

Editing Electronic Media^{*}

Amare Asgedom^{**}

Introduction

Electronic Media involve radio, television, video, taperecorders, computers, and the like. The discussion on this topic will, however, focus on television and radio. Video and taperecorders are tools of the former and can be subsumed in it. In terms of editing, radio and television use the same principles. A discussion on television editing undoubtedly has far-reaching implications to radio-editing. The present discussion, therefore, further limits itself to television-editing but will raise certain issues peculiar to radio. A person who has good knowledge and skill in television-editing would certainly have a good skill in editing radio-broadcasting materials.

Television

Television (TV) messages combine picture and sound. TV also involves motion, color, art, people, etc.

1. Major attributes of TV

- (1) **TV gives simulated experience.** By bringing the "World of reality to individual homes or classrooms", television creates the feeling of being there at the scene where the event takes place. The viewer feels a sense of participation witnessing the various activities including such inaccessible and hazardous realities as explosions, fire hazards, astronomic distances, invisible and hidden parts of reality.

^{*} Presented to UNICEF-Organized Workshop on *Editing Communication Materials*, Dec. 2-7, 1991, Nazareth

^{**} Associate Prof. Curriculum & Instruction & Director of Institute of Educational Research, AAU.

Editing Electronic Media^{*}

Amare Asgedom^{**}

Introduction

Electronic Media involve radio, television, video, taperecorders, computers, and the like. The discussion on this topic will, however, focus on television and radio. Video and taperecorders are tools of the former and can be subsumed in it. In terms of editing, radio and television use the same principles. A discussion on television editing undoubtedly has far-reaching implications to radio-editing. The present discussion, therefore, further limits itself to television-editing but will raise certain issues peculiar to radio. A person who has good knowledge and skill in television-editing would certainly have a good skill in editing radio-broadcasting materials.

Television

Television (TV) messages combine picture and sound. TV also involves motion, color, art, people, etc.

1. Major attributes of TV

- (1) **TV gives simulated experience.** By bringing the "World of reality to individual homes or classrooms", television creates the feeling of being there at the scene where the event takes place. The viewer feels a sense of participation witnessing the various activities including such inaccessible and hazardous realities as explosions, fire hazards, astronomic distances, invisible and hidden parts of reality.

^{*} Presented to UNICEF-Organized Workshop on *Editing Communication Materials*, Dec. 2-7, 1991, Nazareth

^{**} Associate Prof. Curriculum & Instruction & Director of Institute of Educational Research, AAU.

- (2) TV has greater credibility hence the saying, "seeing is believing." People take television reality for granted. They pose no or few questions on television pictures. Research in Western societies has confirmed this hypothesis. In the US, television is found as the major source of KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice). It is also found as having greater credibility than the rest of the media.
- (3) Television is found as an equalizer of educational opportunities, creating a common culture between the "Elite" and the "Masses". The concrete nature of television presentations enables less literate masses to learn from it. Where as print has divided society, by creating information-rich and information-poor segments of the population, television is believed to have the reverse effect, bridging the gap between the two. Marshall McLuhan in his several books pioneers this position. He believes television will create "The Global Village" - a sense of unity among peoples and nations to be created because of exposure to this new medium.

In the Third World, however, the effect of television (harmonizing or dividing society?) is not clear. Research results are not conclusive. Some findings suggest that people who have more access to TV are benefiting more and classes of information-rich and information-poor are being created. Nevertheless the "ceiling effect" of television programming and implications of massification seem to be inherent to television technology. On the other hand, the masses of illiterate people could learn more from television, thereby, elevating their technical and political awareness of things. The idea of how television narrows the gap between the elite and the masses still remains controversial. Is it by massification of the elite class or by elevating the mass consciousness? Or is it both? It requires a further probe to answer the question (specially in the context of Developing Nations).

- (4) Television has the obligation to simplify presentation. In receiving a message/information from a given medium the audience apply much communication effort (especially in reading) in TV, however, "ready-made" messages are given. The drama, motion, art tend to simplify messages. In

print communication the audience go from symbol to picture then to meaning in TV, however, the perceiver goes directly from picture to meaning.

