7.3 SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

Every profession, every discipline has its own set of terminology, its own lingo which is commonly used by the members within that fraternity. Doctors commonly use medical terminology in their interactions, researchers have their own jargons and corporates speak in their own business language. Television professionals also do the same. Therefore, for every member in a television programme crew needs to be familiar with these terminologies so that they can converse easily and there is no miscommunication. Let us discuss some terms related to television.

PTC

A reporter at a news site can send the newsroom what is called '**piece to camera**' or **'stand upper**'. Here the reporter can be seen telling the story from the site. This kind of presentation immediately establishes the reporter's presence on the spot and he tells the story straight to the camera and through the camera to the viewer. It is usually placed somewhere near the middle or at the end of a story and it is usually about two to three sentences long. The tone is generally conversational, but that does not mean that it is delivered spontaneously. In most cases they work out the sentences and memorise them. The difficulty is that some reporters can do it very easily while others can never do it well. The latter should know how to write spoken language on a small note and try to memorize this as far as possible. It is not necessary to remember a very long PTC but for many even a small piece is difficult. Nowadays, portable electronic prompters are available to deal with this problem.

There is something important about the **framing** of this type of story by the cameraperson on location from where it should be given. The reporter should not stand against a wall or such other background unless it is relevant to the story. Preferably the reporter should be seen at the scene of the event itself and should also include something visible in the frame to that effect. Ideally, the reporter should be seen in the proximity of the most important action elements of the story



Framing —

Framing here refers to how the shot is framed or composed, i.e., what objects and people will be visible on the screen or within the frame of the shot.

pare for editing, this is a good activity for reviewing the quality of shots - what went right and where there are areas for improvements. Also, when editing, this is a good way to find out if there is a shot that they didn't get and still need to get.

The name of the video tape being logged, the names of the people in the team, the date of shooting are all written down carefully on the log sheet so that it serves as a ready reference. The name written on the video tape itself should be the name written on the log sheet. That way they are easily paired up if the log sheet and tape get separated.

Ambience Sound

In radio as well as television, there are four types of sound that together make up the sound design of a programme. These are the spoken words, music, special effects and the *diegetic* or *ambience sound.* Of the four elements, while spoken word relates to the monologues and dialogues etc, music can be any element that is instrumental or with lyrical verses added later on; SFX or special effects are the transitions and several other add on effects that are used to enhance the feel of the programme; ambience sound is the diegetic or 'natural sound' that is present at the time of recording/shooting. All the other elements of sound design can be added later on to create an illusion as if they were present at the scene of action. However, only the ambience sound is present when recording. Ambience sound helps create a sense of what the surrounding is like.

It is necessary to record ambience sound both in fiction and non-fiction programmes. Especially in case of shooting nonfiction programs, particularly news, ambience sound plays an important role in establishing the context. Ambience sound arises from the shooting location itself. For example, the sounds of people chattering, the rush of vehicles and the sound of the horns.

main transmitter, i.e the high power amplifier (HPA).

The dish antenna on the OB van transmits signals to a satellite which are being downlinked at the **earth station**. The earth station routes the pictures and sound to the bulletin on air, which sends back the sound of the presenter. The sound from the channel's earth station then travels back to the OB van by satellite, which in turn is connected to the reporter's earphone.

Live Telecast

Live Telecast means telecast of an event as and when it actually happens in real time. In modern times, live telecast has become one of the most widely practiced phenomenon of TV journalism. TV news channels usually opt for this technique to make the news coverage more enthralling. The most widely accepted live telecast is of the sporting events like cricket matches etc., when the viewers stay glued to their TV sets in order to remain updated with the developments. Nowadays, this technique is also being applied during the time of election coverage and Parliament sessions. We also encounter live telecasts during any breaking events in order to grab the viewers' attention. With the help of high end sophisticated techniques news channels telecast live programmes.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-A

1. Define the following terms:
   a. PTC
   b. Sound bite
   c. OB Van

2. What is the importance of logging?

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process begins the moment a reporter is assigned to cover an event. He visualizes the news story before he starts shooting the event. It is not only enough for him to record the incident and report it on screen. He has to coordinate with the cameraperson and allied staff (light men etc) to get the necessary visuals. Again he has to think about 'angle' for the news story. Finalizing the 'angle' means deciding from which perspective to look at the incident because a single event can have various dimensions.

Once these preliminary decisions are made, he records the event. Covering an event implies its coverage both in audio and video forms. Different shots of the same action are taken, from different angles so as to convey the desired meaning. It is also important to include extra shots which can be used as **cutaways** in editing. Audio is recorded in the form of ambience (natural) sound, sound bites of relevant people of the event and piece-to-cameras (PTCs) of the reporter.

Finally when the shooting is over, the reporter comes back to the office and may either do the editing of the news story himself or take the help of technical editors who are specially engaged for the purpose of editing.

But before the actual editing can begin, the reporter has to prepare a news copy. While writing copy based on the report gathered, the script writer/reporter should examine the following points:

- Story points: What are the things that need to be highlighted
- Pictures: See if relevant visuals are present and if not, how to make do with the existing footage.
- Narration, referred to as Voice-overs (VO), and bites also known as Sound–on-Tape (SOT): This is the audio that describes the related pictures.
- Hand out materials such as press release: These are materials that are provided by the PR personnel engaged in the event. These help decide on the 'angle' of the story besides providing valuable background information.

- **What's In it For Me?**

When writing the beginning of a news story, find a WIFM for your story or What's In it For Me? It is the question you should imagine every viewer asking. When you are faced with a news story, ask what's in it for your viewers. Viewers will not listen to or watch for long a story that does not affect them. Finding a WIFM helps news writers know which information should be included in and omitted from stories and hence stay focused.

