientific paper is more detailed and clear, especially to persons who can understand it while the message in the press article is raising doubts and creating room for criticism.

4. How did the papers and articles explain the methodologies of the study? How does this inform your understanding of the results?

The methodologies of the study are explained in details in the scientific article while using scientific terminologies that ordinary people find difficult to understand. The press articles have not described the methodology applied while conducting the study because the reporters were targeting ordinary people who might have very little or no understanding of the scientific terminologies used to describe scientific methodologies. The methodologies described in the scientific article confirm that the study is reliable and that the findings made are accurate.

5. What kind of information was left out the paper press article? The scientific paper?

The scientific paper is more detailed compared to the two press articles. The scientific article had background information like the relationship between *Australopithecus sediba* and other pre-humans such as the *Australopithecus Africanus* while the press articles focused on the *Australopithecus sediba* alone. Opinions of the researchers that are beyond the findings made are left out in the scientific paper while in-depth scientific details such as the scientific methodologies applied during the research were left out in the press articles.

6. Read a couple of the comments in the popular press article. What is your reaction to them? Do you think that comments are a useful part of the

discussion?

Some of the comments in the press articles are supporting the argument raised and further elaborating the topic at hand while others are criticizing the argument. For instance, some people argue that Australopithecus Sediba which is closely related with Australopithecus Africanus led to Homo Habilis and Homo Erectus, but none of them ended in Homo Sapiens. The findings reported make some people claim that “ Lucy” is not likely to be the immediate ancestor of human genus (Homo). Such comments whether criticizing or in support are very essential because they show the weaknesses of the findings made and raise areas that need further research.

7. Tell me about your reactions to this comparison: Comment on the nature of science, the press, and public understanding of science.

Analysis of the scientific material, the press article and the comments made by the public confirms that these three categories of people have varying level of understanding science. Scientists have a better understanding and they use jargon words that ordinary people and the press are unable to understand or find them difficult to understand. They also appear to strongly believe in the “ Evolution Theory,” while a significant percentage of the population strongly opposes it. Media on the other hand is neutral and it reports the findings without any bias.

The articles analyzed are:

Berger, L. R., de Ruiter, D. J., Churchill, S. E., Schmid, P., Carlson, K. J., Dirks, P. H., & Kibii, J. M. (2010). Australopithecus sediba: A new species of Homo-like australopith from South Africa. *Science*, 328(5975), 195-204.

<https://assignbuster.com/australopithecus-sediba/>

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The New York Times. (2010, April 8). New Hominid Species, Au. Sediba, Discovered in South Africa - NYTimes.com. Retrieved November 18, 2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/09/science/09fossil.html?pagewanted=all&_r=2&