- (5) Television is perfect for action, motion and emotion. It is more entertaining, and in fact, reinstates the “rituality” of the oral culture... which is lost to the print culture in literate societies.
- (6) Television coverage makes which ever side look good. You are always with the hero. You see TV from the perspective of the hero. Television is, therefore, most appropriate for persuasive communications, Public Relations, Development Advocacies, Advertisement, Propaganda, etc.

2. Editing Television Communications

To EDIT means to prepare (a movie, film, video tape or recording) for presentation by cutting or mixing or rearranging. The essence of editing is compressing or abridging a dull reality.

Purposes of Editing

The purpose of editing is to eliminate time problems of audience and media – Media slots are limited your message has to compete with a variety of other messages for access. Or if you have to pay for getting your messages transmitted, you have to realize that TV-time is very expensive and you may afford to pay only for a limited time.

We can eliminate unwanted time of viewing an event. The Gulf War took about three to four month-time. The audience cannot sit continuously to view this war.

It requires to compress the three-month war to a thirty-minute cinematic event to get the complete story of the war. Unedited coverage of events is very long and boring for viewers. On the other hand some events are so *dramatic* that one cannot follow the sequence of events; for instance, the scoring of a wonderful

goal in soccer games, or a road accident. The latter takes nearly five seconds. This time, however, is very short and would leave our audience wondering what it really was. We need to extend the time probably to 25 seconds through the techniques of editing called *slow-motion photography*.

Edited materials get more access to the mass media than others. The mass media staff have little time to spare for editing your material. The easiest way for them is to throw away your material. Only "ready-made" messages could be published or broadcast. The Development communicator has to compete for access to the mass media by preparing ready-made television materials.

3. Process of Editing

Television editing starts with television production – which is essentially writing to pictures. Pictures are the essence of TV. Do not write the words and then try to illustrate them. "Write" the pictures and worry about what words you might need later. This transition to write pictures first and add words later needs a lot of conscious effort. The requirement of TV-Message production is sensitization to needed pictures or visual thinking. Once you get the pictures, you select and rearrange these pictures to give the sense of movement.

In print communication, movement (structure of editing) is created by the use of the *inverted pyramid*. The story is organized on the basis of degree of importance, the most important point at the top (the lead) and the least important at the bottom.

Editing problems, however, force TV-movement to be structured on the criterion of chronological order. Because TV is a time-but-not-a-space phenomenon events must be sequenced but not mixed.

Editing could take place in a studio the technique of which is called "Mixing". The story is ready in different cameras and microphones to be mixed (edited) and converged. My discussion will, however, be limited to editing through

cutting or in Field/Location reporting which is an attempt to bring the world to individual homes. The former could be dealt by in other forums.

Cut - Edit/Location Shooting and Editing-Cut-Edit system requires

- (a) basic shots
- (b) movement within shots (internal movement)
- (c) movement between segments
- (d) External movement—packaging the story.

a. Basic Shots

1. Long shot (LS) – establishes the whole story, the particular scene. For instance, “hunger” could be covered by showing many hungry people as a background. It requires, a wide angle coverage of the event.
2. Medium shot (MS) – five or four hungry faces probably receiving aid. It would be represented by half-body coverage.
3. Close up (CU) - very dramatic picture. You could show the hungry hand with bread, or presentation of a wrinkled face in a sharp focus and the shortest distance could stand for close up.

Internal movement is therefore created by movement from shot to shot (one-to three), that is, by editing from Long shot (Establisher shot) in which you establish the story, what it is that you are showing, and then edit to showing the elements (MS) and finally to the heart of the story Close up. This could be analogous to writing (in print medium) a single grammatical statement conveying a meaning. Each one is called an edit. There are also times when you go to the reverse progression. Start with Close up and move to the establisher shot. The whole process of editing could normally take about 20 seconds. Every cameraman knows that this kind of editing is called cut-in, that is, you go directly from Establisher to the heart of the story in which all pictures are part of the progression.