- **Focus**

The focus of your television news story is the point or points you want viewers to understand. If you are using **wire copy** as a source of information for a story, your job is to choose from the wire copy information that will interest your viewers. You put that information into context by defining a focus.

- **The Lead**

By asking a WIFM you define a focus. You separate information that should be included in a story from that which shouldn't. You have a general plan for the direction your story will take based on your viewers' interests and concerns. Now you are ready to pick up a pen or sit at a keyboard.

The first sentence of a television news story is called its lead. Television news stories need to hook or grab viewers' at the very beginning and pull them into the story. They need to start strong. They need a good lead. The lead is the most important sentence you will write.

In searching for a strong lead, don't exaggerate the story. Don't distort or misinterpret it. Do look for the most compelling way to draw viewers into the story. Your first sentence may determine whether viewers stay tuned.

The Middle

A television news writer starts strong with a lead that grabs or hooks viewers. It is the "sell", which means you sell the story

example: “We’ll continue to follow this story and will bring you all the details”; or “We’ll update you on this story as details become available.” However, it should be remembered that false promises are dangerous and should be avoided.

LET US KNOW



Six steps to news copy preparation:

1. Understand the news-worthiness of an incident.
2. Grab the story line and then proceed for collecting facts through research/ interview/ dialogue/ documentary/ archive etc.
3. News judgment intuitions and writing skills should then be applied.
4. Determine the essential elements of information of the press release or report. Always use the Ws and H formula and organize the elements in order of importance.
5. The lead should be written with only one important feature.
6. The rest of the details should be placed in the order of diminishing importance.

7.4.2 Rules of writing for television

Here are a few rules to follow while writing news for television.

1. Write in conversational, informal style.
2. Be specific, simple and direct. Vague, generalized action or information tends to be confusing. The first requirement for writing news for broadcast is clarity. Understanding must be immediate.
3. Avoid flowery language.
4. Be brief. Each sentence, ideally, should contain only one idea or image. Give them a unit of information at a time. If you give them too much information all at once, they can’t take it in.

the name later. (Example: Chairperson of the company, Prakash Das)

18. Use complete name in the first reference, thereafter use just the last name or first name.
19. Omit doubtful names and places if they are not meaningful to the story.
20. If age must be mentioned, the age has to come before name. (Example: The victim, 21-year-old Rob Roy.)
21. Use direct quotes carefully and sparingly. It is better to use sound bites. If sound bites are not available on tape, and it is unavoidable to use a direct quote, then set it off with such phrases as: “In the words of..” “As he put it...” or try to paraphrase as much as possible.
22. Avoid use of the word ‘meanwhile’. Most news channels make indiscriminate and liberal use of this word, which is incorrect. Use it only when a close relationship exists between subject matter and intervening time.
23. Grab the audience’s attention by writing a strong lead.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - B



1. Write the basic rules of writing numbers in a television news story.

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2. Write the basic rules of writing titles and names in a television news story.

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National Cadet Corps (NCC) at their Republic Day camp here.

To a question on recent terrorist attacks in J and K, he said the decision would be reviewed "as and when the situation demands" but these attacks "are not enough reason.

Observing that the prevailing levels of infiltration has gone down, Mukherjee said the terrorists always chose major national events like Republic Day or Independence Day or the visits by certain foreign dignitaries to grab world attention.

The Defence Minister said India has been consistently emphasizing that Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf "should stick to his own commitment" that Pakistani soil would not be allowed to be used for terrorism and anti-India activities.

Maintaining that militancy depended on the logistical support provided to it, he said the current reduction in cross-border infiltration of terrorists was "mostly due to fencing and stepping up of vigilance by security forces".

To a question on the confidence-building measures (CBMs) with Pakistan, Mukherjee said it was unfortunate that "continuous and unabated support" was still being given to militants by that country.

7.5 LET US SUM UP

- A reporter at a news site can send the newsroom what is called ‘piece to camera’ or ‘stand upper’.
- A sound bite or ‘cold bite’ is a type of story that includes a brief video-taped interview with someone relevant to the news story.
- Logging means making a note of or writing down what is on the tape after the video has been gathered.
- Ambience sound is the diegetic or ‘natural sound’ that is present at the time of recording/shooting. Ambience sound helps create a sense of what the surrounding is like.
- Live Telecast means telecast of an event as and when it actually happens in real time.

is generally used to prepare for editing, this is a good activity for reviewing the quality of shots - what went right and where there are areas for improvements. Also, when editing, this is a good way to find out if there is a shot that they didn't get and still need to get.

3) Ambience sound is the diegetic or 'natural sound' that is present at the time of recording/shooting. The significance of ambience sound is that it helps create a sense of what the surrounding is like. It is necessary to record ambience sound both in fiction and non-fiction programmes. Especially in case of shooting nonfiction programs, particularly news, ambience sound plays an important role in establishing the context.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS- B

1) When writing numbers for television news, the following rules should be kept in mind:
   - Spell out figures through ELEVEN. Use numerals for 12-999. Use hyphenated combinations for numerals and words above 999. (Example: 33 -thousand.)
   - Round off numbers unless the exact number is significant.
   - Use "st," "nd," "th," and "rd" after dates, addresses and numbers to be read as ordinary numbers. (Example: "2nd Street," "May 14th")
2) When writing titles and names for television news, the following rules should be kept in mind:
   - Titles precede names.
   - Use complete name in the first reference, then last name OR first name thereafter.
   - Omit obscure names and places if they are not meaningful to the story.
   - Use phonetic spellings for difficult pronunciations.
   - In age reference, precede the name with the age. (Example: The victim, 21-year-old Rob Roy.)
3) Straight line.