You would, however, be forced to use “*cut-aways*” to avoid a “*jump-cut*”. When the story is advanced, for instance, from 3:05 to 3:30 a gap is created between the two time-intervals (3:05 and 3:30). If you connect 3:05 and 3:30 (stories) you would experience what is called a *jump-cut*. You can, however, cover the cut (gap) with another picture called cut-away so that you hear the sound but for sometime, you see something other than the person who is speaking. It is also used to break the visual monotony of a long speech. Changing the pictures in long sound-bites makes the communication tolerable by the TV viewers.

b. Movement within Shots

We have seen from the foregoing discussion that movement in TV story could be created by cutting-in from shot to shot (LS to CU or CU to LS) and each move is an edit. Movement could also be generated by panning, zooming or tilting.

Panning - swivelling of the camera to the right or to the left. Pan is an abbreviation of panoramic movement. In TV, panshots create the illusion of motion.

Zooming - involves zoom-in and zoom-out which are the equivalent of pull (focuss) or push—wider angle shooting. You could start with the same establisher shot and then zooming-in (from a wider angle to medium or close-up). The motion in zooming is not created by cutting or editing. Zooming is difficult, it is time consuming, boring and is not good for cut-aways. It is not possible to interrupt the zooming.

Tilting - Zooming, is moving the camera up or down. panning and tilting are ways of getting from one view to another. They should all be used with discretion. These camera movements can become part of the grammar, the punctuation of sequences. Don't let them become lazy substitutes for something better.

C. Movement between Segments

From the previous discussion, we have realized that an internal movement could be created by cutting from shot to shot. This complete movement could be considered the equivalent of movement from word to word for making a complete grammatical sentence in print reporting. Making a complete story, however, requires an *external movement* – from segment to segment. A fairly simple TV story must involve the following segments (the equivalent of movement from sentence to sentence)

1. Lead-in
2. Voice-over
3. Sound-bite
4. Stand-up

1. Lead-in is sometimes called the head-line of the story as drafted by the reporter and read by the anchorperson. The lead-in is a highly summarized and key-point of the story. It also carries the story to the reporter. For instance, a lead-in about “Deputy Mayor Resignation would look like the following:

Slug – Deputy Mayor Resignation

Lead - in

ANCHOR OC (on Camera): Mayor X today announced the resignation of Deputy Mayor Z and the appointment of a local Mayor to take his place. Belay has more on the news.

The lead-in is the opener of the TV news story and must be catching and leading to the bulk of the presentation.

2. VOICOVER--The reporter speaking over a series of edited pictures telling additional elements of the story and leading up to the "sound-bite". For instance:

VO/VTR (Voice-over Videotape):

BE:AU: The mayor says the mounting friction between himself and his deputy makes it impossible for them to continue as a team. He says it is important to the city for both to share the same goals. He lists these areas of disagreement that lead to Z's resignation.

3. SOUNDBITE--this is the videotape of the news-source, in this case the mayor himself.

EXAMPLE of Sound bite

Mayor SOT (sound on tape)

A-roll *Z failed to support my efforts to change the zoning laws. He tried to block my plans to cut the Number of police and sanitation men. He resisted fare-increase for the buses. In short, he made it impossible for me to govern the city.*

4. Stand-up – is the picture in which the reporter appears on the scene, microphone in hand and reports directly to the viewer (even when done while sitting, it is called a stand-up). Although his voice may have been heard in interviews, and voice-overs, it is now seen full-face on camera, addressing his audience and thus becomes a distinct personality. Stand-ups are not necessary always, but whenever one decides to use them, he should make sure that the setting is relevant to the story.

(d) Packaging Television News Story

Once the TV story has been gathered and videotaped, the reporter must make plans for packaging it. In print terms, this would be called the process of writing,

editing and laying out the story. When the television reporter packages, he writes the words that will cover some of the pictures, chooses these pictures, picks out the sound-bites for his story, and determines the placement for the various elements in it. He is in a sense EDITOR, layout editor, photographic editor, as well as reporter. What he has to provide to his station for the broadcast is a package, and the package must be complete when it is delivered.

Knowledge of what you have on the videotape is essential. Keep a written record of useful material as it is taped—**Covershots, Cutaways, interviews, stand-ups**. Indicate in your *log* of this material roughly where it can be found on the videotape and if you have used more than one videotape cassette, make sure that each one is numbered and indicate which material is on which cassette. Your *log* should state which of the stand-ups you want to be incorporated into the final story, and which specific sound bites you want to be used.

To indicate the specific sound-bite to be included in the story, write down where the sound bite is located and on which cassette and then state the in-cue and the out-cue (end-cue). That is, specify the first few words of the sound bite (in-cue) and the last few words of the sound-bite (out-cue): Thus:

Note that at the end of the instruction you indicate, the approximate length of the sound-bite. This information is helpful to the editor who may be asked by the producer to either shorten or lengthen the story depending upon his evaluation of its worth and the needs of the program.

Suppose that you have in mind a fairly, simple story, one that would include the following elements: anchor lead-in, reporter voiceover, silent pictures, one sound-bite and a stand-up close at the top of your editing instructions you put the *slug*. A slug is several words designated by the desk to identify your story. Thus an example of a final script of a fairly simple story looks like this:

EXAMPLE OF TV SCRIPT**DEPUTY MAYOR RESIGNATION**

Time: 10:00 PM.

BELAY (reporter's name)

ANCHOR LEAD-IN: Mayor X today announced the resignation of Deputy Mayor Z and the appointment of a local Mayor to take his place. Belay Shibru has more on the story.
12 seconds

BELAY VO/VTR

beginning second tape:
 general shots,
 news conference
22 seconds

The Mayor's announcement came as no surprise. For months he has been visibly displeased with his deputy's public and private statements, etc.

MAYOR SOT

tape one,
15 seconds

In cue: <<Z failed to support
Out cue: ...govern this city>>

BELAY SOT

Stand-up, tape
 four, middle tape
 two
20 seconds

in cue: "The mayor's appointment of

out cue:for ETV news"

Total time, with anchor

1:09 minutes

Notice that, to the left of this rough script you are indicating the visuals for the story with particular attention to the visuals available for your voice-over. The right hand side of the script indicates the spoken words. This is the usual format of a TV news script-- picture instructions to the left, words to the right.

The story described above is obviously fast-paced, too much so for the significance of the event itself. Each element of the package is brief; 22 seconds, 15 seconds, 20 seconds. A story like that has pacing, that is, it doesn't dwell for too long on a single visual or aural element. The story hits the headlines in brief wham-bang style, but it offers little in the way of explanation or depth.

Pacing in TV is a factor that you simply cannot ignore. The medium has intrinsic requirements of time, mood, and movement, and if you fail to understand these, you run the risk of producing dull and lifeless stories.

How long should a sound-bite be? The shorter the better. What you are looking for in a sound-bite is impact--depth instead of length. Each of the elements in a news story should not be allowed to drag on. A voice-over should be about 20 to 30 seconds long, depending on the length of the cuts of the videotape and the power of the visuals. You can create pacing by cutting pictures of two or three seconds in length giving the effect of a kaleidoscope. However, even with the liveliest visuals, you should avoid talking *at* your viewers for too long a time. Break up your narrative with sound-bites. Furthermore, you should use the sound-bites to *tell* the story, not just to support or amplify what you have written.

For example, in a particular story you might write 20 seconds of voice-over narration, then move to a sound-bite of 15 seconds, to voice-over of 10 seconds, and then to three sound-bites of 12, 10 and 15 seconds, one following the other in quick progression. You would wrap it all up with a stand-up of 12 seconds. Each change for one kind of segment to another gives a sense of movement, action and pacing. The effect is that of montage. However, you must exercise

care when choosing these clips so that they make sense by relating them to each other in a natural way.

The use of B-roll is one of the more creative ornaments available for packaging of a story. In effect, the A-roll is where the sound is. The B-roll gives you the option of laying pictures over the sound shot in the field. These terms come from film rather than videotape. With film, you literally have two separate rolls on two separate reels, and they are marked A and B. With videotape the entire process is laid down on a single piece of tape.

However, the goal is the same. For example, suppose that you have done excellent sound-bites from an interview but the speaker is not too exciting and the visuals are rather dull. You could allow the speaker to talk (on the A-roll) for a while, with his face showing to establish who he is. Then while continuing the sound of his voice, you lay over (on B-roll) pictures of what he is talking about. This technique improves the pacing, because it offers visual change. It also supports the basic idea that in TV it is often better to show something than to talk about it.

Writing to Radio or TV

(1) Writing must be simple:

- (a) avoid writing in multi-syllabic styles (word-length should be short).
- (b) use short sentences by avoiding conjunctive phrases.

(2) The ear cannot double-scan as the eye:

- (a) avoid expression as: the former, the latter, etc.
- (b) don't put key words or names at the beginning of your sentences.
- (c) No quote signs. The major said and I quote "get of the town". This is clumsy. Use the following phrases.

- in his words
- as he put it

- he said and we quote him
- as he said
- he went on to say.

And finally, editing an exciting TV story is not necessarily the result of familiarity with principles and techniques, the craftsmanship is the result of practice on-the-job activities. With this also develops the sensitivity to visual materials, that is, the ability to compose stories in picture. Visual thinking is not yet well developed in the Ethiopian society.

Reference

Lewis, C.D (1984). **Reporting for Television**. New York: Columbia University Press.

Guidelines to Contributors

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 *The Ethiopian Journal of Education* publishes scholarly articles based on work in education and related areas.
- 1.2 Besides original research papers, EJE publishes book reviews, dissertation abstracts, short communications and comments on articles published in EJE.

2. STYLE AND FORMAT

Before submitting the manuscripts for publication in EJE, contributors should pay attention to the following requirements:

2.1 Title Page

- 2.1.1 The following should appear on the Title Page:-
 - a. The full title of the article;
 - b. The name(s) of the author(s);
 - c. The titles(s), academic positions(s) affiliation(s) of the author(s) referred to at the bottom of the page with the use of an asterisk if it is a single author or numerical subscripts against each name.
- 2.1.2 It is the responsibility of the authors to declare the amount of contribution made by each of the contributors. But normally, the following applies:
 - a. Equal contribution is presumed when the names are written in alphabetical order; or
 - b. The degree of contribution should be determined by the order in which the names appear, unless indications are given by the authors to the contrary

2.1.3 All correspondences will be made with the author whose name appears first (unless indicated otherwise).

2.2 *Length of an Article*

2.2.1 Manuscripts should not exceed 30 pages, including an abstract of about 100 words which should be provided on a separate page.

2.2.2 The manuscript should be typed, double spaced on one side of an A4 type white paper. A space of one inch should be left on the left and right margins as well as at the top and bottom of each page.

2.3 *Citation of Notes and References*

2.3.1 All materials, referred to or quoted must be acknowledged. Plagiarism is illegal and unethical.

2.3.2 Direct quotations should be as short as possible and should be reproduced exactly in all details (spelling, punctuation and paragraphing) as the original.

a. Short quotations of less than four lines are run into the text and enclosed in quotation marks.

b. Long quotations (i.e. more than five lines) should be set off from the text in a separate paragraph, indented (four spaces) and single spaced. Quotation marks are omitted.

2.3.3 References in the text should read as follows:

◆ Smith (1992:42) has suggested that....or

One educator (Flanders, 1970:16) has argued that...

◆ Use "et al." when citing a work by more than three authors. Example: Interaction analysis (Flanders et al., 1970) suggests...

- ◆ The letters a, b, c and so on should be used to distinguish citations of different works by the same author in the same year. Example: Daniel (1985a, 1985c) recommended that...

2.3.4 Essential notes should be indicated by consecutive subscript numbers in the text and collected on a separate page at the end of the text, titled 'Notes'. Such numbered notes should be kept to a minimum. Numbered notes should be used to make clarifications about the references used, to include points left out in the text, or to add some items readers may want to know.

2.3.5 All references cited in the text and other supporting materials should be listed alphabetically by author in a section entitled References or Bibliography and appearing after Notes. Ethiopian authors should be listed in alphabetical order of first name. Daniel Tadesse, for example, should be listed under D and not under T. Ethiopian names should be written in full in the Bibliography (i.e. first and second names) as they are given in the publication cited. Honorific titles such as Ato, Dejach, Dr, Wzro, etc. Should be avoided in citation or references.

A. Published Articles

The following are examples of different entries in References or Bibliographies.

- i) Kremmer, L. (1978). "Teacher's Attitude Towards Educational Goals as Reflected in Classroom Behavior" Journal of Educational Psychology, 70,6: 993-997.
- ii) Ayalew Shibeshi (1989). "Some Trends in Regional Disparities in Primary School Participation in Ethiopia" The Ethiopian Journal of Education, X, 1: 25-51.

Note: The volume and issue numbers should be entered exactly as they are given in the journals cited (i.e. in Roman or Arabic numerals).

B. Books

- i) Perrott, E. (1982). Effective Teaching: A Practical Guide to Improve Your Teaching. New York: Longman Inc.

Listing of several works by the same author should be in chronological order of the year of publication. Here is an example:

- ii) Ryans, D.G. (1989). Characteristics of Teachers. New Delhi: Starling Publishers(p) Ltd.
- iii) _____ (1972). Analyzing Teaching. New York: Macmillan Co. Ltd.

C. Contributions in Books

Philip. W.J. (1986). "Life in Classrooms" in Norris G. Haring, Analysis and Modification of Classroom Behavior, pp. 13-17. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

D. Contributions in Proceedings

Marew Zewdie and Fanta Suppa, "Attitudes of Teachers Towards the ESLCE". In Proceedings of the Workshop on Major Issues Related to the ESLCE and Possible Solutions, Nazareth 25-27 April 1991, pp. 235-257, Addis Ababa, Institute of Educational Research.

E. Conference/Seminar Papers

Amare Asgedom (1990). "Communication Theories and Instructional Practice: A Limited Effect Perspective" Paper presented at the First Annual Seminar of the Faculty of Education, 17-20 May, 1990. Nazareth, Ethiopia.

F. Unpublished Works

Tirussew Teferra (1989). The Psychology and Educational Problems of Handicapped Students in Addis Ababa University. A Research Report, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University.

3. OTHER IMPORTANT RULES TO CONSIDER

3.1 *Tables and diagrams:*

Tables and diagrams should be properly labeled and carefully drawn. They should have short titles. All footnotes to tables and all sources should be placed under the table.

3.2 *Section Headings:*

Major section headings must be centered on the page. Sub-headings must be aligned with the left margin.

3.3 *Language:*

English and Amharic are the languages of publication. Sexist and racist language should be avoided.

3.4 *Responsibility for Views*

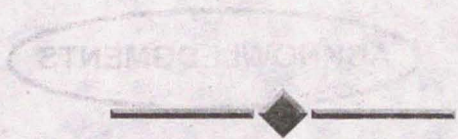
Any statements in an article accepted for publication remain the sole responsibility of the author and should in no way be construed as reflecting the opinions of the Editors or the Publisher of EJE.

3.5 *Copyright*

Authors submitting manuscripts do so on the understanding that if they are accepted for publication, copyright to the articles, including the right to reproduce in all forms and media, should be assigned exclusively to the publisher.

3.6 *Originality of the Paper*

EJE publishes only original investigations. Manuscripts for concurrent consideration by another journal are not acceptable. Already published manuscript should not also be submitted to EJE for publication.



All published and original investigations manuscripts for consideration should be submitted to the Editor. Manuscripts already published elsewhere should not be submitted to EJE for consideration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Institute of Educational Research is grateful to the continued financial support by the **Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission** from the **SAREC** funds (the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries).