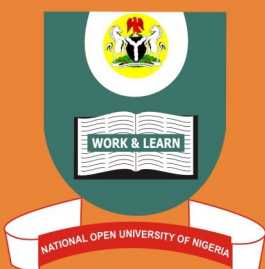


# JLS 601

# INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

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**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

**JLS 601**

**INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Pages**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction.....                         | 1   |
| Course Aims.....                          | 1   |
| Course Objectives.....                    | 1   |
| Working through this Course.....          | 2   |
| Course Materials.....                     | 2   |
| Study Units.....                          | 2   |
| Textbooks and References.....             | 3   |
| Assessment.....                           | 3   |
| Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA).....       | 3-4 |
| Final Examination And Grading.....        | 4   |
| Course Marking Scheme.....                | 4   |
| Course Overview.....                      | 4-5 |
| How to get the most from this course..... | 5-6 |
| Tutors and Tutorials.....                 | 6   |

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Welcome to JLS 601: Introduction to Journalism.**

Introduction to Journalism is a foundation course for students and practitioners in the field. It treats all the fundamental principles of writing and reporting for the mass media. Although particular attention is given to the practice of journalism in Nigeria, the basic principles still retain their universal meanings.

This course guide provides you with the necessary information about the contents, process, and materials with which to read and understand the subject matter of the course. The guide also specifies the amount of time you are required to spend on each unit of the assignments. It also gives you some guidance on your Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA). You are advised to attend the tutorial classes to discuss your difficulties with your tutorial facilitators.

## **COURSE AIMS**

The aims of this course are to:

- (i) Establish the history of journalism.
- (ii) Introduce the locus on the core business of journalism practice.
- (iii) Explain the related Laws of the Nigerian Nation that covers and regulates the practice of journalism.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

There are objectives to be achieved in unit of the course. You should read them before studying each unit. It is expected that by the time you have finished studying this course, you should be able to:

- (i) Demonstrate their understanding of the history and development of journalism in Nigeria;
- (ii) Identify and know the basic principles of journalistic writing;
- (iii) Write news stories of any kind by applying the principles of journalistic writing;
- (iv) Describe how news is gathered, processed and disseminated to readers; and
- (v) State the relevant laws that affect the journalism practice everyday.

## **WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE**

To fully benefit from this course, you are expected to read the study units and other materials provided by NOUN. Each unit contains self-

assessment exercise. At certain points in the module, you are required to carry out the assignments, which will be marked by assessors appointed by the University. Remember, all components of this course contribute to your total success. So, take your time to read, and study them effectively in order to successfully derive the best from the course.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

The main components of the course are:

1. Course guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment file
5. Presentation schedule

## **STUDY UNITS**

There are sixteen study units and a course guide in this course, and they are as follows:

### **MODULE ONE**

- Unit 1: The Development of Journalism: A World View
- Unit 2: Journalism Development in Nigeria: Pre-independence Era
- Unit 3: Journalism Development in Nigeria: Post-independence Era
- Unit 4: The Journalism Industry: Key structural make up

### **MODULE TWO**

- Unit 1: The Nature of News
- Unit 2: Writing the News
- Unit 3: Editing the News
- Unit 4: Headline Writing
- Unit 5: Essentials of Journalistic style
- Unit 6: Elements of Good News Reporting
- Unit 7: Interviewing and News sources

### **MODULE THREE**

- Unit 1: Contempt of Court
- Unit 2: Court Reporting
- Unit 3: Knowing the Courts in Nigeria
- Unit 4: Defamation Law
- Unit 5: Copyright Law

The first module, consisting of four units generally establishes the history of journalism from the worldview to the Nigerian perspective.

The second module, comprising seven units of study, focuses on the core business of journalism practice. The last and third module, explains the related laws of the Nigerian nation that cover and regulate the practice of journalism. Each unit is designed to engage you for one week (seven days) and includes: specific objectives, reading materials, self assessment exercise, together with tutor-marked assignments. It is hoped that these exercises will help you achieve the learning objectives in each unit of the course syllabus.

## **TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES**

Each unit has a set of recommended textbooks for references for study. You are also encouraged to read books, even when not recommended, but which contain relevant course themes. In addition, you can visit the Internet to enhance your chances of achieving your learning task.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment in this course is divided into two parts: They are (1) the continuous assessment or tutor marked assignments (TMA) and (2) a written examination. In doing the assignments, you are expected to apply all the information gathered during the course. The assignment must be submitted to your tutor for assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the presentation schedule and the *Assignment file*. The work that you submit for assessment will altogether account for 30% of your total course mark.

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Every unit in this course has a tutor marked assignment. You are required to attempt all the questions, and you will be assessed on all of them but the best four performances from the (TMAs) will be used for your 30% grading. One each will be selected from Modules 1 and 3, while two will be selected from any of the units in module 2. A greater weight is placed on module 2 because it reflects the core content of journalism practice.

When you have completed each assignment, send it together with a Tutor Marked Assignment form, to your tutor. Make sure each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline for submissions. If for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor for a discussion on the matter.

## FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination for this course will be three hours duration and will attract 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the kinds of self assessment exercises and tutor marked assignment you have previously encountered. And all aspects of the course will be assessed. You should use the time between completing the last unit, and taking the examination to revise the entire course.

## COURSE MARKING SCHEME

Here is a breakdown of how actual marking will be done.

| ASSESSMENT  | MARKS   |
|---|---|
| Assignments 1 – 4 The best from modules 1 and 3 and the two best from module 2. | Four assignments, best three marks of the four count for 30% of course marks. |
| Final Examination   | 70% of overall course marks   |
| Total   | 100% of course marks  |

## COURSE OVERVIEW

| MODULE/<br>UNIT | COURSE TITLE   | NUMBER<br>OF WEEKS/<br>ACTIVITY | NUMBER OF<br>ASSESSMENT |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                 | Course Guide   | Week 1                          |                         |
| One<br>Unit 1   | The Development of Journalism: A World view              | Week 1                          | 1                       |
| Unit 2          | Journalism Development in Nigeria: Pre-Independence Era  | Week 2                          | 1                       |
| Unit 3          | Journalism Development in Nigeria: Post Independence Era | Week 3                          | 1                       |
| Unit 4          | The journalism Industry: Key structural makeup           | Week 4                          | 1                       |
| Two<br>Unit 1   | The Nature of News                                       | Week 5                          | 1                       |
| Unit 2          | Writing the News   | Week 6                          | 1                       |
| Unit 3          | Editing the News   | Week 6                          | 1                       |
| Unit 4          | Headline Writing   | Week 7                          | 1                       |

|              |                                  |                 |           |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Unit 5       | Essentials of Journalistic style | Week 8          | 1         |
| Unit 6       | Elements of Good News Reporting  | Week 9          | 1         |
| Unit 7       | Interview and News sources       | Week 10         | 1         |
| Three Unit 1 | Contempt of Court                | Week 11         | 1         |
| Unit 2       | Court Reporting                  | Week 12         | 1         |
| Unit 3       | Knowing the Courts in Nigeria    | Week 13         | 1         |
| Unit 4       | Defamation Law                   | Week 14         | 1         |
| Unit 5       | Copyright Law                    | Week 15         | 1         |
|              | Revision                         | Week 16         |           |
|              | Examination                      | Week 17         |           |
|              | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>17 weeks</b> | <b>16</b> |

## HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. The advantage is that you can read and work through the study materials at your pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. Just as a lecturer might give you in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate times. Each of the study units follows the same format.

The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit intergraded with other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your studies. When you have finished the units, you should go back and see if you have achieved the objectives.

If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. Self Assessment Exercises are interspersed throughout the units and answers are given at end of the course. Working these tests will help you to achieve the objectives of the unit and prepare you for the assignments and examination.

You should do each Self Assessment Exercise as you come to it in the study unit. There will be examples given in the study units. Work through these when you have come to them.

## **TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

In this course, you have been provided with 15 hours of tutorials. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, a together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group. Your tutor will tutor, mark and comment on your assignments as well as keep a close watch on your progress in this course. So, you should try as much as possible to attend tutorials. It is the only chance you have in meeting your tutor face to face and asking all the questions you want or need to ask.

We wish you a successful course work.

|                        |
|------------------------|
| <b>MAIN<br/>COURSE</b> |
|------------------------|

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Course Code      | JLS 601   |
| Course Title     | Introduction to Journalism  |
| Course Developer | Dr. Idorenyin Udoesen Akpan, MNIPR, RPA<br>University of Calabar<br>Calabar   |
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| <b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b>   | <b>PAGE</b> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Module 1</b>   |             |
| <b>Journalism Development and Structure</b>                             | <b>1</b>    |
| Unit 1 The Development of Journalism: A Historical Approach .....       | 1 - 10      |
| Unit 2 Journalism Development in Nigeria: Pre-Independence Period ..... | 11-18       |
| Unit 3 Journalism Development in Nigeria: Post-Independence Era .....   | 19-26       |
| Unit 4 The Journalism Industry: Key Structural Make Up .                | 27-31       |
| <b>Module 2</b>   | <b>32</b>   |
| Unit 1 The Nature of News .....   | 32-41       |
| Unit 2 Writing the News .....   | 42-46       |
| Unit 3 Editing the Copy .....   | 47-58       |
| Unit 4 Headline Writing .....   | 59-70       |
| <b>Module 3</b>   | <b>71</b>   |
| Unit 1 Essentials of Journalistic Style .....                           | 71-77       |
| Unit 2 Elements of Good News Reporting .....                            | 78-81       |
| Unit 3 Interviewing and News Sources .....                              | 82-88       |
| <b>Module 4</b>   | <b>89</b>   |
| Unit 1 Journalism/Media Laws .....                                      | 89-94       |
| Unit 2 Court Reporting .....  | 95-102      |
| Unit 3 Knowing the Courts in Nigeria .....                              | 103-113     |
| Unit 4 Defamation Law .....   | 114-121     |
| Unit 5 Copyright Law .....  | 122-127     |



**MODULE 1****JOURNALISM DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE**

- Unit 1 The Development of Journalism: A Historical Approach
- Unit 2 Journalism Development in Nigeria: Pre – Independence Period
- Unit 3 Journalism Development in Nigeria: Post – Independence Era
- Unit 4 The Journalism Industry: Key Structural Make Up

**UNIT 1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISM: A HISTORICAL APPROACH****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Journalism: What it Means
  - 3.2 Nose for News
  - 3.3 The History of Journalism
  - 3.4 Technological Development
  - 3.5 American Dominance
  - 3.6 Politico-Economic Developments
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, we are looking first, at the history of journalism from the viewpoint of the technologies that were produced in aid of the practice. There is also a view of the development of journalism in relation to the political and economic situation peculiar to the societies under which the discussion is made. Before we set out to do that, let us first understand what the concept of journalism is all about.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define and explain what journalism means

- Describe the origins of writing and printing
- Explain how journalism started in Europe and America
- Highlight the different phases of journalism development in Nigeria

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Journalism: What it Means**

Journalism is the art and science of gathering, selecting and processing information or ideas, intelligence for dissemination to the public. The media of dissemination are usually the print or broadcast channels. In other words, there is journalism for the print and the broadcast. For both them, the journalist follows the same principles and is guided by the same determinants/values in gathering news materials. What makes them different, lies in the adaptation of the principles to bear upon or reflect the specific features of the medium. For instance, a news story for transmission in the radio medium should use words, which are simpler and mostly conversational. But, in the newspaper or magazines, words may not be as simple and less conversational.

Good journalism consists of the intelligent assembly of relevant facts. Getting the facts to work with is not an easy task. Yet, it is the most important responsibility of the reporter. Newsgathering therefore concerns the ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘How’ of identifying, selecting, collating and processing of information for publication in the newspaper, magazine, radio, television. To achieve all this, demands the special skill of nosing for news.

#### **3.2 Nose For News**

This is a journalistic parlance that describes the pulling force, zeal, anxiety and sensitivity of a journalist in the process of newsgathering. It requires that extreme observational tendencies and the ability to make deductions or meanings from factual assumptions. It does not call for any invention of facts, instead, an ability to assess or weigh the usefulness of answers from questions, especially when people, of today are particularly observant to help a journalist give answers that they think the journalist wants, rather than the ones he needs. In summary therefore, the ‘nose for News’ is

- an ability to recognise possibilities of an item of information
- an ability to recognise clues which through their casual search, lead to the discovery of important information
- the capacity to recognise the relative importance of a number of facts concerning the same general subject

## Self Assessment Exercise 1.1

State three primary roles of the journalists that have also given direction to the practice yesterday and today.

### 3.3 The History of Journalism

#### 3.3.1 Technological Developments

Strictly speaking, the word technology does not refer to mechanisms, but the way mechanisms are used. Thus, when using such terms as modern technology, or the latest technology, although inventions or new machines are at the heart of the matter, it is the processes in which they are used that constitute the technology. This should be borne in mind when studying the text by a journalism historian Robert Desmond (1978:1 - 12). He talks about the Roman's first daily newspaper. Rain or shine, soldiers in Caesar's garrison in the freezing Alps or burning Sahara were lined up in the parade ground at least once a week to have the *Acta Diurna* read to them. The soldiers were easier to control and easier to motivate, if they were reassured regularly that theirs was the greatest nation on earth. News of fresh conquests by their colleagues in other parts of the Empire, plans by the government to increase soldiers' pensions, gossip about the famous, and sports reports all helped convince them they were remembered and would get fed today and paid next week.

#### a) Writing

Desmond then takes several steps backward to trace the history of the ideographic and phonetic types of writing. The phonetic writing used here is based on a 26-letter Latin alphabet, and an Arabic numbering system. This systems is pre-dated, however, by ideographic systems. Originally, these systems used stylised drawings of objects. By a series of combinations and associations these pictographs could be made to represent abstract ideas as well as objects. For instance, the abstract notion of a home could be written down by melding the pictographs for a house, with those for a man and a woman. The notion of a family could be portrayed by combining the pictographs of home and children, and so on.

The three great early civilisations in India, Egypt, and China probably developed their own ideographic systems of writing independently. Today, only the Sino-Japanese versions survive. To those of us who only have to learn 26 letters and nine figures, the survival of an ideographic system in which people have to learn literally thousands of characters may seem strange. The Chinese see the advantages of this

system. The Latin alphabet is taught in schools in China and used in many forms of public communications such as street and shop names. However, the ideographic system has one advantage over the phonetic. The ideographs are the same for all languages. That is to say, there are many ethnic divisions in China, with many variations in language, but the ideographs are the same. The word for house may be very different in each language, but the ideograph is the same. Hence, the national television news is broadcast from Beijing in Standard Chinese, but for those who do not understand this language, most items of news are summarised on the screen in ideographic writing.

## **b) Paper and Printing**

Desmond (1978) further outlines the development of writing surfaces, from animal skins to woven papyrus; then to the invention of paper about 1800 years ago. The latter occurred in China, but the major breakthrough in paper manufacture took place in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Almost simultaneously, chemists discovered how to break the strong bonds of lignite that hold wood fibres together so all the tree – not just the bark – could be used for paper-making. Engineers then invented machines that could make paper continuously as a long strip. (Up to this point paper had been made out of fibres, such as cotton and linen that were also used to make cloth). In the final part of this reading, Desmond summarises the development of printing.

For a start, the evidence has grown stronger that Coster (or Koster) was using movable type before Gutenberg. George Putnam says in his two-volume “Books and Their Makers” during the middle ages that Coster was using movable type in 1426 and published his first book using this method in 1430. This pre-dates the available evidence as to when Gutenberg started using movable type.

Second, Peter Schoffer who made the breakthrough for mass-producing type seldom gets credit in the history of printing.

Third, Caxton is unlikely to have carried out much printing himself. By the scale of his time he was virtually an old man by the time he returned to England after retiring from being a wool-merchant and diplomat in Burgundy. The foreign assistants he brought with him back from Europe, headed by Wynkyn de Word, were the real printers. Caxton was an author and translator. Caxton used his knowledge of the contemporary public service to get legislation passed by Parliament that could be described as the world’s first guarantee of the Freedom of the Press.

### 3.3.2 American Dominance

This showcases the developments in journalism technology as viewed from the United States. This is probably an appropriate view because, after the steam-powered rotary press was invented by Walter Koenig in German, and first used in 1811 (three years earlier than in America), most of the significant new journalism technologies emerged in America. These included the telegraph, telephone, radio news, and television.

This list, however, should only be used as a guide. There is a certain ethno-centric bias in the extract by Schramm (1975). For example, the town of Schenectady is credited as being the place from which the first regular television schedules were broadcast. Other countries make rival claims that such broadcasts were originated from their soil. The most widely accepted of these claims is that the honour goes to the British Broadcasting Corporation in London in 1936.

Today, the place of origin of new journalism technology is hardly relevant. It is not significant if John Logie Baird invented television. What matters is that there are more people involved with American television coverage at an Olympic Games than competitors. What matters is that Olympic officials time high points in the Games' schedules to coincide with prime-time viewing in the Americas. What matters is that without the money generated through and by the American television networks, the Olympic Games as we know them may as well have some hitches.

However, the present dominance of the mass media by America is not something that will last in perpetuity. Just as the focus of media technology shifted from China to Europe, and then to America, so, too, will the focus move on to Asia and Africa.

Already there are signs this is happening. For instance, the present dominance of American and/or Japanese media is largely due to the expensive and complex back-up systems these two societies can afford to support their dominant news media. Even today it normally takes many hundreds of people to bring an overseas item of news to the front pages of American daily newspaper, radio newscasts, or television screens. But the 1991 coverage by CNN of the gulf War from within Iraq showed that a story could be covered round-the-clock by fewer than ten people using portable satellite phones. Since then, satellite technology has been improved, and the cost of digital video has been reduced so that it can now come within many family budgets. Soon individual journalists will be able to afford the portable technologies to cover stories for all types of media, without the backup of a newspaper

empire, or a television network. Such a situation might lead to a new type of less-restricted, independent journalist, covering the world's news without political and economic interference.

On the other hand, it might lead to more restricted journalism as publishers no longer have to employ staff journalists, but can pick and choose which version of events pleases them and their customers most from the different ones offered by the many new technically-independent freelance journalists.

### **3.3.3 Politico-Economic Developments**

The history of journalism in England is the next step. Cranfield (1975) of the University of Newcastle traces how the Tudor monarchy whittled away the freedoms gained in the 1484 Act until the Crown had total control of all publications. Even when Parliament gained ascendancy over the monarchy there was little inclination by the elected government to relax the controls on publishing. Only party politics prevented the Printing Act being renewed in 1695. This lapse in government control meant England was the only country in Europe at that time where the publishing of newspapers was unlicensed.

#### **a) Freedom of the Press**

A few weeks after he became king of Prussia in 1740, Frederick the Great introduced a process that partially freed the Press by removing virtually all censorship (Koser 1907: 158-9). He even tolerated attacks on himself in books, plays, pamphlets, and especially in the newspaper he ordered to be established in Berlin. Just across the border in Denmark, a young doctor from Prussia, Johann Struensee, took over the effective rule of the country in 1770 with the help of his lover, the queen Caroline Matilda (Williams (1907: 415 – 118). One of his first edicts was the granting of unrestricted freedom of the press. Unfortunately, a prime target of the new free press was Struensee and his relationship with Caroline Matilda. After a sustained press campaign, Struensee was put on trial and beheaded in 1772.

The concept of a free press jumped the 20km gap between Denmark's Copenhagen and Sweden's town of Malmo. In 1997, the world's first law to specifically guarantee the freedom of the press – including limitations to this freedom – was introduced in Sweden. Since then freedom of the press has been guaranteed in the laws of many nations. In the United States and the former Soviet Union such a guarantee is enshrined in each nation's constitution; although the Soviet guarantee differed from its Western counterparts by guaranteeing freedom of access of its citizens to the columns of the press.

## b) Development of Newspapers

Anthony Smith (1979: 7 – 15) offers an explanation why the birthplace of printing. China was one of the last places to introduce mass-circulation newspapers. Smith also expands on Desmond's claim that modern newspapers and accompanying forms of journalism did not emerge in the West until about the 1850s. The author outlines four stages before the nineteenth century in the European development of publishing news. All were in book form, with the first stage being known as relations. These contained a description of a single event that was written long after the event occurred. The second stage was the collection of these relations into a publication known as a Coranto. The first English prototype of a daily newspaper was the *Daily Courant* (or Coranto) which appeared during the latter part of this stage, in 1702.

The publications in the third stage were known as *diurnals*. These dealt with more recent events and were published weekly – provided a sufficient number of significant events had occurred during the previous week. However, the diurnals ranked their information in chronological order.

The fourth stage was the mercury. Although these publications were still in book form, according to Smith, their writers adopted some of the basic practices used by today's journalists. For instance, for the time information was selected and ordered in ways that would most interest or influence the readers.

In another book by Smith (1978:147) that incorporates an historical view of journalism. The Politics of information, he quotes the nineteenth century poet Rev. George Crabbe as describing journalists as:

“Some champions for the rights that prop the crown.  
Some sturdy patriots sworn to pull them down; some  
neutral powers, with secret forces fraught. Wishing for  
war, but willing to be brought.”

A pessimist might say that, in the intervening years, the role of journalists has not changed, only the technology. For instance, during the five years before the start of the nineteenth century, two New York newspapers “The World” (owned by Joseph Pulitzer) and “The Journal” (owned by William Randolph Hearst) were engaged in a circulation battle. After running the gamut of stories on local sex, crime and scandal, the World began to highlight often fictitious stories about the cruelty and excesses of the soldiers in the Spanish colony of Cuba.

The Journal responded by sending a dozen of the cream of its reporters and artists to milk as many human interest stories about the alleged civil war that was about to erupt. After several months one of the artists telegraphed Hearst asking to come home because there was no war. Hearst's reply was: "You supply the pictures. I'll supply the war". Sure enough, public opinion in American had been whipped up to such a fever pitch against the Spanish over the "exploited" Cubans that Hearst was able to persuade his government that the almost certainly accidental sinking of an American warship near Havana in 1898 was cause enough to start the Spanish-American War.

### c) **The Fourth Estate**

Like Smith, Jeremy Tunstall in *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the present Day*, identifies four stages in the development of journalism. However, Tunstall argues that these stages are myths that have been constructed post facto in attempts to raise the status and value of journalists.

The first of these mythical stages was "the heroic struggle against state control of the press, culminating in the establishment of the fourth Estate". The tag of Fourth Estate helped reinforce this first myth. This was created by Lord Macaulay for journalists when he suggested that they were a fourth-part of government – after the estates, or classes, of the Lords Temporal (peers of the realm and members of the House of Lords), Lords Spiritual (archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, also sitting in the House of Lords), and the Commons (members of the lower house).

Tunstall's second mythical stage was the "key role of the Fourth Estate in maintaining a mature democracy" as watchdogs.

The third stage was the alleged transformation of journalist from venal hacks into socially responsible people committed to the ideals of "objectivity, accuracy, and truth"; and fourth, "the contest within the press between commercial and non-commercial goals, between conceptions of the press as an industry and as a public service" (1978: 17).

Smith also pours cold water on such a romanticised view of journalism history. He sees the needs of trade and the economy of particular societies dictating the rate of development and spread of journalism. He says, for instance, that the fact that the Far East had a 500 – year march on Europe in the development of printing and yet had to wait for Europeans to introduce the idea of newspapers only demonstrates this hypothesis. There was no commercial or economic need for newspapers

for the common reader in the highly-bureaucratized, pre-nineteenth century China.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 1.2**

Discuss how technology, politics and economy have significantly influenced the growth of journalism practice today.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The newspaper is not just the oldest of the popular mass media; it has also tended to serve as the training ground for many journalists.

Without doubt, the press is an integral part of the society and needs to be kept healthy. It is the greatest public service, which hinges its performance on investigative journalism, a tool used to perform the watch dog function of the press.

The next question is to do with where the press is going with the speed of technological advancement of the century. What sort of future does the newspaper have in the new dispensation? Answers to these questions will be found by communication researchers.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit so far, you have learnt that:

- Journalism is not just an art of news gathering and selecting, but of processing and disseminating of intelligence to the public;
- Good journalism consists of intelligent assembly of facts which can be enhanced and facilitated by the journalists development and use of the skill of ‘nosing for News’;
- Technology makes easy the work of the journalist at all levels – newsgathering, news professing and news dissemination;
- Technological developments in the field of journalism cuts across the globe with each continent of the world wielding dominant power as time and chance permit it;
- The good journalism is significantly influenced by the political and economic support given it by any society. Such political structures and policy can dictate the length and breath of freedom given the press or can mar such freedom and discourage investment in the journalism progression.

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the significant trends in the world that have influenced the growth of journalism.

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## **UNIT 2 JOURNALISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 The Period of Missionary Journalism
  - 3.2 The Period of Alien-Dominated Press
  - 3.3 The Indigenous Press
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, the issue of press development is revisited but this time, the Nigerian society before independence in 1960 is given special attention. The direction of our discourse will reflect a blend of two important trends. While you will read about the kinds and number of papers that sprang up at every stage of our discussion, you would also notice that such developments are discussed side by side with the propelling political and economic interest of the participants of those periods or eras.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you are expected to:

- Identify the major publications of the eras under study
- List the key personalities/players during such era
- Describe the major roles and contributions played by the owners and participants in the press business

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 The Period of Missionary Journalism**

The history of Print Journalism began in Nigeria with the installation of the Printing Press at Calabar by the Presbyterian Mission in 1846. The presence of the printing press had a religious undertone, in the sense that books, pamphlets, short essays and short stories that were produced had their contents focused primarily on religious matters and other cultural interests. Although, this development did not last long and has often

been left out in the chronicles of print development in Nigeria, other missionaries and religiously inclined business conscious men took a cue from the Calabar experience. Consequently, Rev. Henry Townsend, a missionary journalist, established a printing press in Abeokuta in 1854. Five years afterwards i.e. in 1859, the “WE IROHIN FUN A WON ARA EGBA ATI YORUBA” was founded. The newspaper translated into English Language means “Newspaper in Yoruba for Egba and Yoruba people”. The newspaper was published fortnightly but later became bilingual in 1860, when the English version was added to the Vernacular edition. “Iwe Irohin” was purely a religious newspaper, publishing news about church activities, particularly, the establishment of new churches, the arrival and departure of missionaries and even the death of religious dignitaries and traditional rulers.

The newspaper’s (Iwe Irohin) primary objective was to cultivate good and appreciable reading attitude among the people of the area and even beyond. As a result of this, the newspaper expanded its news coverage to cover non-religious events such as those about trade and commerce, exhibitions, sports, health, hygiene, moralistic, educational and other news items of national consequences, crime reports, immoral news abstracts, alcoholic promotions, etc.

Although “Iwe Irohin” ceased to exist in 1867, as a result of ‘IFOLE’, the popular uprising in Yoruba land that saw many Europeans feeling or expelled from Abeokuta, the newspaper was said to be unique in several ways. Omu (1980) writes that Iwe Irohin was the best organised of the mission papers at the time. It was also the first paper to be published in African Language.

Rev. Henry Townsend’s trial at newspaper publishing could be called the “Preliminary period in the evolution of the Nigerian Press”, while Hope Waddell’s attempts could be described as the evolution of the “Commercial Press in Nigeria”.

The characteristics of Townsend’s “Iwe Irohin” were equally remarkable. It had a cover price of 30 cowries per copy, while the English edition was sold for one penny,

It had a crude technical production, since the modern press technology was yet to become known. Its layout was crowded and dull, and without pictures. The newspaper had two large columns running down from its masthead and filled with text in uniform types.

The Iwe Irohin regularly carried anti-slavery editorials and many of its religious publications were either slanted or coloured to promote the

crusade against slavery. The paper actually spear headed the attack on slavery.

However, other publications of the early missionaries as documented by Nwuneli (1985) were:

- The African Gleamer published in 1917 by the African Church Organisation of Nigeria (ACON) - English Language.
- African Hope (1919) by ACON – English Language.
- Leisure Hours (1918) by CMS – English Language.
- Nigerian Baptist (1923) by Nigerian Baptist Convention, English and Yoruba Language.
- Nigerian Methodist (1925) by the Methodist Church – English Language.
- African Challenge (1934) by Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) - English language.
- African Christian (1930) by African Church Organisation - English language,
- African Chronicles (same as in No.7.)
- Catholic life (1936) by the Roman Catholic Church – English language.
- Labarian Ekklesiye (1947) by the Muslim Society of Nigeria – English and Arabic languages.

The contributions of these missionary papers were summarized by Fred Omu (1978), as having significant influences on West African Society. The newspapers introduced the first generations of educated Africans to what has become an intrinsic part of enlightened society in Europe and other continents. Their examples gave inspiration to Africans who then exploited the business (news papering) and employed it as the chief weapon of exercising power as well as participating in government.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 2.1**

What are the main features of ‘Iwe Irohin’ that you have read?

### 3.2 The Period of the Alien-Dominated Press

The alien dominated press simply covers the period non-Nigerians enjoyed the freedom of publishing newspapers for Nigerians. The first recorded impression of this era was initiated by Robert Campbell on June 6, 1863. It was called the ANGLO-AFRICAN newspaper. As a weekly newspaper, Anglo-African had a circulation figure of between 30-50 copies and was sold for three pence. The primary interest of the publisher, Robert Campbell was to exploit the growing interest in western education and enlightenment in Lagos, by providing cheap and accessible material, which would educate, inform and entertain its readers. Robert Campbell's publication was Nigeria's second newspaper to be launched after Townsend's attempt. Campbell's "Anglo-African" devoted its front pages to publishing, advertisement, notices, and announcements. It carried local and overseas news, and a lot of editorials dealing with the issues of those years. It was ahead of Townsend's "Iwe Irohin" in news coverage and editorial issues. The newspaper later ceased to exist on December 30, 1865 due to some financial constraints.

That the Anglo-African ceased to exist did not mean that other aliens were discouraged from venturing into the business. In fact, certain conditions or factors engendered greater interest and zeal in the minds of the aliens. Some of the factors were identified as:

- The uncompromising difference between the teachings of missionaries and their overt behaviour and practices. This was primarily evident in the increasing difficulty to reconcile missionary protestation of Christian ethics or doctrines with the evidence of glaring hypocrisy exemplified in Henry Townsend's desperate fight against Ajayi Crowther.
- The educational or literacy level was increasing tremendously in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos and other cities along the West African Coast.
- The rapid growth of printing industry in urban centres in the progressive enterprise of newspaper publication.
- The increasing nature of competition arising from aggressive business acumen which made advertising almost an inevitable tool of immense marketing efforts. The channels for such marketing goals and publicity were no doubt the organs of the press.

Such publications that followed the footsteps of Anglo-African were the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser established by Richard

Beale Blaize on November, 10, 1880. The Lagos Times was published fortnightly and sold for six pence. Its presence was significant in setting the ball of militant journalisms and nationalism rolling in Nigeria. Because of the stance, it was not patronized by the colonial government. The Lagos Times died in 1883 out of financial constraints.

Prior to the exit of Lagos Times, Blackall Benjamin had established the Lagos Observer on February 4, 1882. He recruited the services of Dr. N.T. King and Robert Campbell to run the paper. The two-hired gentlemen later died in 1884 signalling also the death of the Lagos Observer. Actually, B. Benjamin continued single-handedly with the paper until 1890 when the possibilities of the paper's survival was questionable. So, the Lagos observer ceased to exist.

Its death notwithstanding the Lagos Observer was noted for its success in terms of its longer life span and remarkable effort in political emancipation. It actually attempted to balance radicalism with decorum. Other newspapers founded by aliens in Nigeria included the:

- Iwe Irohin Eko founded by Andrew Thomas in 1888, November 3.
- The Weekly Times by John Payne Jackson, a Liberian born businessman on May 3, 1890.
- The Lagos Weekly Record founded by John B. Jackson in 1890. This newspaper became one of the most popular press having the greatest continuity and long life in the history of early newspapers in Nigeria. It was also reputed for its strong views on politics and total political independence for Africa.
- The Standard paper by George Alfred Williams on September 16, 1894.
- The Lagos Echo founded by J.S. Leigh on September 12, 1898.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 2.2**

What main reasons encouraged aliens to avoid being discouraged in their business of journalism?

### **3.3 The Period of Indigenous Press**

One of the early indigenous newspapers was the Nigeria Pioneer. It was founded by Kitoyi Ajasa in 1914. The newspaper was pro-governmental

and so, did not encourage radicalism of the nationalists. For this reason, the newspaper was unpopular. It died in 1936. Ernest Ikoli came into the scene with the African Messenger on March 10, 1921. He is said to have been the first man outside Yoruba land to emerge into prominence in Lagos politics. The African Messenger lasted for five (5) years before it metamorphosed into the Nigerian Daily Times, after being bought over by the then Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company in 1926.

Being a gentleman agreement between Adeyemo Alakija and Richard Barrow, the African Messenger transformed into the Daily Times, was headed by Ernest Ikoli as the first Editor under the management of Nigerian printing and publishing company, NPPC. Like its predecessor, the Nigerian Daily Times was pro-governmental and its relationship with the government was like that of the Times of London and the British government. The Daily Times was later made a subsidiary of the London Daily Mirror in 1948. This co-operation brought some positive changes to the Times of Nigeria in many ways. Notable among such development was the general treatment of news and page planning which witnessed remarkable improvement from what had existed before in the publishing scene then. The improvement were very much peculiar to the outlook of the Times and Mirror of London.

As a result to this relationship, the Daily Times was solidly supported financially culminating in a highly equal competition with other newspapers of that time. It virtually made the business of publishing practically uncomfortable for other papers by attracting good and competent personnel with the baits of mouth-watering incentives. It also expanded greatly and increased its circulation capacity to about 62,000 in 1956, when the Sunday Times was introduced. Generally, the Daily Times was not liked by most Nigerians due to nationalist radicalism. It relatively lost the respect of the general public and was not of any significant consequence in the aggressive pursuit of national independence for the country.

Few other papers that co-existed with the Nigerian Daily Times and afterwards were:

- The Lagos Daily News by Herbert Macauley and Akilade Caulcrick in 1927.
- The Nigerian Daily Telegraph by Akin Fagbemo Beyioku on November 12, 1927.
- Akede Eko by I. B. Thomas on June 1, 1929.

- The Nigerian Daily Mail by Ernest Ikoli in 1930.
- The West African Pilot in 1937 by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. This newspaper was a pillar in Nigerian Journalism. It was well positioned and could be compared to a local training school for journalists, because it produced great future journalists – amongst them were Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Tony Momoh. Also, the Pilot was the first newspaper to introduce cartoon strips into Nigerian Journalism.

The West African Pilot was the most popular nationalist newspaper of all times in Nigeria. Journalistically, the W/A Pilot brought about great innovations in the general newspaper outlook and typography. It was noted for its tremendous use of pictures and modern headline forms. Dr. Azikiwe also owned and edited other papers such as the Eastern Nigerian Guardian, The Eastern Sentinel, and the “Northern Advocates”.

By 1958, two newspapers, The Daily Express and Sunday Express were launched from a partnership pact between Roy Thomson of Canada and the then ruling party in the Western Region. This resulted in the formation of Allied Newspapers of Nigeria, a new body that absorbed the former Amalgamated Press of Nigeria.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 2.3**

Briefly outline the major policy thrust of the West African Pilot and the Nigerian Daily Times.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The early press in Nigeria set the pace for today’s journalism. It is for this foundational thrust that made Nigerian press to be rated high amongst other nations.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

On the whole, the general picture of the press during the colonial or pre-independence of Nigerian history can be said to have been in the remarks of Dr. Azikiwe, thus:

If we analysed the earliest newspapers Published in this country in the first 70 years of existence, the following will emerge; The newspapers were mainly periodicals, published weekly, fortnightly or monthly; The

proprietors were invariably their editors, With the exception of Iwe Irohin, the Nigerian Pioneer and the African Messenger, the Journalist were mostly aliens, the period of survivals of these papers were very short; Indeed averaging three and half years.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Compare and contrast the major features of the following newspapers in terms of their objectives, contents and format:

- (i) Iwe Irohin
- (ii) Anglo African
- (iii) West African Pilot, and
- (iv) Nigerian Daily Times

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 3 JOURNALISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: POST INDEPENDENCE ERA**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 The Modern Nigerian Press
  - 3.2 The Press in Civil War and Military Nigeria
  - 3.3 The Press in the Second Republic
  - 3.4 The Post Republic Press
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, the final part of the press development is discussed. Just as it was stated in the previous unit, the direction of our discussion will reflect not only the significant newspapers and events of the different periods, but also the political, social and economic issues that formed the basis of their existence.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you are expected to:

- Know the major publications during the period of Nigerian independence;
- Know the key personalities/players during such period;
- Understand the character of the press at periods shortly after independence.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 The Modern Nigerian Press**

The modern Nigerian Press history covers the period of independence in Nigeria and years afterwards. And for the Nigerian Press then, it was once nationalistic in nature later very regionalistic. It was preoccupied with the business of enhancing regional autonomies, preserving national independence but mostly promoting sectional, tribal and the very selfish interest of those in leadership positions. These confused and

provocative roles of the press at that time gave the independent press a rather justified and severely limited success.

The independent press, having been assured of independence on October 1, 1960 shifted aside its colonial militant advocacy of nationalism to embrace fresh responsibilities as vehicles of internal political and governmental control, of struggle and of maintenance of power. A social observer, Dr. Ahaziah Umanah once described the independent press as having some functional utilisation which were antagonistic, subversive of national cohesion, politically schismatic, fragmentary and fractious in social mobilisation. It seems apparent that the 'fragmentary' and parochial nature of the press of this period paved way for all government information apparatus, both at the regional and national levels assuming new dimensions to the general information communication activities.

Within the regions, these official media channels were mainly manipulated by their respective governments and politicians for selfish advantages as well as against their local rivals, and their national political counterparts. It was the partisanship of the press operation mostly visible at the regional level that perhaps spurred the federal government to establish its own newspapers – The Morning Post and the Sunday Post, in addition to Nigerian Daily Times. All these newspapers existed to preserve national power and counter possible attacks or encroachment of uncompromising regional forces into national interest or matters. Perhaps, it may be reasonable to mention a few or allude to little of the Press activities of Independence.

In Western Nigeria, The Nigerian Tribune founded by Chief Awolowo in 1947 and later controlled by his wife through a major stockholding, was an opposition newspaper, particularly with the entrance of Chief Akintola as the political boss of Western Nigeria.

The Tribune, once the mouthpiece of Action Group now 'replaced' by the Daily Sketch later became the mouthpiece of Akintola's NNDP.

The Sketch was founded in 1964. It was used as a weapon in the political vendetta between Nigerian National Democratic Party NNDP and the Action Group that ensued after Awolowo's conviction and imprisonment on a charge of treasonable felony. Mr. Ayo Ojewumi, the Editor of Tribune was also sent to jail after the newspaper commented on possible irregularities in the budget of Western Nigerian government. However, with the release of Awolowo, The Tribune, alongside its vernacular edition Irohin Yoruba began to flourish again.

In Eastern Nigeria, various newspapers were published to serve the people's interest. Notable amongst such publications were the Eastern Observer printed in Onitsha; the Nigerian Spokesman and the Eastern Sentinel, all constituting members of Zik's group of publications. There was also the COR Advocate, a paper printed in Ikot Ekpene and serving as a mouthpiece of the minority states of the Eastern Region. The Nigerian Outlook, an English daily published in Enugu by the Eastern Nigeria Information Services served as a government/party (NCNC) organ. Its regional partisanship was said to be unquestionable.

In the Northern Region of Nigeria, the story was not different. The Nigerian Citizen, a bi-weekly, subsidised by the Northern Nigerian Government acted as the principal mouthpiece of the Moslems and the leadership of the NPC. Published by the Gaskiya Corporation in Zaria, it was a strong advocate of Northern supremacy and NPC's policies, programmes and ideology. There were also minor ethnic media challenges such as the Daily Comet, the Northern Star, all of Kano and the Middle Belt Herald of Jos. These were principally organs of the Ibo State Union in the North, and served the interest of Ibos living there. All of them ceased to exist by early 1968.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 3.1**

Outline the character of the press at independence. Do you think the character complements the ideals or values of journalism practice today?

### **3.2 The Press in Civil War and Military Nigeria**

The press during the Civil War period can be said to have been characteristically propagandistic, partisan and subjective; and in terms of a national sense of purpose/decorum, very mischievous as well as destructive of the individual human personality.

It could be maintained that the principal actors of the Civil War were Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu on the Biafran side and General Yakubu Gowon on the Nigerian or national front. The central reason behind the eruption of the war is attributed to the pogrom committed by the Northern Moslems against Southern Christians, more especially the Christian Ibos. This resulted in the secession move of Lt. Col. Ojukwu and his government (Eastern Nigeria) from the National geo-political composition.

The press at this period was said to be exercising the highest degree of propaganda in the Northern scene. This was exemplified by the initial reference of 'Radio Biafra' to General Gowon as 'Boy Yakubu Wagon' and the retortion of the Federal Radio to Ojukwu as a 'Rebel Leader'.

In 1968, Ojukwu had sought the services of a foreign-based Public Relations firm, Markpress in Geneva, to improve on his propaganda machinery. This action paid-off effectively for the Biafran side as the world was made to almost believe without reservation, the exaggeration of the truth behind the killing of the Ibos in the North. At one time, the figure was inflated to 30,000 Ibos (being killed).

Armed by the poor propaganda machinery of the Federal Military Government, the Nigerian side began a belated process of counter propaganda of the claims and counter claims of the Biafran government. Taking advantage of Biafran claim that, it is the Ibos that mainly controlled or perhaps exist in the East and thus were subjected to inhuman conditions of acute starvation resulting from the war, the federal mouthpiece (Radio Nigeria) took side in preaching against the assumed dominance of the Ibos in the East and indeed elsewhere. It however sang and amplified the slogan 'To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done'. No doubt, that same task kept the military in politics for long. But how did the press help in keeping the task? The answer to the question can be feasible if one acknowledges the character of the press in the military period or years, (before the second republic). Its character was indeed Laurelistic'. This description means that the press was content with its rather unethical successes, honour and reputation or feats of singing praises of military leadership and pre-occupied with the promotion of personalities and seeking after mass media actors' gratification and rewards.

The press also became blind to the pervasive social ills, oblivious of the erosion of individual and corporate rights of citizens and uncaring of, if not participants in the corruption that infested the Nigerian body politics. The press however generated a general sense of awareness amongst the populace, with regards to Gowon's cardinal programme of 3Rs – Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation.

### **3.3 The Press in the Second Republic**

The military men paved way for the return of civilian government. A fresh opportunity for the masses to have a say and exercise their potentials in the governance of their country. This time, the parliamentary system of government which existed in the first republic was discarded and the presidential system mould out of American political structure was brought forward for experimentation.

In spite of these modifications, the cankerworm of partisanship and regionalism of the first republic thought to have rested in 'pieces' raised its hideous structure again. In other words, significant features of the

second republic paralleled with the first republic, hence, making no change. These features were that:

- A correlation existed between political parties of the first republic and the second republic.
- Politics of the first republic was seen to have reflected the second republic, in spite of some constitutional provisions in the 1979 constitution.
- No lesson seems to have been learnt from the military regime between 1996 – 1978.

Based on these features, the second republic was seen as a ‘replay’ of the first civilian rule. In this direction Peter Enahoro’s observation of the status of the mass media towards the close of 1968 as lacking men of status as well as vision to recognise danger and oppose wrong was factually matured during the second republic as opposed to its prematurity at the time of observation.

The press at second republic metamorphosed into becoming political sycophants. The journalists allowed themselves to be used as tools for self-satisfaction. They discarded the ethic of the profession and advanced to the highest political ‘Bidder’, ‘Messiah’, or anybody who has ‘rewards’ to offer. The media, instead of classifying political issues for public evaluation, resorted to darkening them or proving ignorant of their dedication to independence, truthfulness, decency, impartiality and objectivity. Whether private or government owned, the mass media were organs of the many political parties that existed, of the states, of the Federal Government and of the regions. It was an era that the NPN press, NPP press, GNPP press, PRP press, etc. existed, each with strong loyalty and yearnings for increased gratification and persistent patronage. For the few ethically and professionally conscious journalists, the time was not right for ‘saintly manners’ as their cajoled and corrupted colleagues battered them with harassments while the government and every instrument of the state clobbered them. Indeed, the second republic press was in nutshell, exceedingly hypocritical to play the watchdog game, while helping to hasten the economic, social, moral and political decadence of Nigeria through their partisanship, sycophancy and slants.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 3.2**

As one of the correlates of the first and second republic press, no lessons seem to have been learnt from the military eras. Discuss those lessons that ought to have been learnt.

### 3.4 The Post-Republic Press

A flashback to the welter of decrees that the Federal Government felt strong to promulgate, ostensibly to facilitate the task of rebuilding the economy with the minimum diversion, the era of Buhari and Idiagbon must rank as the most hazardous for the practice of journalism. The era itself was presumingly a blessing in disguise or call it a necessary evil.

This is because, the death of the Nigerian press, the resurrection and its revitalisation were to be realised during the Buhari/Idiagbon regimes. It was a period when all newspapers and periodicals wrote almost the same thing, in almost the same manner and with an “almost” uniform pagination. In the same vein, the radio and TV stations were almost broadcasting the same thing at the same time slot and almost at the same length of time.

The apparatus of censorship were so daring, brandished and sharpened to precision that, the intolerable state of social existence emboldened the mass media actors, challenged the mass media consumers and the general citizenry towards revitalising the Nigerian press. The journalists themselves became once again truly reflective of their profession and became dedicated to the ideals of journalism.

This determination to be right, resulted when their initial sycophancy earned them not only Decree No.4 and Decree No.2, under which several journalists had to operate in a terrain full of ‘Mines and Traps’ but also intense harassments, stage-managed trials and imprisonments, temporary closure of publishing organisations as well as seizures of publications.

The decline of the Buhari/Idiagbon regime gave birth to existential government of President Ibrahim Babangida. His government deriving strength from the weakness of the predecessor’s regime, vowed a libertarian press and a social condition that will not only ensure the existence of, but works to enhance human rights in all ramifications. The regime’s promises were appreciated by Nigerians who heaved a sigh of relief from the draconian years. Then came an immediate abrogation of stringent decrees like the Decree No.4 and released from jail of some of the press actors that were detained, etc. The personal charm of President Babangida added a personal touch to his being courted and even promoted by the press.

Although at the initial period of the administration, the promises and vows for the preservation of a libertarian press committed to a more investigative, advocative, agitative and provocative journalism seem utterly realistic, events in the later years of the regime punctuated the

original intents of the government to promote a libertarian press. The dwindling state of the privileged press freedom of the Babangida regime, perhaps, influenced the return to the authoritarian press in the regime of General Sani Abacha.

The press in Abacha's regime apart from bringing back the memories of colonial censorship, again promoted the ideals of controlled social responsibility on the part of surviving journalists. However, all of the gaggings were to be challenged and promoted in the wake of another democratic experimentations of the third republic, now headed by a retired military general and former military Head of State, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Just as the press gave African nationalism its primary means of dissemination and propaganda, it also gives politicians their prime means of reaching national audiences and of attempting to secure a national following. It is fair to say that the primary motivation for producing a newspaper in Nigeria is political rather than commercial. A Nigerian politician who has no access to, or is not reported by any news medium is at a grave disadvantage. The mass media report politics, they are also political institutions of central importance to the functioning of Nigerian democracy.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The more the harassment, the bolder the press. Overall, the Nigerian press is still rated one of the freest.

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Would you prefer the press during the military regimes to the press during the civilian/democratic regimes? Give reasons in support of your stance.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 4 THE JOURNALISM INDUSTRY: KEY STRUCTURAL MAKE UP**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Structure of News Industry
  - 3.2 The Editorial Department
  - 3.3 The Production Department
  - 3.4 The Business Department
  - 3.5 The Administrative Adjunct
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 6.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, the structural make-up of journalism industry is discussed. A reporter needs a thorough familiarity with the set-up of his organisation in order for him to understand and appreciate the intrigues of newspapers production.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Identify the major personnel in the news industry
- Highlight their key functions of their jobs

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Structure of News Industry**

The news industry is a complex one. The structure or organisation depends mainly on the resources available to the owner. The resources in turn influences the size of the organisation irrespective of the size of particularly the print media house, certain key personnel must be put in place to perform certain legitimate functions. Where the size of the organisation does not accommodate all of the key staff, then some functions are easily combined for adjunct personnel to perform. We shall now look at the key personnel and their duties.

### 3.2 Editorial Staff

The key editorial staffs are the reporters and editors.

- (i) **Reporters:** These are people or specialist who see and report events for the public. They are actually news gatherers. They are the basic set of journalist. Without the reporters, all other personnel may have nothing to do in the newsroom. The reporter's main function is to be at the scene of event, whether assigned by the editor or a regular beat. He is the one to first apply the elements, values, determinants and essentials of good news reporting. Modern art of reporting has narrowed down the areas of reporters' specialization. Special reporters have been assigned to report crimes, court proceedings and assembly procedures, industry, sports, labour, entertainment etc. In each of these fields, there are always a techniques and ways in which the report must follow in order to attract readers. Each of the specialized areas of reporting also has its language, slangs and terms, in order to carry the right message. His job ends when he sends in his report to the editor.
- (ii) **The Editor:** The editor is the principal gatekeeper in the newsroom. They are many kinds of editors. While some edit for specialized interest like news, picture, women, foreign matters, editorial page/opinion pages, sports, features and layout, others are designated because of the need to facilitate the process itself. For example, sub-Editors or Copy Editors.

Generally, editors edit copies of news stories sent in by reporters. Editors make corrections in facts, spellings, grammar, names, dates, and claims. They also edit to ensure that the copy fits into the house stylebook or the organisation. An editor therefore is a manager as well as a supervisor. In order to perform such skill, an editor must not just be intelligent but must be a motivator, have a good command of English, have a sense of humour, have a nose for news, have the wealth of experience in journalism, and have good professional manner. And all these must be in addition to being a good policy maker, being creative and dynamic, being a good team leader and worker and being responsible ethically and professionally.

### 3.3 The Production Staff

The production staff are the inhabitants and operators of the second level of news processors. They are often called the production men. A production manager usually heads the production department. The

production manager not only ensures that the news copies sent by the editorial department is typeset, he also ensure that the proofreaders thoroughly check the typeset materials, while the paste-up men situate stories and artwork where such materials belong. The manager also ensures that the plate making process is in order. The production department has a crop of the following experts:

- (i) *Compositors*: Those who typeset by hand.
- (ii) *Typesetting Machine Operators*.
- (iii) *Proofreaders*: Check the gallery proofs side by side the original copy for errors.
- (iv) *Make-up personnel*: Assemblers of types and photo engravings in page forms.
- (v) *Stone hands*: Arrange the pages in proper sequence.
- (vi) *Printers*: Those who operate the machines that turn out the newspaper in the form that readers read.

### **3.4 The Business Department Staff**

The business department is the third and the last stage of the tripartite structure of the newspaper process. The principal personnel of this department are the circulation and the advertising managers and staff. The circulation manager along with his team does the marketing job. He is responsible for the sales of the newspaper copies. He must therefore strategize on how the copies of the newspaper can be distributed to the readers.

Note that a newspaper is a business. Most newspapers have a managing director whose function is that of an MD in any business i.e. he is to see that the business is run efficiently, that it makes the most economic use of its resources to manufacture a saleable product, and finally to see that the business makes a profit. That is why this department is referred to as the lifeblood of the mass media, hence it must be managed by capable and experienced hands. Vendors form a large clunk of the circulation manager's personnel pool. Vendors are independent personnel who collect and sell newspapers on commission. It is important to note that the circulation manager is influenced by time, in the same manner as other editorial and production staffs are circulation people. But are only expected to maximise their circulation only if other departments (editorial and production) have optimise their own share of time and quality of work.

### **3.5 The Administrative Adjunct**

The adjunct department consist of the personnel account and public relations units. While the personnel manager is responsible for all administrative functions including staffing, remunerations and promotion, the public relation expert manages the various relationships between the organisation and the various units and groups within and outside the organisation.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 4.1**

How do the staff and functions of the editorial departments differ from those of production and Business?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In all, most of the functions of the personnel dovetail with each other and therefore complimentary. Hence, all the departments in the news industry are important.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The business of journalism revolves round three major departments/units, namely: editorial, production and business. Other adjacent units are the personal and public relations.
- The three principal departments parallel the three key interests of journalism which are (1) news gathering (2) news processing and (4) news disseminating.
- The principal actors in each of the basic units are reporters and editors for the editorial section; proof readers, compositors, typesetters, stone hands and make up hands for the production section; and vendors, advertisers, marketers for the business department.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

From your understanding of the structures of a typical journalism environment, draw an organisation representing the major units and their functions.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Baran, Stanley J. (1999) *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Dominic, Joseph (1990) *The Dynamics of mass Communication* New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Ogunsiyi, M. A. (1989) *Introduction to Print Journalism* Ikeja, Nigeria: Nelson Publishers Limited.

## **MODULE 2**

- Unit 1 The Nature of News
- Unit 2 Writing the News
- Unit 3 Editing the Copy
- Unit 4 Headline Writing

### **UNIT 1 THE NATURE OF NEWS**

#### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 2.0 Introduction
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Introduction
  - 3.2 The Meaning of News
  - 3.3 News Determinants
    - 3.3.1 Timeliness
    - 3.3.2 Proximity
    - 3.3.3 Prominence
    - 3.3.4 Consequence
    - 3.3.5 Human Interest
  - 3.4 Types of News
    - 3.4.1 Straight forward News report
    - 3.4.2 Investigative News report
    - 3.4.3 Interpretative News report
  - 3.5 News Values
    - 3.5.1 Objectivity
    - 3.5.2 Balance
    - 3.5.3 Currency
    - 3.5.4 Accuracy
    - 3.5.5 Brevity, Conciseness and Clarity
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

“News” is the *raison d’être* of any newspaper. This is why the newsroom is the first port of call for all cub-reporters. The would-be journalist must therefore have knowledge of the technicalities involved in writing news story as observed in this unit.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this Module/Unit, you should be able to:

- Define what 'News is;
- Identify what is known as News Determinants
- Distinguish between types of News.
- Explain the values of good News Reports.

## 3.0 MAIN BODY

### 3.1 Introduction

News forms basic content of every mass medium. In this unit, you are led to understand the concept of news. The criteria for selecting what event should be news are also discussed. The nature of news is further explained in the discussion of news types. The philosophical base of assessing the quality of news output is further discussed under the examination of news values.

### 3.2 What is News

The word "news" means different things to different people taking into consideration the varying levels of political, social, economic, cultured or geographical orientations in the world. However, it is worthy to note that the term has over the years been understood as "something which is extra – ordinary, a rare occurrence or, something different from what is believed to be normal. An old demonstration of this view is usually signified in the statement: "A dog bites a man, and: A man bites a dog" The first sentence "A dog bites a man" is seen to be a normal and natural phenomenon but, the second sentence "Man bites a dog" is seen to be unusual, unheard of, and so unnatural. In this case, it is believed that the second sentence (that which is unusual) qualifies to be addressed as News. Other attempts to give meaning to the concept of news include the following:

- That news is what the editors in the mass media organizations say it is. Or what the "opinion leaders" say it is. This thinking takes root from the gate-keeping role of editors in the process of information dissemination.
- That news is any event that concerns the audience because it is closer to them than events that happen far away from their territory, community, state or nation.

- That news is “random reactions” by the mass media to random events.
- That news is an account of event as covered by the media establishments rather than the event itself – at least given that there are multiple number of events that always occur around us.

However, news, in the context of our study should be seen as an account of an event amongst events which constitutes a new kind of impute or information that changes the status of what had existed.

### **3.3 News Determinants**

The fact that there is no concrete agreement as to what News is or should be among scholars, does not mean that there is no loosely consented yardsticks or criteria of determining why an event should be or should not be considered newsworthy. In any case, majority of media practitioners have come to embrace the following criteria or determinants of news. These are:

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Consequence
- Human Interest.

#### **3.3.1 Timeliness**

A well known axiom within the world of journalism is that “Nothing is as dead as yesterdays news”. Although this lends itself mostly to the deadline of the print medium given that the broadcast media often repeat the previous day’s event in the early morning broadcast, perhaps, with modified slants, the element of timeliness suggest some form of currency or immediacy in reporting events. It emphasizes speed in the output of the media institution so that the citizenry may be informed and make decisions in response to the appropriate time frame. Because information is a form of energy, people need it to urgently make their business or political decisions. Therefore, it must be made accessible to people as fast as possible. In order that the “freshness” of an account is not lost totally, some – observers are of the view that the journalist should avoid the use of “yesterday” in their reports, unless it is very necessary to do so. For instance, a report of a bomb blast in Lagos state this morning appears fresher and current than a report of the same bomb blast in Lagos last month.

### **3.3.2 Proximity**

Proximity has to do with nearness. As a news determinant, it is in the judgment of the media worker, a criterion for selecting, those news events that are situationally and locally relevant to the audience. Proximity thus has the geographical and psychological implications. For example, reports about Nigerians in Nigeria, are likely to be of interest to readers in Nigeria than reports about Americans in Nigeria. Also, reports about Nigerians in America will be a thing of interest to Nigerians in Nigeria than reports about Cameroonians in America.

### **3.3.3 Prominence**

The common saying that “All men are equal but some are more equal than others” may also pass for prominence as a news determinant. But this time one can re-phrase the statement to read: All men are “newsworthy” but some are “more newsworthy” than others. The difference in the status of newsworthiness can either be attributed to the position, rank or class people occupy, their entertainment, an instance here is when the president of a country shakes hands with children on the street. An event of this sort, is very likely going to attract a news paper’s front page banner, compared to the many hand shakes of a man or woman who is not prominent enough to be recognized. In any case, what is true of persons is also true of places, organizations, institution, etc. Certain persons because of their status in the society, are more newsworthy than others. For example’ a news story that claims that ‘a man was shot dead in Aso Rock, Abuja’ does not attract as much attention as reporting that ‘The President of Nigeria has been shot dead in Aso Rock Villa, Abuja.

### **3.3.4 Consequence**

Consequence as a determinant of news event means that the interest of the public is upper- most in weighing the implications or effect of an event reported. The numerical strength of those affected by an event also fits into this report. For instance, if an accident involves 80 people in number, the report is likely to be considered for publication than an accident that involves a person or two. Other stories that are often selected using this criterion include those of price changes, epidemic, pestilence, national strike like NLC, and ASUU strikes in Nigeria. Strikes of this nature often have far reaching implications on the population.

### 3.3.5 Human Interest

This refers to interest in human beings and events because they concern men and women in situations, which might confront anyone else. It concerns the lives and welfare of people, animals or otherwise. Thus, the extremes of “pathetic” and “humorous” experiences of life are inclusive. A news story about a dog rescuing a baby from a swimming pool when the parents of the child were attending to other needs, represents a good example of one of the perspective of human-interest news.

#### Self Assessment Exercise 1.1

For each of the news determinants, cut out stories from the daily newspaper that best represent the values of the determinants.

### 3.4 Types of News

The difficulty that is normally associated with the distinction between types of news is not strange to many. This is simply because all the noticeable types of news share certain common characteristics that do not permit any clear direction. Nevertheless, the differences are most obvious in the scope and the nature of treatment or effort expended on event of such importance. In broad terms; there are three major types of news reports namely:

- The straight forward news
- Investigative news reports
- Interpretative news reports

#### 3.4.1 Straightforward News Reports

These are the products of the conventional answer to five Ws and H. It is normally short and sometimes lengthy in content but generally; it constitutes the bulk of news types that form the content of most commercial newspapers. In this kind of report, reporters are not expected to inject their opinions. Rather, they are only expected to answer the basic questions of 5 Ws and Has objectively and straightforward as possible.

Straightforward news story may be based on hard, soft / human-interest events. **Hard news** are stories that deal with topical issues that are tied to governmental affairs concerning economic, social and political issues. They are usually filled with facts and figures. They also form the core of most newspapers straightforward news coverage. **Soft news** stories deals with social and ceremonial events in the society, like investitures,

coronation, birthdays, marriages etc. While the **Human interest** arouse emotional feeling all though mostly generated from conflict, controversy, crime, disasters, accidents, adventure, children etc.

### 3.4.2 Investigative News Reports

An investigative report is a better quality reporting that is distinct from the straightforward news type. Its degree of thoroughness is greater than that of straight news report. It normally deals with reports on serious subjects and normally, involves obstacles that are common on the straight news type. Generally, it is distinguishable from the straight news because:

- It involves a lot of interviewing
- It involves the digging of facts.
- The reporter is tied up to rewards
- It is time consuming
- It calls for handwork
- It cost much money
- It demands more patience; persistence yet, may be frustrating.
- It is also risky

Like the straightforward news type, an investigative reporter is not expected to editorialise or inject or interpret fact in the story. These facts are not to be twisted or fabricated but must be based on information dug from many sources. The investigative report is usually long and written to expose and explain Issues in details. In order that the much-needed details are accurately sourced for, the investigative reporter relies heavily on such techniques as:

- (a) Direct observation of an event in order to get first hand experience, without the intrusion of other peoples (eye witness perceptions or biases. i.e. being a participant observer or being part of an action maybe robbery, gangster operation, and cult etc) in order to know what goes on.
- (b) Searching for primary and secondary documents from record keepers or institutions. The investigative reporter must have a solid documentary base on local/ international records of interest, official and unofficial.
- (c) Reliance on unsolicited information from informants, government and other publicity seeking interest groups.

(d) Interviewing people to get information. Interview is the bedrock of newsgathering business. Success in this exercise also depends on the investigative reporter's adherences to the basics of investigative interviewing, which are:

- Preparation
  - Control
  - Information.
- **Preparation:** This involves a reporter's knowledge of the background of the subject matter or topic, the people involved in the interview or story: the list of questions, sorting of and arrangement of facts and opinion in order to extract or separate the neutral information from the factual one in a controversial issue.
  - **Control:** This includes all forms of courteousness in the mastery and handling of an interview. It calls for a direction of purpose and a sense of responsibility that does not reveal the ill preparedness of the reporter or his lack of knowledge of the subject matter.
  - **Information:** This involves all the amount of attention a reporter can give the interviewee to elicit facts about the subject matter. It demands a sound and careful listening skill and attitude.

### 3.4.3 Interpretative Reporting

In the report of events, most reporters are often confronted with the urge of analyzing the implications of several issues in an event. This is the thrust of interpretative reporting. It is a kind of news report that demands the reporter's injection of his opinion, or some form of editorialization or comments on the issue reported. Like the investigative report, the interpretative reporter requires additional facts for easy clarification, detailed explanation and logical analysis. An interpretative reporter also has a wide variety of **approaches**, which he may use to give his story an interpretative slant. These include:

- (a) *Side-bar short*: supplements or pieces of information that highlight the main feature of an issue. It can be blocked or boxed at the side of the newspaper or magazine.
- (b) *An interpretative article* developed from the views comments or opinions of experts.

- (c) *Historical background* of the event that provide a kind of go between the present and the past.
- (d) *Speculative or predictive analysis* of the event by the reporter. Although it can be dangerous in intent and result. It is normally unreliable as the future is usually not understood firmly by anyone.
- (e) The *personality profile*: This an attempt to provide a feed forward information before the primary message by introducing the personality involved in, behind the event itself.

### 3.5 News Values

News values refer to those qualities of the news that give meaning and integrity to the sound journalistic practice. The fundamental and philosophical components of such a sound journalistic practice are:

- Objectivity
- Accuracy
- Balance
- Currency and
- Brevity, conciseness and clarity.

#### 3.5.1 Objectivity

Though greatly misunderstood and misapplied, objectivity subsumes all other virtues of journalism, whether or not it is viewed from the moral, artistic or intellectual angle. Objectivity not only concerns the individual journalist but also the institution of journalism practice. In this sense, objectivity is not just considered as a ‘goal’ but also as a process. When considered as a goal, objectivity is seen as that impossible idealistic task that cannot be attained. But when seen as a process, it is possible task which can be attained, but not without subjective intrusions. However, for the purpose of journalism practice, objectivity is the ability of the reporter to bridge the knowledge gap between the thing/ event he/she reports and the (real) event/thing itself. In other words, objectivity requires that a complete, unbiased, truthful, comprehension and intelligent account of an event be given in a context that give meaning to the reader. Dennis, Ismach, and Cilmor (1978)

#### 3.5.2 Balance

Balance derives its essence from objectivity. It simply draws the journalists closer to the task of appropriating the focus, treatment, prominence, time, space and privilege of any news event with fairness and equality.

### **3.5.3 Currency**

Currency is a virtue of news just as anyone who asks for news wants to know the status of an event he either did not know about or wants to know about. Currency calls for immediacy, freshness and recency in the report.

### **3.5.4 Accuracy**

Accuracy as a news value connotes exactness and truthfulness. This virtue does not only put a spotlight on the journalists understanding of his/her profession but also puts to test the confidence and integrity of the reporter. Accuracy stresses that all the facts about persons, their ages, address, their duties etc are correctly reported.

### **3.5.4 Brevity, Conciseness and Clarity**

This virtue complements the often-overstressed essence of communication – to share meaning and understanding. The entire essence of a report stands to be defeated if meaning is not shared. Meaningful reports are those that are brief (because people do not have all the time to read/listen or watch news) concise (because readers need direct and straight guidance) and clear (devoid of ambiguity or double meanings).

### **Self Assessment Exercise 1.1**

Cut off or photocopy two stories each from any of the current national dailies that fit into the description of (a) the straight news, (2) investigative and (3) interpretative report.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The news story is the form in which the journalist reports events. The primary goal of such report is to convey information accurately, briefly and clearly. These are the hallmarks of good news reporting.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

So far, you have learnt the following from this unit, that:

- That news is basically an account of an event as viewed by the reporter and polished by his editor.

- That the criteria for determining what is news and what is not news are: timeliness, proximity, consequence, prominence and human interest.
- That news is of many types, but the principal three are (1) straight news report (2) investigative report (3) interpretative report.
- That good news report must expressly reflect the values of objectivity, balance, currency, accuracy and brevity.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Write an interpretative news report on the issue “Aids and your life style”. It should not be more than two pages, type written and on an A4 size of paper.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

McDonald, Donald (1978) “Is objectivity Possible” in Denis, E. Ismach, A and Gillmor D. (eds) Enduring Issues in Mass Communication. New York: West Publishing Company.

Ogunsiyi, M. A. (1989) Introduction to Print Journalism. Ikeja, Nigeria: Nelson Publishers.

## UNIT 2 WRITING THE NEWS

### CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 News Structure
  - 3.2 Writing the News
  - 3.3 Types of Lead
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is about news writing. The emphasis is fundamentally prescriptive. The practical experience is to be gained from the exercises provided for your review. The unit first of all gives a brief overview of the available news structure in journalism practice. Then the common elements of the news content are explained before the types of lead are discussed.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Identify the major structures of news writing
- Explain what they are and also the types of lead
- Describe how to write and analyse the lead of a story
- Write a simple news story

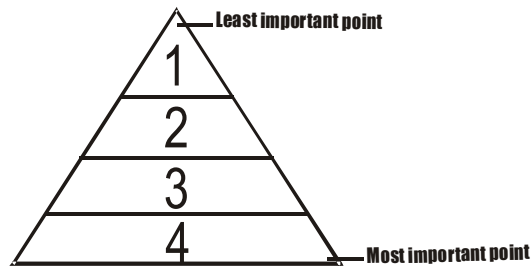
### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.1 News Structure

It is conventional to have presentations, whether spoken or written, follow the process of introduction, body and conclusion. In news writing, this method is generally observed. But in practice, three styles of news presentation are known. These are: the pyramid, the inverted pyramid and the modified inverted pyramid.

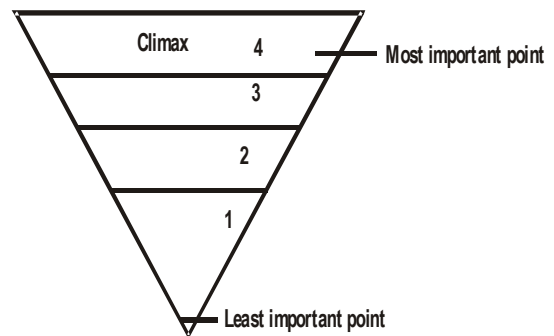
- **The Pyramid:** The pyramid style is a kind of structure in which the least important idea is presented first to the most important and then

followed by others in ascending order of importance. The shape itself is pyramidal.

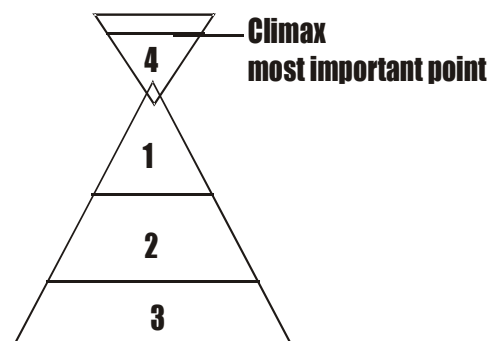


- The Inverted Pyramid:** This is the style mostly used by the journalist. It is known as the traditional form of news writing. Here, the most important fact is presented first and then gradually, other facts in decreasing levels of importance follows to the end. This method originated during the American civil war days when correspondents feared that all information may not be transmitted to the receiving stations before the unexpected strikes. The inverted pyramid is valuable today as it was then, because it:

Facilitates reading.  
 Satisfies curiosity  
 Facilitates make-up  
 Facilitates headline writing.



- The Modified Inverted Pyramid:** This style of structure is developed from both the pyramid and the inverted pyramid styles. It is characterised by the presentation of the climax of an event before unfolding sequentially from the beginning showing how the event led to the climax. i.e. the result is presented before the steps taken to reach the result are subsequently reached. The modified inverted pyramid looks like this:



### 3.2 Writing the News

Ordinarily, news writing begins from the time that a reporter sets out to gather facts. As the facts are gathered, the slants of news stories are also planned. Conventionally, news writing starts with the introduction. The introduction is technically called the Lead.

- **The Lead:** The lead is the first paragraph or two or any news report. It does not extend to the third paragraph. The lead usually gives or provides answers to the basic questions of 5 Ws and H. A good lead must:
  - Be appropriate for the story.
  - Make the reader want to read the rest of the story.
  - Should be kept short, brief and telegraphic.
  - Be based on the key features of the story.

The 5 Ws refer to WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and then the H – How. In most cases, not all the Ws are found in the lead. The who, what, when, where and why are common. The how is normally left for the body of the story. Here is an example of a lead.

Five students were shot dead, yesterday  
In a clash between two rival cult groups  
At university of Lagos main campus, reports  
“The Campus Times”.

#### Analysis:

|        |                                 |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| Who:   | Five students                   |
| What:  | Were shot dead                  |
| When:  | Yesterday.                      |
| Where: | University of Lagos main campus |
| Why:   | clash between cult groups.      |

The “HOW” is to be explained in the body of the story.

### 3.3 TYPES OF LEAD

There are many types of lead. The few notable ones are:

- **Cartridge Lead:** presents the gist of the event in the fewest possible words. It is usually abrupt and breath taking e.g. Awo is dead.
- **Punch Lead:** This is usually called the blind lead because it presents a non-specific angle of an event e.g. politics in Akwa Ibom House of Assembly took a new sour today.

- **The Crowded Lead:** This type of lead emphasizes many aspects of an event instead of concentrating on one. This usually occurs when several aspects/angles (who, what, when, where, why) are of equal importance.
- **The Astonisher Lead:** This has to do with the kind of introduction that uses superlative expressions to break the news e.g. For the first time in its history, the Co-operative Development Bank of Nigeria declared a profit 700 billion naira last year.
- **The Shirt-Tail Lead:** This is a lead that is broken into two sentences expressing two related ideas. It is common to build up such ideas with the use of link words as “in another development...”
- **Summary Lead:** This type summarises the whole story and gives details later. It is brief and deals with only the key points of the story, e.g. a bank clerk returning home from work last night was robbed of N10,000.00 and his handset while attempting to board a city bust at Ojuelegba bus stop.
- **Effect Lead:** This focuses on the effect/consequences of an event. Leads that emphasise the effect on readers of an event have a powerful human angle, e.g. you may have to pay more for bus rides as a result of the increases in the prices of petroleum products announced by the Federal Government yesterday.

### Self Assessment Exercises 2.1

1. Search through your national daily, identify and photocopy examples of the leads mentioned in this unit.
2. Write a lead, for each of the mentioned types, using the recent matriculation ceremony in your campus.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The teaching of the lead is so emphasised in this study because it is the “window” of a news story. It should therefore aim not only at presenting the gist of the story but also at gaining the attention of the reader.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt in this unit that:

- Writing news requires the knowledge of its structure. This means the ways news reports are arranged or presented.
- Three main structures are common in writing news stories. They are pyramidal structure from least important item to the most important; inverted pyramid – from the most important to the least important news item and, modified inverted pyramid
- Presentation of the most important item followed by the least important and gradually leading to the penultimate important item of the news.
- In writing new, there must be a lead. A lead is the opening paragraph of the news story. It basically summarizes the high points of the event by answering questions energize by the 5Ws – who, what, when, where and why.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Choose one of the three structures of news writing and prepare a news copy of a recent news event in your campus, for publication in a national Daily. Your copy should not be more than two and a half pages, typewritten or typeset on an A4 paper.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Macdongall, Curtis (1977) Interpretative Reporting. New York: Macmillan.

Ogunsiyi, M. A. (1989) Introduction to Print Journalism. Ikeja; Nigeria: Nelson Publishers.

## **UNIT 3      EDITING THE COPY**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objective
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Copy Editing Functions
    - 3.1.1 Creative function
    - 3.1.2 Managerial function
    - 3.1.3 Policing function.
  - 3.2 Copy Editor Tools
    - 3.2.1 Equipment
    - 3.2.2 Reminders
    - 3.2.3 Copy editing symbols
    - 3.2.4 References
    - 3.3.5 Intellectual tools.
  - 3.3 Editing Symbols
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Ordinarily, to edit means to make something short or shorter. In journalism, it means to remove unwanted matter in the news. It is an important aspect of any media persons work irrespective of whether or not the person works for the print or broadcast media.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define what editing in journalism is all about.
- Explain the functions and why editing is done in journalism.
- Identify and use the copy editing symbols.
- Identify and use the Proof reading symbols.
- Edit a copy for publication.

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.1 Copy Editing

Copyediting can be variously described. It can be called copyediting, news editing, or copy reading. They all mean the same thing. But before any meaningful editing can be achieved, the copy editor must have a good knowledge of the subject. He must be current as well as be an expert in the language being used.

Furthermore, the editor should be flexible and tolerant. He should be that person who is capable of appreciating the work of other people. In summary, therefore, a good editor must be versed in the subject in question, an expert in the language use, and others liberal arts.

Editing is done to eliminate unnecessary details. It is also done to effect corrections that are bound to be there. Such editing are often carried out in an editing room, using a specially designed table known as copy desk, with a slot man at the helm of affairs. A copy desk is that object around which copy editors sit. The slot man controls the activities of the team.

Writers of all sorts need editors even when they have had time to go over their own work. They need editing despite the fact that they took pains to read through such work. In short, such a writer does not exist whose work cannot be improved by the constructive vigilance of an editor, who is:

- Versed in what is written about.
- An expert in language use
- A flexible and tolerant person capable of appreciating values in the work of others.

Moreover, news writing has a special need for copy readers because most news writing is done at high speed. They are often written in haste. Reporters are usually under severe pressure. Consequently, are prone to mistake or bound to make slips and need some help in verifying and organising their facts. The quality of every newspaper is dependent on the array of its copyreaders. The copy desk is the heart of the newspaper and the character of the newspaper is determined by its copy desk.

The Copy Desk has three major functions.

- Creative function.
- Managerial function
- Policing function

### 3.1.1 Creative Function

This function largely centres around the following activities: First, the desk judges the news of the day and makes decisions about how it shall be presented. Second, it assembles single stories and spreads from materials originating from a variety of sources. In this way, the desk editor is said to be creative when he can originate an idea such as merging two or more stories from different reporters on the same topic or related topic. Such write-ups carry peculiar phrases like: “in a similar development or” in another development “or” in another development”. Creativity also involves assembling and selecting related stories into a single story or a big spread.

Copy editors write headlines, captions and outlines. Captions are found at the top making scanty details of the pictures while outlines are found below with more details. Another area of creativity deals with space management, which is the major problem of print media as against the problem of time in the electronic media.

### 3.1.2 Managerial Function

This function consists of the three activities enunciated below. One, the desk directs the work of the compositors and printers. This they do through marking copy with the style of type the compositor is expected to set it in. Managerial function can also be called administrative function. The major divisions of a typical newspaper organisation are the business, the editorial, and the production divisions. In the editorial division are the editor, copy desk, editorial writers and photographic section. Copy desk give directives to compositors in the production division. This relationship forms the major link between the two distinct divisions namely the editorial and production divisions respectively. Copy desk directs and adjusts stories. They also prepare fillers and time copy. As the name implies, fillers are ready made stories specially designed to fill up extra spaces in newspaper. These stories must as a matter of necessity, be fresh and timely. On the other hand, time copy are those copies that are funny and entertaining, and of general interest.

Managerial function aims at avoiding waste and instead tries to adjust the volume of copy to the available space before it is sent to the composing room to be set in type. This managerial function also strives to meet emergencies with plenty of filler and time copy on hand at all times. In this way there are hardly open spaces.

### 3.1.3 Policing Function

The copy desk's chief function is the job of policing the content of the paper. It is the most important of all the functions because it safeguards the paper against errors and libel. It corrects grammatical errors, crosschecks facts, and marked necessary interpretation to avoid ambiguity. Sometimes this policing function may slip the copy desk or it may decide to undermine the consequence in which case the newspaper may face libellous suits. In the light of the above, the desk checks copy against errors of facts and interpretation of ambiguous statements. Secondly, it guides the newspaper's position against being sued for libel and other legal difficulties. Thirdly, it guides public confidence in the paper by ensuring objectively, fair play and good taste. Finally, it improves the flow and corrections of language so as to clarify the news and make it more meaningful.

The individual copy editor should have many things in mind as he works on a story. Among those things he must do are:

- He must eliminate errors of spelling, grammar and sentence structure.
- He must be conscious of taste, style, fact and organisation.
- He must guard against unwarranted reportorial bias, verbosity, repetition, incongruity, wearisome details, overlooked facts, zealous statements, and advertising in disguise as well as old and a grinding news.

## 3.2 Copy Editor Tools

In a bid to do his work effectively and efficiently, the copy editor needs a set of tools namely: Physical and Intellectual tools. The physical tools come under specific headings including equipments, reminders, copy editing symbols, and references.

### 3.2.1 Equipment

The copy reader's obvious physical tools comprise the following:

- A special editing pencil with broad and soft lead and slightly bigger than the normal ordinary HB pencil.
- A clean eraser for neatly cleansing any wrongly written words or sentences.
- Scissors and paste which are supposed to be used only when necessary

- A typewriter that will be used only when it will do the job quicker than the other tools.
- A telephone within reach which will be put in use for communication with staff and non staff members to clarify facts and issues.

### **3.2.2 Reminder**

Besides other physical tools the copy editor has certain reminder within reach. Some of these include the office style sheet and the headline schedule. Also included is a detailed headline count system, which serves as a guide for the headline writing.

### **3.2.3 Copy Editing Symbols**

Another aspect of the physical tool available to the copyreader is the shorthand he uses always to tell the compositor how he wants the original copy changed. The copy reading symbols vary slightly from newspaper to newspaper and depends on what each organisation is used to. The symbols are not quite distinct from one another. Here are some examples adapted from two sources.

### **3.2.4 Reference**

Reference of any kind constitutes yet another set of physical tools always employed by the copy reader. The extent and appropriateness of reference materials like books available on the editing desk vary from one desk to another. However a minimum list of reference necessary in every desk consist of the following:

- An unabridged dictionary
- The city Directory
- The State Handbook
- City and area telephone director
- Good Atlas
- City, country and state maps
- Who is who in Nigeria
- The world Almanac
- Year Hooks
- Roget's Thesaurus
- Book of Quotations
- Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage.
- Webster Dictionary with its rich information
- Other general references.

### 3.2.5 Intellectual Tools

The most important of the copy editor's tools are the intellectual tools. It is assumed and rightly too that the present day copy editor is an educated and literate person putting all the available tools to work for the purposes of producing an accurate, dependable, well written and grammatically correct as well as interesting and sound newspaper. The list of the copy editor's intellectual tools is inexhaustible.

In any case, the following may be assumed as the list of intellectual tools a copy editor often needs.

- Thorough knowledge of English grammar, sentence structure and style.
- Thorough knowledge of the copy desk current routine.
- Thorough knowledge of how to use the references available to him.
- Proper knowledge of the community the newspaper is expected to serve.
- Broad general awareness and solid educational background.
- Common sense and even disposition as well as good sense of continuity of news.

The last two are crucial and fundamental as they are real assets to the copyreaders. Generally, the copyreader must have respect for the viewpoints and special problems, of his co-workers and the reading public. As a matter of necessity he must have a feeling for what others can and will read. He should have a sense of balance in all major decisions he makes. Of course, cool judgement is probably the most important of all intellectual tools. The phrase "Sub this story" means "edit the story".

### 3.3 Editing Symbols

**Typing Errors** (known as typos):

- If you wish to capitalise a letter or word, underline it with two parallel lines, thus:

Bob hawke condemned the usa.

- To turn a capital letter (known as an upper case letter) into a non-capital (or lower case letter), place a small slash mark through the top of the letter, to the bottom thus:

Set this in ~~UPPER CASE~~

- To delete a word or phrase, draw a horizontal line through it. If, as is usual, you wish the space thus created to be ignored, place a bridge above and below the line to signify that you wish the space to be closed, thus:

He says the bomb should ~~not~~ have been dropped.

- To take out a single letter draw the delete line vertically, thus:

Never hand your copy ~~inh~~ before reading it through carefully.

- To insert space between words place an insertion mark, like this between the words.

The Vice Chancellor h~~h~~/s warned students...

- In the print media, to insert a letter, word or phrase an insertion mark (or slash mark) is placed at the relevant point and the extra materials is written above the type, thus:

“It is not true that I w<sup>o</sup>/rk for Rupert”. She said.

- In the broadcast media, a single letter must not be inserted. The whole of the incorrect word should be deleted with a horizontal line and the new word written out in full above. Also, the insertion mark differs from that used in print, thus:

worked  
She said it was true that she ~~wrked~~ for Nupeng.

- In the haste to get a story down on paper journalists sometimes transpose letters, words or phrases. To correct this typo draw a horizontal S around the offending materials so that the letter, word or phrase below the S-line is placed before that above this line, thus:

The~~man~~dead is identified as ...

(NOTE: Some authorities say the S-line should be reversed e.g. for need then becomes for need. Others say this reversal should

only happen when single letters are to be transposed. However, the subbing mark in this course will be the one above.)

- Most publications use abbreviations, particularly for titles. Some everyday abbreviations, however, are often not acceptable in some publications. What is acceptable and what is not acceptable on a particular publication is part of the publication's house style. Most publications hand new journalists a style book that contains instructions on what is, and is not, acceptable.

A journalist, particularly one recently arrived from another publication, can make a mistake on abbreviations. To correct this, the offending material should be circled, so that a word that has been abbreviated will be spelt out in full, or a word that has been spelt out in full will be abbreviated, thus:

(Col) Wale said (Tamuno) Briggs was a twit.

(NOTE: The rule is that when an abbreviation ends with the same letter as the full word, then no full stop should be used. If it does not, then use a full stop, thus:

Prof. John Brainstorm criticised Dr. Jane Bookworm).

The use of numbers in copy is also subject to house style. Some have to be typed in letters, some in figures. If the wrong style has been used, circle the offending materials, thus:

He accused the (2) teenagers of stealing (one thousand) naira worth of valuables

**Punctuation Errors:** While typos can be corrected in ink, punctuation corrections should be made in pencil. This is because the sub-editors may not agree with the punctuation. If it is in pencil they can rub out the reporter's mark.

- To insert a full stop, place an insertion mark in the relevant place in the copy. Above the mark draw in a dot and circle it, thus:

⊙  
“It is over/” he said “I will go no further”

Some journalists use a cross in a circle. This is probably because the Pitman's shorthand symbol for a full stop is a cross by itself.

(NOTE: Use the same procedure for a colon, thus:

The University Senate decided the following students: Ade, Bassey, Okonkwo..

- For a comma, place an insertion mark at the relevant place and draw in a comma above the line, with a small slash above it, thus:

⊙  
“It is over/” he said.

(NOTE: To insert a semi-colon, use the same procedure as for a comma.

⊙  
His uncles are/ Baba, Shalolo, Danjuma

- For an apostrophe, use the same procedure as for comma, but place the small slash below, thus:

˘  
A journalists/ duty is to be accurate.

- For quotation marks, use the same procedure as for an apostrophe, but reverse the double commas where necessary, thus:

?  
“This is an accurate report/“ he said

In some newsrooms the small slash mark under the quotation marks is replaced with either a V or a Y

- For a hyphen, place an insertion mark at the relevant place and draw above the line a short horizontal line between the vertical lines, thus:

—  
The prosecutor said that this was not a run of the will case

- Journalists should try to avoid using dashes. If, however, they must insert one, an insertion mark should be placed at the relevant place and a short vertical line, followed by two short horizontal lines and another short vertical line should be drawn above, thus:

⊥  
Journalists with some exception are good writers.

- Parenthesis, or brackets, should be drawn in at the relevant point, thus:

Nigerian reporters (known as pressmen) are among the best in the world.

- Paragraphs should be indicated in a reporter's copy by placing a blank line between each paragraph. Any corrections, such as the breaking up of long paragraphs or the combining of short paragraphs should be left to the sub-editors.

However, there are exceptions to this rule, so to indicate a new paragraph an L should be drawn in at the beginning of the first sentence, thus:

“Newspaper reporters who mark the start of paragraphs are bad news”. Said the sub-editor.

“They do not realise that paragraphs are sometimes broken up or combined to suit the design of a page”.

To combine two paragraphs draw a reversed S from the full stop of the first paragraph to the beginning of the second, thus:

“Newspaper reporters who mark the start of paragraphs are bad news”, said the sub-editor:

“They do not realise that paragraphs are sometimes broken up or combined to suit the design of the page”.

**Note:**

- If your correction is wrong and you have used a pen, or, for any reason, you want the subbing mark to be ignored, place a row of horizontal dots below the offending correction, and write STET above the line and circle it, thus:

Journalists who hand in inaccurate copy STET  
~~Will be boiled in oil~~

Source: University of Southern Queensland Study Book, JRN 1000)

**ProofReading Symbols:** Sub-editors are responsible for editing news stories, so proof readers are responsible for proof-reading typeset stories. While the sub-editors use editing symbols to edit news stories, proof readers use proofreading symbols to edit typeset stories.

The sub-editors are free to use pencils to write editing symbols anywhere in the copy. In the case of proofreading, proofreaders must use pencils to write their proof reading symbols only in the left and right margins of the proofs.

Some of the common proofreading symbols are:

|      |                                |        |
|------|--------------------------------|--------|
| (1)  | Use lowercase letter           | lc     |
| (2)  | Use capital letter             | Cap    |
| (3)  | Transpose                      | ┌ ┐    |
| (4)  | Close u p                      | ⌋      |
| (5)  | Use boldface                   | BF     |
| (6)  | Insert space #                 | #      |
| (7)  | Use hyphen (-) here            | -      |
| (8)  | Leave it as it was             | stet   |
| (9)  | Take it out; delete            |        |
| (10) | Use a dash _ / _               | -/-    |
| (11) | Use light face If              | If     |
| (12) | Use question mark - ?/         | ?/     |
| (13) | Use a comma if it is necessary | ,      |
| (14) | Use a semi-colon - .           | ;      |
| (15) | Use a colon :/                 | :/     |
| (16) | Use a period - . or x          | . or x |
| (17) | Use an apostrophe ‘ ‘          | ‘ ‘    |
| (18) | “ Use quote marks “            | “ “    |
| (19) | // Begin a paragraph           | //     |
| (20) | No // Do not paragraph.        | No //  |
| (21) | End of story. #/30             | #/30   |

Source: Ogunsiyi (1989:82-83)

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Editing function in the media house can be viewed as a watchdog role, and, the life of a newspaper especially, depends on it. Hence, highly specialised people carry out the technical work.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Editing is an important aspect of the journalism process.
- We edit primarily to remove unwanted bits of information in the copy.
- Editing function does not just end with the use of mechanics or symbols to instruct others, but also involves managerial, creative and policing duties.

#### 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Using the editing symbols in 2.3.3, edit the following copy provided.

The price of oil in international markets showed signs of stabilizing today, though they were still sharply lower after a week's fall caused by a world surplus of supplies. At the close of trading on the Mercantile Exchange yesterday, contracts for delivery of West Texas Intermediate, the top U. S. crude grade, stood at \$19.50 a barrel, down 32 cents from the previous day's \$19.92. a barrel is the equivalent of 42 gallons, making the \$19.50 price break down to 46.43 cents per gallon of unrefined oil. Elsewhere, North Sea oil for delivery in April sold for \$18.65 a barrel, up 45 cents from the previous day's \$18.30. That \$18.65 tag was down more than a dollar from the previous week. The price of heating oil was down again, but gasoline prices rose slightly. Although the market had shown signs of settling down recently, prices were still 26 percent less than they were six months ago, when a barrel of West Texas Intermediate sold for \$25.15 and 30 percent less than they were nine months ago when a barrel cost \$31.70. Most of the decline from that \$31.70 tag to the \$25.15 occurred in 10 days, rather than as a steady slide.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries announced late in 1985 that it was giving up attempts to support prices by controlling production. The 12 cartel members said they would pursue their "fair market share" instead. That meant an increase in production. Although the world was already awash in oil, supplies swelled, pushing prices downward amid O. P. E. C. warnings of a price war. The situation stabilized in the summer of 1986 when OPEC members reached another agreement. OPEC members are Algeria, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Ecuador.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 4      HEADLINE WRITING**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Headline Writing Defined
  - 3.2 Functions of the Headline
  - 3.3 Headline Schedule/Headline Writing
  - 3.4 Guides for Headline Writing
  - 3.5 Headline Counts
  - 3.6 Headline Order and Headline Copy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is about headline writing. Practical experience on casting headlines is gained from the exercises provided at the end of the unit. The unit also gives a detailed appreciation of functions, schedule, guides and writing final copy of the headline.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit you should be able to:

- Define the headline
- Explain the function of Headline in journalism practice
- Identify the basic requirements for casting good Headlines
- Write headlines for select stories

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Headline Writing Defined**

Any single line or collection of display type that precedes a story and summarizes or introduces it can be called a headline. Such a headline has the following attributes.

- A headline is a sentence built around action verb. It distinguishes a headline from a binder or label head. e.g., full text of Presidential broadcast; INEC Boss speaks on Transition Programme. The first is a label head, the second is a typical headline.
- A headline must be adjusted to a predetermined length and number of sentence and characters respectively.
- A headline is fashioned to save space. This, the headline writer does by omitting articles (i.e. the) and other unnecessary encumbrances, thereby leaving room for less detail in the restricted space.
- A good headline uses a language symbols, singly and in groups, to convey or maximise meaning. Articles are hardly in use while commas take the place of “and “in most cases.
- A headline uses the present tense to convey immediacy and to save space. Often the present tense is shorter than the past with few exceptions.

The generic term, ‘headline’ comprises many specified terms including: jump heads, kickers and sub- heads. They should not be confused with outlines, captions and binders. A binder or label head is a display line identifying but not summarizing special material not handled as a news story.

The binder identifies the content of the material but does not summarize the content of the message. It also does not tell what the President says or what happens. Binders are also used over tabular matter accompanying a related news story.

### **3.2 Functions of the Headline**

- The headline performs various functions, one of which is to index the news by stating plainly what the story contains so as to save the reader’s time in finding the aspect of the news that interest him most.
- The headline tells the news to the reader by way of conveying mandatorily the accurate information.
- Again, it conveys the relative significance of the news as expressed in terms of type display through the use of type size and weight.
- Headline convey to the reader the relative seriousness of the news using type families such as italics and other decorative typographical devices like dashes, stars, boxes etc. Some of these are indicative of

the fact that certain stories are meant for its entertainment value rather than its significance.

- The headline beautifies the newspaper and makes it attractive. In all ramifications, the primary function of any headline is essentially to make room for good and balance page make –up. Such headline accompanied with their variety in size and typefaces do a lot to make modern newspaper pages quite attractive. For instance, a five – column page of solid body type looks uninterestingly grey and colourless as can easily be seen in the Nigerian early newspapers and as against the modern newspapers. Present day headlines introduce contrast by bringing side by side, black type and white space as a relief to the dull grey of body type. If placed properly, headlines bring about balance, symmetry, and typographical beauty to a well-planned page.
- Headlines give the newspaper character and stability through consistent use of familiar headline structure thereby giving a newspaper the relatively familiar and welcome personality. While some newspapers use screaming headlines, other are more gentle and less shouting in their use of headlines.
- Headlines to some degree are often employed to sell newspapers on the newsstand. This is true of catchy headlines.

### **3.3 Headline Schedule/Headline Writing**

The headline schedule is a sample of headlines used by a particular newspaper, It shows the point size, types and type faces available and the precise form they must take. Every newspaper has its own headline schedule as distinct from others. It represents the character of the paper and forms a major distinguishing factor in comparing various newspapers.

Headline writing does not and should not use a language of its own. Instead it must use language symbols common to people and which they must understand. The writer must take into consideration the exact and special meaning respectively in the light of their immediate meaning.

Some of the basic skills that lead to the success of headline writing are:

- Accurate perception of the story. A headline writer must be able to recognize what parts of the story are newsworthy, dramatic, and significant.

- A vocabulary that is both broad and deep is necessary for the headline writer's task. The layman's vocabulary is not enough for accomplishing such task. Constructing sentences for headline writing requires not just a vocabulary of multi meaning that may or may not be used synonymously. Viewed closely, synonym would imply word of the same meaning as another in the same language but often with different implications and associations.
- A sharp sense of sentence structure. The headline writer depends on flexibility not only in choice of words but also in choice of sentence structure so that the writer can switch word order quickly without alerting meaning. Sentences take many structures and headlines are most notable for that.
- A keen eye for ambiguity. The headline writer must review his writing endlessly to detect ambiguity. He should be able to put himself in the place of many potential readers. This is because what is meaningful and clear to him may not be clear and meaningful to others.

### **3.4 Guides for Headline Writing**

- Tell the story's essentials. In headline writing, the writer is expected to tell the essentials just as the lead story does since most headlines are based on the lead. This is however not a rule but merely. The lead of a straight news story often summarizes the essential facts. Headlines by extension must do the same. The implication therefore is that the headline writer usually finds his best material on which to peg the headline at the top of the story otherwise called the lead. The parts of the lead that suits headline treatment are those that tell the main aspect of the story clearly and interestingly. It may be noteworthy to point out that in some cases the lead paragraph may be lacking in substance as the larger story may be buried in the specified details contained in the body of the story.
- Get the facts straight. Getting at the heart of the story is a not a simple task as most people would think. Complex news stories bothering on public affairs keep headline writers constantly on their toes as they struggle to tell the stories in a restricted space and in an understandable term. Such stories put headline writers on high jump trying to exempt themselves from the tasks.
- Put the key facts at the top deck. Should the headline be of two desks, the most important one would be at the top to be followed by the less important headline. This is done for the purposes of emphasis.

- Marshall the facts in sentence form. The writer can narrow the headline down by removing non-essential words. The point has since been made that headline are skeletonized sentences. This suggests dropping articles and sometimes substituting a comma for 'and'. In most cases, it goes to the extent of doing without non essential modifiers including personal pronouns. Skeletonizing however does not mean merely assembly unrelated and uncoordinated words that make virtually no meaning.
- Build around a strong verb. Good headline writers choose vigorous, active, positive as well as colourful words. The writers know that the ideas in the headline are propelled by the verb. Though all the words that come from the headline are expectedly selected with care, the verb is the key to the headline. Rich in vocabulary and an ear for words are invaluable assets to a headline writer who, as a matter of fact should listen to what he writes. Crowell (1969:85) provides some of the effective verbal components, thus.

|               |                |                 |               |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>ACCUSE</b> | <b>BEAT</b>    | <b>BELITTLE</b> | <b>CHOOSE</b> |
| allege        | bow            | ignore          | elect         |
| involve       | pound          | malign          | pick          |
| arraign       | sink           | shun            | select        |
| name          | spank          | spurn           | vote          |
| blame         | upset          | shirk           | name          |
| change        | win            |                 |               |
| indict        |                |                 |               |
| link          |                |                 |               |
| <b>ESCAPE</b> | <b>FLOOD</b>   | <b>AQUIT</b>    | <b>DAMAGE</b> |
| elude         | cover          | absolve         | cripple       |
| dodge         | inundate       | clear           | destroy       |
| bolt          | sink           | defend          | harm          |
| flee          | wash           | free            | injure        |
| slip          | overflow       | release         | mar           |
| get away      | submerge       | vindicate       | wreck         |
| hide          | deluge         | uphold          | ravage        |
|               |                |                 | raze          |
| <b>FALL</b>   | <b>MEETING</b> | <b>ARREST</b>   | <b>DENY</b>   |
| collapse      | assemble       | capture         | disclaim      |
| decline       | confer         | catch           | disown        |
| deflate       | meet           | hold            | refute        |
| depress       | gather         | jail            | renounce      |
| drop          | unite          | net             | retract       |

|        |          |         |          |
|--------|----------|---------|----------|
| reduce | rally    | seize   | recount  |
| slash  | unite    | trap    | refuse   |
| slump  | mobilize | take    | withhold |
| dip    | reunite  | roundup | reject   |

|             |             |               |             |              |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>FIND</b> | <b>LOSE</b> | <b>RESIGN</b> | <b>KILL</b> | <b>PROBE</b> |
| detect      | bow         | abdicate      | die         | delve        |
| digout      | fail        | depose        | drown       | scan         |
| discover    | give in     | desert        | execute     | study        |
| unearth     | give up     | retire        | murder      | analyse      |
| show        | submit      | quit          | perish      | pry          |
| prove       | surrender   | expel         | slay        | sift         |
| discern     | yield       | flee          | stab        | plumb        |
|             | slump       | abandon       | succumb     | weigh        |

|               |                |              |              |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>HONOUR</b> | <b>MISSING</b> | <b>PEACE</b> | <b>STEAL</b> |
| award         | abduct         | agree        | cheat        |
| cheer         | depart         | arbitrate    | defraud      |
| cite          | disappear      | conciliate   | dupe         |
| exalt         | elope          | pacify       | embezzle     |
| greet         | kidnap         | settle       | rob          |
| name          | vanish         | reconcile    | swindle      |
| salute        | fade           | harmonize    | seize        |
| welcome       | go             | heal         | take         |
| receive       | quit           | patch        | loot         |
| extol         | drop           | sign         | get          |

|                |              |            |             |
|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>PROMISE</b> | <b>FIGHT</b> | <b>SAY</b> | <b>STOP</b> |
| assure         | argue        | address    | abolish     |
| pledge         | assail       | affirm     | avoid       |
| swear          | attack       | claim      | ban         |
| vow            | battle       | chat       | bar         |
| shake          | blast        | declare    | block       |
| agree          | clash        | feel       | cease       |
|                | contest      | hint       | check       |

|                 |               |                 |              |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>RIDICULE</b> | <b>DIFFER</b> | <b>PROCLAIM</b> | <b>CLOSE</b> |
| boo             | dispute       | quote           | cripple      |
| jeer            | slap          | insist          | forbid       |
| insult          | jolt          | declare         | halt         |
| jest            | disagree      | charge          | impede       |
| joke            | hit           | contend         | limit        |
| mock            | quarrel       | maintain        | repel        |
| scorn           | rebuff        | hold            | refrain      |
| tease           | rebuke        | regard          | curb         |

|       |                            |                        |              |
|-------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| laugh | reject<br>repel<br>protest | cite<br>decide<br>deem | avert<br>end |
|-------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|

|             |             |              |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>SEEK</b> | <b>RITE</b> | <b>PERIL</b> | <b>PLAN</b> | <b>PUSH</b> |
| beg         | greet       | brave        | agree       | act         |
| appeal      | hail        | caution      | aim         | goal        |
| ask         | hold        | concern      | arrange     | impel       |
| plead       | mark        | dare         | decide      | jog         |
| pray        | fete        | defend       | design      | press       |
| solicit     | perform     | fear         | draft       | prod        |
| implore     | read        | frighten     | draw        | push        |
| demand      | recite      | guard        | fashion     | rush        |
| call for    | say         | imperil      | fix         | speed       |
| urge        | stage       | risk         | map         | stir        |
| bid         | observe     | threaten     | outline     | urge        |

|            |             |              |                 |
|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>GET</b> | <b>RISE</b> | <b>STORM</b> | <b>VIOLENCE</b> |
| acquire    | add         | break        | battle          |
| earn       | arise       | grip         | brawl           |
| enlist     | ascend      | lash         | clamour         |
| given      | broaden     | pound        | clash           |
| grab       | climb       | rage         | fight           |
| take       | develop     | smash        | mutiny          |
| steal      | enhance     | strike       | parade          |

|               |             |              |                 |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>PUZZLE</b> | <b>RISE</b> | <b>STORM</b> | <b>VIOLENCE</b> |
| amaze         | enlarge     | sweep        | protest         |
| awe           | extend      |              |                 |
| baffle        | mount       | <b>SHOW</b>  | <b>START</b>    |
| bewilder      | lift        | bare         | act             |
| confound      | rocket      | display      | begin           |
| confuse       | soar        | list         | create          |
| perplex       | swell       | issue        | enter           |
| surprise      | widen       | expose       | found           |
|               | jump        | publish      | move            |
|               | exceed      | reveal       | open            |
|               |             | test         | set             |
|               |             | unfold       |                 |

- No repetition of words. In headline writing there is no room for repetition or use of two forms of the same word. Any key word can just be used only once in a given headline and, in a single form.

- Tell the story in specific terms. It is highly advisable that the headline writer strives at all times to be specific to avoid ambiguity. He should leave nobody in doubt as to the meaning of every bit of word contained in the headline. He should always be vivid and avoid being vague.

### 3.5 Headline Counts

The essence of headline counting is to determine the amount of space to be earmarked for the headline in page planning. It also helps to determine the length of each deck of the headline. The decks in the headline should not vary more than two units in length.

Most newspapermen count headline by the unit. Horizontal space in newspaper is always measured in pica, points and units while depth is measured in inches. To determine the space for a headline therefore, the counting of the head has to be done by counting the total number of units for all the letters and space between words in the headline.

As pointed out by Crowell (1969) the general rule to obtain a dependable line count is to count the heads as follows:

| LETTERS                      | UNITS             |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Cap M Q W                    | 2                 |
| Cap I J                      | $\frac{1}{2}$ (1) |
| All other caps               | $1\frac{1}{2}$    |
| Lower case m w               | $1\frac{1}{2}$    |
| Lowercase f l i r t j        | $\frac{1}{2}$     |
| All other lower case letters | 1                 |
| Figure 1                     | 1                 |
| Other figures                | $1\frac{1}{2}$    |
| Punctuation                  | $\frac{1}{2}$     |
| S # % ? &                    | $1\frac{1}{2}$    |
| - (Dash)                     | 2                 |
| Space between words          | $\frac{1}{2}$     |

It should be pointed out that while some authors say that the unit for uppercase *I* and *J* should be  $\frac{1}{2}$ , others say it should be *I*.

In the headline count, certain basic data are required and must be known by the person counting the headline before he could arrive at the correct answer. The data include;

- the maximum unit count per line
- the number of decks in the headline to be cast and

- the type of letters (whether uppercase or lowercase or a combination of both) to be used in casting the headline.

Whether to cast the headline in uppercase or lowercase or combination of both caps and lowercase is a decision the headline caster has to make. The same thing applies to the number of decks the headline must be counted in line with the units already universally assigned to each letter (or figure, space, symbols or punctuation marks) whether set in uppercase or lowercase.

The maximum unit count per line could be arrived at by measuring the length of space or column that the headline would cover in units. That is, if the head is to be placed on a three column story, the length of the three column measured horizontally in units would definitely give you the maximum unit count per line for the headline. The following data of measuring space horizontally in page planning may be used:

|          |                              |
|----------|------------------------------|
| 1 inch = | 72 points                    |
| 1 pica = | 12 points                    |
| 1 inch = | 6 picas                      |
| 1 unit = | 1 9/10 picas (about 2 picas) |

The first rule in the headline count is that no line in the headline must exceed the maximum unit count for the longest deck in the headline. For example, if the maximum unit for a particular head is 20 (i.e. 20 units), no line in the headline must exceed 20 units precisely because that is the total length of space any deck in the headline could go horizontally.

As earlier pointed out, any variation among the decks of the head must not be more than two units in length. That is, if the maximum unit count per line is 20, any line of the headline should not be shorter than 18 units. If it is a headline of three decks, the first deck could be 20 while the last two could be either 20, 19 ½ or 18 units.

### **Typical Assignments on Headline Count with Necessary Data:**

- (1) Write a headline of 2 – 18 – 1 in lowercase (maximum unit count per line: 21½) on the lead below:

“Top seed David Imonitie came back from a set down to outstroke rival Abubakar Sadiq 4 – 6, 6 – 4, 6 – 4 last night to become the new All-Nigeria men’s Lawn Tennis singles champion”.

- (a) Answer:  
l m o n i t i e i s n  
e w

1 1½ 1 I ½ ½ ½ 1½ ½ ½ ½ 1  
 e w  
 1 1½ ½

Units  
 c h a m p i o n  
 ½ 1 1 1 1½ 1½ 1 1 = 21½

1 s N e w  
 1 1 ½ 1½ 1 1½ = 6½ Units

Units  
 P r e s I d e n t  
 1½ ½ 1 1 ½ 1 1 1 ½ = 8

- (2) Write headline of 2-24-2 in uppercase (maximum unit count per line: 26) on the lead below:

“The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revealed that various governments throughout the world are finding it difficult to control their expenses, thereby recording more deficit”.

Answer:

W O R L D  
 2 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ ½

G O V E R N M E N T S  
 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ 2 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½  
 =25 Units

R E C O R D M O R E  
 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ 1½ ½ 2 1½ 1½ 1½ ½

D E F I C I T  
 1½ 1½ 1½ 1 1½ 1 1½ = 26 Units

Experience, people say, is the best teacher. No one can be perfect in headline casting or headline counting without trial and error as well as many years of practical experience.

**3.6 Headline Order and Headline Copy**

The headline order is always stated on the headline copy, which is usually a small clean sheet of paper. Each headline on a page must get its own separate head copy.

The headline order usually tells three things. First, it tells the number of columns in which the head is to be set. Second, it tells the size of the head. And thirdly, it tells the number of lines. e.g. 2-30-2 means two columns of 30 points in two lines while 2-42-3 means two columns of 42 points in three lines.

Heads to be set in all capitals must be written in all capital letters on the headline copy while those to be set in capitals and small letters are written in upper case and lower case. Those to be set in lower case must be written in small letters except the first letter of the head and the first letter of each proper noun, e.g.

- (a)
- |  |
|--|
| HEAD COPY<br>Slug: war Page: 3                  Edition: 1<br>Size: 3-40-2<br>Size: 3-4-2<br>Regean Warns Mideast Of General War |
|--|
- (b)
- |  |
|--|
| HEAD COPY<br>Slug: Duty Page: 2                  Edition: 2<br>Size: 2 – 40 – 1<br>CJ RESUMES DUTY |
|--|
- (c)
- |   |
|---|
| HEAD COPY<br>Slug: accident Page: 5                  Edition: 2<br>Size: 2 – 30 – 2<br>Five girls die in road crash |
|---|

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The job of casting appropriate headlines is another specialised area of news writing that demands technical skill in perception of the story and in the use of language. It is the basic job of the sub-editor.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Headline summarizes the story in a sentence.
- Writers choose vigorous, active, positive as well as colourful words.
- Headline counting is essential to determine the amount of space to be earmarked for the headline in page planning.
- There is headline order, and, each headline on a page must get its own separate head copy.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a headline of 2-18-1 in lowercase (maximum unit count per line =  $26\frac{1}{2}$ ) on the lead below: “Catholic Bishops in Nigeria have sent a congratulatory message to Pope Benedict 16 who is celebrating his 100 days on the throne of papacy today”.
2. Write a headline of 2-18-1 in lower and uppercase (Maximum unit count per line: 24 on the lead below: “Students of the National Open University, Lagos, have commended Governor JINUBE for slashing the school fees introduced by his predecessor”.
3. Write a headline of 4-30-2 in uppercase (maximum unit count per line:  $23\frac{1}{2}$ ) on the lead below: “The Lagos State University Lagos, has embarked on a new admission policy. The new admission policy which took effect from this session exempts candidates seeking admission for both pre-degree and degree program from written and oral interviews. Before now, candidates were made to sit for interviews in consonance with the admission policy in operation then”.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Alfred A. Crowell (1969). Creative news Editing, Dubuque: WM. C. Brown Company Publishers,
- Ogunsiyi, M. A. (1989) Introduction to print Journalism Ikeja, Lagos: Nelson Publishes.

## **MODULE 3**

|        |                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Essentials of Journalistic Style |
| Unit 2 | Elements of Good News Reporting  |
| Unit 3 | Interviewing and News Sources    |

### **UNIT 1 ESSENTIALS OF JOURNALISTIC STYLE**

#### **CONTENT**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1.0   | Introduction                            |
| 2.0   | Objectives                              |
| 3.0   | Main Body                               |
| 3.1   | Meaning of Style                        |
| 3.2   | Types of style                          |
| 3.2.1 | Formal style                            |
| 3.2.2 | Informal style                          |
| 3.2.3 | Colloquial style                        |
| 3.3   | Essentials of good journalistic writing |
| 3.3.1 | Clarity                                 |
| 3.3.2 | Conciseness                             |
| 3.3.3 | Cautiousness                            |
| 3.3.4 | Candidness                              |
| 3.3.5 | Concreteness                            |
| 3.3.6 | Completeness                            |
| 3.3.7 | Coherence                               |
| 3.3.8 | Concord                                 |
| 3.3.9 | Simplicity                              |
| 4.0   | Conclusion                              |
| 5.0   | Summary                                 |
| 6.0   | Tutor Marked Assignments                |
| 7.0   | References/Further Readings             |

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is about journalistic style. It examines different types of style in writing and zeroes on elements that make good style.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define the meaning of the word, ‘Style’;
- Explain the various kinds of style and the style suitable for journalists;
- Identify and make use of the *elements* essential for good journalistic writing.

## 3.0 MAIN BODY

### 3.1 Style: Meaning and Dimensions

The term “Style” means different things to different people, under different situations, context or places. Its meaning ranges from the way a man lives to the latest in the world of fashion. When applied to writing, style refers to anything from the philosophy and personality of the writer to his choice of words in sentences.

According to McCrimmon (1974), style is a product of all the choice a writer makes in working out the implication of his purpose. If the choices are consistent, they reveal:

- His view of the real subject.
- His view of readers.
- His person or personality.
- The kind of material he selects
- The way he structures, restructures and expresses his ideas, including the tone of his writing. The sum of all these factors make up a style. In essence therefore a description of any piece of writing is an explanation of the means by which the writer works out his purpose. So, there is a link between purpose and style. Purpose controls style while style reveals purpose.

### 3.2 Types of Style

There are basically three types or kinds of style in writing. These are: Formal, Informal and Colloquial Styles.

#### 3.2.1 The Formal Style

It is often called the academic style. It is characterised by a tone that is high-sounding, dignified and eloquent. The sentences are usually long, complex and refined in structure. It adheres to the strict syntactic

demands of a particular language. The vocabulary is usually extensive, largely drawn from foreign and specialized/technical fields of learning like law, medicine, psychology. Such words are mostly used by those that are educated, and not by the uneducated. Other characteristics of formal style include avoidance of contractions (I've, can't don't) and clipped words like (exam, auto, ad). The paragraphs too, are usually long; the tone impersonal while the social distance between the reader and writer is generally official. This kind of style is not mostly embraced by the journalist or popular in journalism practice.

### 3.2.2 The Informal Style

This is a style that is multi-dimensional. It can be used for occasions like lectures, newspaper, broadcast etc. The diction here is a mixture of the formal style and that of colloquial. So, the popular diction is normally emphasized. By popular diction, one is referring to words which are used by a wide section of the populace, educated, uneducated. Compare the following learned and popular words:

| <b>Learned</b> | <b>Popular</b> |
|----------------|----------------|
| Abdomen        | Belly          |
| Capitulate     | Surrender      |
| Corpulent      | Fat            |
| Myopic         | Short sighted  |
| Facilitate     | Make easy.     |

Informal style is often more concrete and down to earth than formal ones that may appear abstract. That is, the diction of the informal style easily allows one to smell, see, touch or taste the object described. Sentences here are normally shorter than formal ones. The paragraphs, the tone and social distance between the writer and the reader is not wide, rather the reader can be addressed personally by using words such as 'you', 'me'. These are not common in formal style.

### 3.2.3 The Colloquial Style

This is a style of writing that is basically conversational. It uses the kind of words and expressions people use when they are together quite informally. Such a style is used in writing when the writer wants to give the impression of talking directly and intimately to his reader. When he does, all formal terms would be avoided while contraction, clipped words and clichés would be generally used. The sentences are usually very short, mainly the S-V-O (Subject-Verb-Object) sequence. The paragraphs are also short. This kind of writing is not common in journalism practice, except for special effect or used by a notable columnist.

### 3.3 Essentials of Good Journalistic Writing

News writing is an art whose skills have to be acquired. Like a sculptor, who has to chisel out something from the wood using perceived dimensions and procedures, the journalist employs the necessary tools of words or language in their appropriate forms, to accomplish his/her task. It is these forms that are broadly expressed as the “essentials of good journalistic writing” or, the 9cs and S. They are:

- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Correctness
- Courteousness
- Candidness
- Concreteness
- Completeness
- Coherence
- Concord
- Simplicity

#### 3.3.1 Clarity

Clarity in news writing requires that the reader is left in no doubt as to the meaning of words in sentences. A word or groups of expression with more than one meaning should be replaced with a simple and clearer one. The good writer takes great pain of going an extra mile to ensure that he presents only one possible meaning. A news story that is open to more than one interpretation is dangerous to the reader, writer or society, because the multi-phase of such interpretations can lead to a confused society.

#### 3.3.2 Conciseness

Conciseness deals with the necessity to be brief. A concise write-up is that which has to be written in a succinct way, avoiding pointless elaboration, exaggeration, tautology or circumlocution. A concise writer is one who does not strain after words or phrases. If he does this, he ends up using unnecessary jargons or clichés. According to Alexander Dope in one of his literary criticisms, words are like leaves; and where they are most abound, much fruit is rarely found”. Conciseness in writing has the merits of:

- (a) Saving space especially in newspaper where available pages are pre-scheduled. Or, in broadcast where time is the greatest asset and constraint to pointless elaboration.
- (b) It spares much effort and achievement as well as give vigour and directness to writing.

### **3.3.3 Correctness**

A news report must be correct in all aspects. It is one of the most important commandments of news writing. It is linked to the question of truthfulness and credibility. Correctness means checking and cross-checking figures, names of persons, town/cities, facts, spellings, maps etc. For local or even international names or places, there is always a stylebook or a resource person(s) who should assist in ensuring that the facts are made available. The dictionary, in its various forms can also be very useful in this connection.

### **3.3.4 Courteousness**

Any writer that fails to take into account the sensibility of his readers, in terms of showing politeness or restraints in the use of language lacks polish and civility. This attitude readily offends the reader and is sometimes classified as one of the features of “low-brow journalism”. There are a number of words or expressions that are not acceptable in polite writing. Many of them are those that depict sexual desires, racial slurs or profanities that are utterly against religious personalities or beliefs.

A polite expression or language as well as the filthy one is determined by the society. The reporter must therefore empathize with his society and present only those aspects of language, which his culture does not frown at. For instance, words like: ‘Hell’, “shift, Down”, fuck, “under below” may mean different things to different societies. Although these words may pass for slang, they are sometimes fuzzy, imprecise and lack courtesy. Courteousness in writing also includes some standardized and general reference to personal titles and compliments.

### **3.3.5 Candidness**

Being candid means that a report must be fair, frank, straight-forward, objective, and sincere in purpose. Although, the doctrine of fairness is often viewed as a threat to press freedom, it has, nevertheless, endowed the practice of journalism with a certain level of responsibility and

service. This doctrine can also be seen as an aspect of the social responsibility view of mass media practice.

So, the attribute of candidness demands that publishing one side of a story without a reasonable effort to get to know and present the other with all sense of frankness is dishonest and wicked. Thus, it is not enough for a reporter to say “when I called in his office to get his side of the story, he was not on seat”. Since this can alter the charge of reporters biases or prejudices.

### **3.3.6 Concreteness**

This concerns writing about actualities or particular events, persons, rather than generalities or abstractions. The need to write about concrete issues or events is felt more in the presentation of news and feature columns. Although the writer can report events in other context or in abstraction, as metaphors for explaining his own situational problem in the country. This should be done in a manner that the explanation is not lost in the minds on the readers.

### **3.3.7 Completeness**

This calls for a reporter’s readiness to present a total picture of an event i.e. the whole story, complete with all the essential parts. It calls for the inclusion of the necessary details about an issue in order to add some kind of muscle to the report. This has an added advantage of making a story clearer and leaving no room for guesses that might open pathways to misinterpretations. A complete picture is more useful than individual parts. If stoppages become unavoidable, then a report should be serialised. Yet, each part of the serial package should be meaningful and complete in relation to other parts.

### **3.3.8 Coherence**

A report may have unity but lacks coherence. Coherence has to do with the sticking together, logically, of the parts that make up all story. It means every part in terms of ideas, facts, or details should have connection with the central idea of the story. Such a balanced flow in news writing can be achieved through the use of link words like: but, although, besides, meanwhile, except, however, nevertheless, also, etc.

### **3.3.9 Concord**

Concord ordinarily means “agreement or harmony”. Such agreement or harmony is required in news writing. Although there is no distinct line between what makes coherence different form concord, it can be said that agreement or concord starts from the construction of sentences.

How the different parts of sentences are co-ordinated for meaningful interpretation. It includes the subject-verb agreement or pronoun-antecedent agreement. From here, it gradually joins up with agreement of parts from the introduction through the body to conclusion.

### **3.3.10 Simplicity**

The purpose of news writing is to communicate meanings through news and not to confound or confuse. Therefore, a reporter must understand the background of his audience to enable him choose and use words that are not difficult or cumbersome enough to leave them searching for a dictionary. A good reporter must always replace difficult words with simpler ones. Even the technical register of some disciplines or exclusive slang can be explained or illustrated where necessary.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The use of the elements essential for good journalistic writing is a “sine qua non” for the successful journalist. Obey the listed rules and the result will be obvious.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Journalism writing is one of the known styles of writing.
- The known styles of writing are (1) formal, (2) informal and colloquial.
- Journalism writing, depending on the subject matter and editorial policy of the establishment can use a blend of the three styles or confine itself to formal or informal styles.
- Good journalistic style depends on the good use of 9Cs and S.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

From what you have understood about the 9Cs and S, construct a sentence to reflect your level of understanding.

## **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

McCrimmon, James (1974) Writing with a Purpose 5th edition Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

## **UNIT 2      ELEMENTS OF GOOD NEWS REPORTING**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Identification
  - 3.2 Attribution
  - 3.3 Capitalisation
  - 3.4 Abbreviation
  - 3.5 Numbering
  - 3.6 Punctuation and word Division
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is about good news reporting. The unit examines “background” information in a story that helps to put the written news story in a clearer perspective for the reader.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After studying this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the various elements of good news reporting.
- Use each of the elements in news writing.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Identification**

Identification in news reporting has to do with the distinctive physical attributes of persons used or involved in the news. Ordinarily, a name is sufficient to distinguish a person from another. But names, by their very

nature of common meaning within a culture, are no exclusive reserves of any person. Thus, other qualifiers are usually needed to give concrete and vivid description of the persons involved in the news. Such other forms of identification include: age, addresses, professions/jobs, titles, positions of authority. For example:

- (a) Edem Musa, a 17-year-old undergraduate of Kano State University. (age).
- (b) Governor Tinuba of Lagos State has declared... (status).
- (c) The defendant, Mr Okonkwo Ifeanyi, of Nos 3 Adebayo Street was yesterday arraigned before... (address)

However, it is uncommon to identify a juvenile in a court or police case except when the crime is serious as in murder, rape, drug pushing. Also uncommon is the identification of subjects or actors in an event by race or religion; well-known cities and capitals may not need an added identification. But small unpopular towns will need to be identified along the nearest big city or capital. For example..." the incident occurred at Obalune, a small town 50 miles from Ikot Ekpene municipal council".

### **3.2 Attribution**

Attribution in news writing involves the disclosure of the identity of information source. Attribution functions to give credibility to the news report. It removes doubts from the readers mind about the authenticity of the report. Reports attributed to legitimate and credible sources often make such reports reliable. A newspaper may avoid mentioning the source of its information, if such disclosure may endanger the source. And if the report is sourced from documented materials, reporters are expected to disclose them too.

### **3.3 Capitalisation**

To capitalise means to set a word in upper case. The main purpose is to lay emphasis on what is written. As a rule in English language constructions, all proper nouns, trade names, names of association, clubs' organisation, religious, and their appellations (e.g. Him, Thou, Lord,), nations, races must be capitalised.

### **3.4 Abbreviation**

Abbreviated words are often the shorter versions of their full forms. They are used because spaces in the newspaper need to be saved, time in the radio and television need not be wasted. Abbreviation also reduces the cost of production or reproduction of news items.

It is important to spell out the meaning of abbreviation at their first mention e.g. United Nations (UN). However, most abbreviations are dictated by the nature of a newspaper's stylebook. The tradition for abbreviation of date is that the months of the year must be abbreviated when they come before the figures except for the months of March, April, May, June and July, e.g. Jan. 10, 2005 and March 4, 2005. It is wrong to use 'st' 'nd' or 'th' when writing news. The preferred form is, for example, Feb.2, 2005 or June 12, 2005.

### **3.5 Numbering**

This is based on the house style or convenience and space saving purposes. While some numbers are rounded up for easy reading, some are not spelt out in order to save space. Usually, it is expected that figures one to nine (1-9) should be spelt out while ten and above can be written in figure e.g. 10, 12, 15. Use figures for street number e.g. 73 Ikpa Road, use figures for scores, telephone numbers, votes, percentages, prices, degree (90<sup>0</sup>). Avoid beginning a sentence with a figure, if you do, the figure must be spelt out. E.g. "Twenty members" of, instead of "20 members of..."

### **3.5 Punctuation and Word Division**

The rules of punctuation are the same as for any other type kind of composition. They may be used to break or stop sentences etc. As for word division, it is important that reporters avoid the division of words between lines. Do not divide hyphenated words except at the syllable where the regular type comes e.g. Mother-in -law. Do not begin a line with hyphen nor divide words between pages.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The news story aims at conveying to readers the salient aspects of an event, hence the reporter's duty is to let the reader into the picture with as little effort on the reader's part as possible. This study has afforded the journalist the opportunity to achieve good news reporting.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- There are rules that can be used to minimise the burden of comprehension on the reader.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Extract a full length and complete story from a current National daily. From the story, further extract aspects of the report that best exemplify the elements of good news reporting discussed in this unit.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Sonaika, Femi (1987). Fundamentals of News Reporting. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition:  
John West Publications Ltd.

## **UNIT 3 INTERVIEWING AND NEWS SOURCES**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Meaning of Interview
  - 3.2 Types of Interview
  - 3.3 Techniques of Interview
  - 3.4 News sources
    - 3.4.1 Government News
    - 3.4.2 Business and Labour news
    - 3.4.3 Sport news
    - 3.4.4 Court and Police News
    - 3.4.5 Accident and Natural Disaster News
    - 3.4.6 Foreign News
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is about interviewing and news sources. Interviewing is a reporter's basic tool, central activity in his daily job. He uses news sources to achieve his purpose.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful study of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain what is meant by Interview
- Describe the essence of an interview
- Explain the techniques of good interviewing
- Conduct an interview
- Identify the major news sources for gathering data
- Identify the kinds of places you should contact when you need certain information under any beat

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.1 Interviewing: Meaning

A large chunk of what a reporter does, to get the necessary data for his stories revolves round meeting and asking people questions. It is the journalist's tool also, for digging out facts. This is where interview comes in. By way of definition, an interview is "any planned and controlled conversation between two or more people which has a purpose for, at least, one of the participants". To be effective, therefore, an interview must have (a) Purpose (b) Plan (c) Control interaction. But you can learn a great deal about the art of interview by learning how to interview. It is practically an exercise best learned by experience.

The purpose of an interview may be specific depending on the type of interview. But all interviews are concerned with either obtaining, passing or clarifying information.

#### 3.2 Types of Interview

There are many types of interview open to use by the journalist. The very familiar types are:

- **Exclusive interview:** This is conducted by a reporter representing a single media house without any other reporter participating in it. Any information disclosed during the interview is only known to the reporter.
- **Panel Interview:** This occurs when more than one reporter is seated to throw questions at an invited guest. It is frequently adopted or used by radio and television station.
- **Vox Populi or Man-in-the-street Interview:** "Vox Populi" means the voice of the people. So, this type of interview is conducted by reporters to elicit information from a cross-section of the general public. It could be anybody in the street irrespective of the status or age. There is no fixed rule as to how many responses one must get.
- **Personality Interview:** This is an interview conducted by a reporter concerning an individual's life, activities, views, character or personality, etc. The selection of the personality is not limited to those who have gained places in the news stream of ongoing events, e.g. government officials, recognised businessman, traditional ruler, professor or renowned academic, etc. A personality can also be out of the news stream but news worthy, by a special trait of oddity,

habit, play, hobby, etc. For instance, a priest who, Sunday after Sunday, preaches to an empty church auditorium deserves a special focus.

- **New Interview:** An interview with one source is just the beginning of reporting. It can involve asking questions from several people, e.g. investigating a bank robbery. People to interview can include: bank clerks, security men, eye-witness (customers) etc. because time is the reporter's greatest enemy (deadline), he must be thorough as well as swift. He must ask right questions directed at the right persons.
- **Feature Interview:** It is a form of article that focuses on an issue of general interest by interviewing one or more persons to present and analyse the issue. It presents a deeper insight into events than in news reports. It also allows for descriptive and stylish techniques not used in news writing usually done around events that have already made news. Reporter would talk to more sources than for news story.
- It is a type of creative writing which takes a lot of preparation e.g. of a fatal road accident that claimed many lives. This can motivate a news feature on e.g. for interview with experts in highway, Police Traffic Officers, Road Safety Officials (FRSC), medical officers, drivers of commercial vehicles, and or persons who have survived such accidents etc. what about the Tsunami Disaster? Hurricane Katrina etc?
- **Sport News Interview:** Reporters interview police officers on crime, fire marshals on causes of fire outbreaks; sports reporters talk to coaches, players for background materials for games stories. In sport news interviews, reporters look for information that will highlight or illustrate the events being described.

### 3.3 Techniques of Interview

Newsgathering requires tact, common sense and knowledge of interviewing techniques. Successful interviews are the result of careful planning and preparation on the part of one or both participants. Good interviewers and interviewees are not born but are made. They practice the skill until they appear to be able to do it without much effort. The notable interviewing techniques are:

- **Preparation:** This reminds one of the saying that “perspiration in preparation is inspiration in presentation”. It requires that the

reporter must read, research and know much about the person or subject to be discussed in the interview. The reporter must get to know the person's past, or the views about the subject in the past. It all boils down to preparation.

- **Have Questions Stated:** This means that a reporter should prepare a set of basic questions meant for the interview. The approach must not be rigid. It can be structured (e.g. Yes or No answers) or unstructured (the respondent is free to say anything). Allowance should also be made for supplementary questions. With time, you will learn not to strictly rely on a prepared list of questions. The natural informal and conversational order would then prevail.
- **Use of Mechanical Device:** In order to ensure accurate report of what is said during an interview, a tape recorder is recommended for use but care must be taken to avoid situations where the presence of the recorder can disrupt the flow of ideas/response from the interviewee. The person might feel unsafe and exposed to give out information that is recorded.
- **Appearance:** This calls for modesty in your dressing habit. A reporter must be well dressed for an interview. Excessive make-up is undesirable. Remember, there is no second time first impression. The first is the first and nothing more.
- **Be on Time:** This calls for an avoidance of African time syndrome. Arrangements should be made for the journalist to be at the venue at least, 30 minutes before time schedule.
- **Eye Contact:** Good interview involves good observation of what is happening around the interviewee. A reporter that refuses, for any reason, to maintain good eye contact during an interview might be missing lots of non-verbal cues necessary for his report. This does not mean that one should stare or gaze at the other person to the point of causing an embarrassment.
- **Note Taking:** A reporter should listen attentively during an interview. If he does not know the formal shorthand writing, he can develop the abbreviated long handwriting, for his purpose. Only the important points should be taken down. Excessive scribbling/writing should be avoided, although it is better to be on that part of "too much", than being on the part of "too little".

- **Verification:** Before ending an interview, quoting statements, names, figures and dates should be cross- checked for accuracy. At the end, express your gratitude to the interviewee.

### 3.4 News Sources

The ‘where’ of news refers to the sources of information opened to the journalist. Primarily, a reporter begins his day with the house diary. The diary contains all the expected events of the day as perceived and recorded by the editor. The next source of data for the journalist is the library, also called the “Morgue”. Here, the reporter has access to newspaper clippings, journals, periodicals, concordance, magazines and other confidential publications of the government. In any case, it is essential to make a list of news categories and their vital sources of information for writing each story.

#### 3.4.1 Government News

- Government gazettes, daily press releases, etc.
- Ministry of Information
- Secretary to the State Government’s Office
- Public Relations/Information Managers of Ministries
- Head of Public Service and Director Generals
- All Ministries (Federal/State)
- Statistics and Planning Offices
- Mass Media Organs
- Legislature (State and National)

#### 3.4.2 Business and Labour News

- Business and Labour Organisation, e.g. NLC and other Union Secretariats
- Business Institution (private and public)
- Finance Houses e.g. Banks, Insurance companies
- Ministries of Trade, Commerce and Industries
- Mass Media Organs
- Stock Exchange Officers

#### 3.4.3 Sport News

- National Sport Commission
- Sport Organisations e.g. NFA
- Sport Festivals

- Sport Magazines, Journals and Programmes
- Sports Ministry
- Sport Personalities (Old and New), etc.

#### **3.4.4 Court and Police News**

- Court Proceedings, Tribunals
- Police Stations and Military Offices
- Ministry of Justice
- Judges and Lawyers
- Secret Investigation Bureau e.g. FIIB, SSS, CID
- Media Reports
- Special commissions e.g. EFCC.

#### **3.4.5 Accident and Natural Disaster News**

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Place of Accident                | - Disaster/Relief Commission |
| • Hospital Police                  | - Airways, Transporters      |
| • Ministry of Health               | - Embassies                  |
| • Fire Service                     | - International Health       |
| • Universities and Research Centre | - Servitors                  |

#### **4.6 Foreign News**

- Ministry of External Affairs
- Embassies and High Commissions
- Nigerian Institute of International Affairs
- International Organisations, UNESCO, ILO, WHO
- Foreign Media Outlets
- Ministry of Information
- National, Regional and International News Agencies e.g. NAN (News Agency of Nigeria), PANA (Pan African News Agency), Reuters, UPI (United Press International), AFP (Agence France Presse) TASS (Telegratnoise Agenstvo Sovietskano Soyusa), etc.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Interviewing is an art that allows the reporter to bring into play all the writing skills at his disposal, especially of personality interview. The study of the techniques is essential in having a good interview.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The unit has exposed you to the following facts:

- That interviewing about the major source by which journalist get information for their daily reports or assignments
- The major types of interview include: the exclusive, panel, Vox pop and personality interviews.
- The best interviews are those which the techniques of interviewing are applied effectively. Common among such techniques are preparation, prepared and stated questions, use of mechanical device, eye contact, promptness and taking down notes.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Choose from (1) the types of interview (2) any of the news sources, you have studied in this unit, conduct an interview or interviews of that sort and submit your report.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

MacDougall, Curtis (1977) Interpretative Reporting. New York: Macmillan.

Moemeka Andrew (1980) Reporters' Handbook. Lagos: Department of Mass Communication Press.

## **MODULE 4**

### **JOURNALISM/MEDIA LAWS**

- Unit 1 Journalism/Media Laws
- Unit 2 Court Reporting
- Unit 3 Knowing the Courts in Nigeria
- Unit 4 Defamation Law
- Unit 5 Copyright Law

### **UNIT 1 CONTEMPT OF COURT**

#### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Contempt of Court; What it Entails
  - 3.2 Types of Contempt
  - 3.3 Checklist for Reporting Summary Trials and Avoiding Contempt of Court
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

With court reporting, it can be a matter of your career sinking or swimming with each report. But sometimes it is not just your career that may be at stake. It can also be your very freedom. There is a body of law called law of contempt. If you infringe it in the magistrate's court you can find yourself in jail that very day. It is therefore extremely important that you read very carefully the references on contempt I am about to give you. This is because one day, when you are sitting in jail, or standing in the dole queue, you may just regret the fact that you did not complete the required reading. The recommended reading on contempt of court is in the next input in this unit.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define what contempt of court is.
- Identify the broad types of contempt of court.
- List the criteria for reporting summary trials from the court.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Contempt Of Court: What It Entails**

Contempt is the law that concerns people who disrupt legal proceedings, insult judges, disobey court orders, publish written or broadcast material which may interfere with the outcome of a trial, or – most controversially – try to undermine public confidence in the judicial system. The enforcement of the law of contempt involves the delicate balancing of two fundamental social values:

- the right of free speech and a free press, against
- the right of individuals to a fair trial.

#### **3.2 Types of Contempt**

There are three types of contempt which are of direct concern to the working journalist. They are:

- Publication of words that tend to “pollute the stream of justice”, such as:
  - Revealing details of a crime which might influence a potential jury after an arrest has been made.
  - Revealing the accused person’s previous convictions or outlining his or her confession.
  - Publishing a photograph or likeness of the accused if identification may be an issue in the trial. In criminal trials, in particular, identification is more often an issue than not.
  - Publishing reports on proceedings in closed courts or where restrictions on publishing apply.
- Scandalising the courts. This arises if your newspaper unfairly criticises the courts or the judicial process in a way which might undermine the public’s faith in the administration of justice. This is a vague area of law, with a varied case history. It is vague because judges disagree on what constitutes fair criticism. It should not concern the novice journalist unless he or she is asked to write an editorial on the miscarriage of justice in a certain case, or unless he

wishes to expose the fraudulent activities of a judge or magistrate. In any such case, where the courts run even the slightest risk of being offended by your words, you are strongly urged to seek legal advice on the firmness of your ground. If you proceed without such advice and you are found guilty of contempt you may well find yourself behind bars.

- By far the most important form of contempt you may face at this stage of your career is contempt in the face of the court, because this concerns your behaviour when in court preparing stories for submission in your court assignments.

In a nutshell, to err on the side of safety, your behaviour in court should be impeccable. People have been fined and jailed for anything short of the most polite, respectful behaviour. Some examples of things which have been found to be contempt in the face of the court are:

- Smoking, and rolling a cigarette in preparation for smoking.
- Sketching or photographing the judge or any people or scenes in the courtroom without the permission of the court.
- Reading a newspaper (since people in a court are supposed to give their whole attention to the proceedings, yes, even during the boring bits).
- Making any sort of noise or disturbance, (I'll leave that up to your imaginations), interjecting, interrupting.
- Walking into or out of the court in anything but the most unobtrusive fashion.
- Being improperly dressed. (In other words, do not cover courts in your thongs and body hugs).
- Using disrespectful language or a disrespectful tone when addressing the court or when giving evidence.
- Throwing an egg or stone at the judge. I'm sure you will certainly not attempt to do that, but here are other examples of obviously contemptuous behaviour.
- In 1773 a man of "ferocious and terrible disposition" was prosecuted for contempt because he forced a clerk to eat the court's subpoena.

- In 1900 a newspaper description of an English judge as “the impudent little man in horsehair, a microcosm of conceit and empty headedness” was held in contempt.
- In 1974 a solicitor’s clerk described the judge as a “humourless automaton”. But he could not be dealt with for contempt because he had already just been sentenced for the same offence for releasing laughing gas into the air conditioning system of the court.

Finally, on courtroom behaviour, some word on etiquette. You will probably never be called upon to address a magistrate or judge. If you must, however, refer to the magistrate as “Your worship” and to the judge as “Your Honour”. Always bow (a significant nod of the head constitutes a bow these days) as a mark of respect to the bench (not necessarily to the judge or magistrate) when entering or leaving the courtroom while in session, and always stand when the magistrate enters or leaves the room.

Briefly, though, it means you cannot comment on a case while a trial or an appeal is pending. All you may publish is a strictly factual account of public steps taken publicly in the litigation. You can report the arrest, but it may be defamatory to give names at this point. In this area, examples of contempt’s have been:

- Publication before a hearing of pleadings, interrogations, answers, or evidence.
- Advertising for witnesses on behalf of a party
- Publication of portraits of parties where identification may become an issue.
- Comments suggesting one party is in the right, whether original or quoted from another source.
- Accounts of police or investigative reporter’s investigations, theories, etc., suggesting the accused is guilty or even innocent.
- Prejudging a trial by a newspaper which will interfere with or obstruct the fair administration of justice is referred to as *facie curiae*. The contempt of court committed here are dealt with summarily by the court i.e. the contemnor need not take any plea nor be put in the witness box for his defence and cross-examination.

- Disobeying the lawful order, decree, injunction etc. of the court that made an order is referred to as contempt *ex facie*. Here, the contemnor is allowed to take plea to a charge preferred against him.

It is not a contempt to publish a factual, straight account of the pursuit and arrest of an accused person, unless something suggests in the story that he is guilty or innocent. Even material seen as being in the public interest in helping police has been found in contempt.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 1.1**

1. What are the types of contempt you know?
2. Without referring to this unit, list the major points that reflect the checklist for reporting summary trials.

### **3.3 Check List for Reporting Summary Trials**

The writer should always read through copy of court reports at least twice before handing them to the editor to check that the following are included.

1. Exact identification and titles of:
  - (a) the defendants and their representative if applicable
  - (b) the magistrates
  - (c) the prosecutors
  - (d) the places and days where the proceeding occurred
  - (e) the witnesses
2. The defendants pleas-guilty or not guilty.
3. The charges. These can be paraphrased, but must be accurate.
4. The results of the proceedings – dismissal, adjournment, or sentence.
5. If there was more than one charge, do the fines, jail terms or community service orders, on each charge add up to the totals you have reported.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The study of media laws is a must for all would-be journalists in order to avoid infringement.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you would readily agree that you have learnt the following;

- (i) That knowledge of the principles guiding the operation of law of contempts is a sine = qua – non for reporter/journalist.
- (ii) That contempt of court results when a person disrupts legal proceedings, insults the judge, disobeys court orders, publish written or broadcast material that interferes with the outcome of a trial.
- (iii) That three types of contempt have strong bearings with journalistic practice. They are (1) publication of matters that “pollute the stream of justice” (2) scandalize the courts and (3) contempt committed in the face of the court.
- (iv) That factual straight account of proceedings in the court is not a drive towards contempt unless the facts upon which the reports are based are not exact and do not originate from the recorded accounts of the court records.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Attend a court session of not less than a Magistrate Court of justice. Record your observations of the proceedings and reconcile them with the points contained in this unit.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Anderson, David (1987) Pitfalls in the Law for Journalists (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)  
Brisbane: Mando Publications.

Griffith, Geoffrey (1974). A Guide to Law Court Reporting. Sydney:  
News Ltd.

## **UNIT 2 COURT REPORTING**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Court Reporting: General background information.
  - 3.2 Rules of writing a good court report
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is about Court reporting. In studying this unit, the reporter arms himself with a weapon that allows him practice unhindered.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On Successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain why reporters are allowed to accurately report court cases
- Apply the standard rules governing court reporting
- Explain what contempt of court is

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Court Reporting: General Background Information**

As a reporter you have no special rights in a court of law. You are entitled to no more information than is normally available to members of the public. Any provision of special seating for the media should be seen as a courtesy of the magistrate or judge involved – there is no right to such accommodation.

The public can be excluded from a court case only if it can be shown that by nothing short of their exclusion can justice be done. It clearly shows that a court cannot be closed just to save witnesses or parties from embarrassment or ridicule.

Of course, as with all principles, there are exceptions to the open justice principle. It does not apply to matters heard in chambers, which are usually procedural items. It does not apply to family law and children's courts, although some reforms are underway as outlined earlier, basically allowing the reporting of some family law cases with identification of parties not allowed.

The judge or magistrate has the power to prohibit publication of all or part of any proceedings, even if the court is sitting in public. The court will sometimes prohibit the publication of the names of witnesses or parties where secrecy is paramount. An example would be the case of someone giving evidence against a blackmailer, who may have to outline embarrassing personal details about the substance of the blackmail. The judge may order the suppression of the witness's name to prevent embarrassment. Otherwise, as you could imagine, there would be few offers to testify against extortionists for fear of wives or husbands reading about their partner's exploits.

But you need not worry greatly about having to read the judge's mind on these things. For such an order suppressing identity to be binding, it must normally be clearly expressed by the judge or magistrate, or the judge must be maintaining such an air of confidentiality in the courtroom that any fool would get the message that it should not appear on the front page of your paper.

Regardless of how autocratic the judge or magistrate may appear, no matter what he or she orders you as a reporter to do, by no means argue, or debate the issue. A challenge to such a restriction can be safely made only from the Bar table, by fully briefed legal practitioners. As we cannot afford such counsel in this course, I strongly suggest you politely do what you are told when assigned to court rounds. Your editor may wish to legally challenge such orders when you are assigned to cover a High Court Case, but for most provincial and regional cases, it is just as well or err on the side of courtroom etiquette and to keep on the right side of the judge or magistrate. After all, he or she could be the very person hearing your plea against a negligent driving charge the very next week, and it would be unwise to test his or her stringent independence on such an important guinea pig.

When juries are sent from the courtroom, the court remains open, but publication of proceedings while they are absent is prohibited, as is any publication, which could intimidate or ridicule them.

Most permissible reports will consist of summaries of what was actually said in the proceedings. Even disruptions and incidents may be reported, although these must be intrinsically connected with the matter at hand.

For example, fathers standing in court and yelling “dirty murderer” or “hope he burns” at the alleged murder of their children, have been published without problem. But, for instance, if the murder trial of a rebel cricketer was interrupted by a demonstrator rising and yelling “racist pig”, the publication could prove both contemptuous and defamatory.

The quote from Lord Diplock about “fair and accurate reports” is crucial to work of the court rounds man. This was further reinforced by Chief Justice Jordan in *Ex parte Terrill, Re consolidated Press Ltd*. He said. “So long as any account so published is fair and accurate and is published in good faith and without malice on, one can complain that is publication is defamatory of him notwithstanding that it may have injured his reputation, and no-one can in general be heard to say that is a contempt of court notwithstanding that it may in fact be likely to create prejudice against a party to civil or criminal litigation”.

But warned, if your report is inaccurate or distorted you leave yourself and your publication wide open to defamation and /or contempt of court proceedings. For a report to be protected from defamation or contempt rulings it must be **contemporaneous**, which means you cannot dig up reports of old proceedings, which might prejudice an upcoming trial.

Do not believe for a moment that small, heavily weighted sections of evidence or judgments can be quoted out of context just because they were said to court. Rebuttals of such evidence must also be clearly stated in your report. A fair summary of the proceedings is protected just as much as a verbatim account.

The report loses protection if it is partial, if it claims something happened when in fact it did not, or if it withholds facts, which put a different complexion on facts, which are truly reported. As long as you meet these requirements, you can use all your skills to find the news angle of the particular case and make it an interesting news item. You can even highlight some aspect of the case, which was not given prominence by the judge or magistrate.

### 3.2 Rules of Writing Court Stories

Avoid the formula approach to reporting court stories, unless specifically instructed to do so by your editor-in chief or editor. You will sometimes find that it is the policy of a provincial, regional or suburban newspaper to follow such a formula, which was Fleet Street’s way of reporting court cases in the 19th century.

In normal circumstances there is no reason to make your story as boring as the proceedings may seem to be. Of course, that does not mean you invent or exaggerate sections of proceedings, but it does mean you can highlight certain things, which may be of interest to your readers, but the magistrate, judge or counsel may have just skimmed over.

Your readers will not be interested in the 30-minute legal debate between counsels over whether a *generalia specialibus non-derogant* applies in that particular instance. They will be much more interested in the five minutes a witness spends in the stand describing in detail how she was bashed, robbed or defrauded by the accused. Of course, you will remember, to outline the defendant's rebuttal of the witness's accusations.

It all comes down to that crucial phrase: BE FAIR AND ACCURATE. I would strongly recommend you write that phrase in capital letters in your study notes and doubly underline it, because it goes to the heart of good court reporting.

- i) **Exercise cares at all times and go right to the heart of a case:** At first you may find the legal jargon a little overwhelming. Refer to the legal glossary in the court booklet provided, or to the glossary in the back of Professor Sawyer's book. But as soon as you see through the legal jargon to understand the issues involved, court reporting can become satisfying and relatively straightforward. Always rest on the side of caution, and do not let your adjectives and adverbs run wild with vivid subjective description of parties or events.
- ii) **Develop a keen sense of news:** Ability to seize on a bright story in the middle of an otherwise dull and involved case is essential. Of course, a keen sense of news comes naturally to many of you anyway. That is why you have chosen to become journalists. But again, be cautious, because as you know news does not necessarily equate with sensationalism, and just because a witness takes all his clothes off in the particular case does not necessarily make that an automatic angle on the story. The case might just happen to be the local mayor found guilty of a ₦10 million embezzlement, and the strip act might just pale into insignificance as a side show. In court, as on any round, news is relative. Your news sense is your ability to prioritise any given set of events.
- iii) **Take the utmost care with names and addresses:** Check them with the official court papers and never rely on information

supplied by court officials or other reporters. This should probably be at the top of the list, because it is a simple trap for young players. There are sad examples of journalist who rely on the outside sources for their stories, with dire consequences. Be sure the information you are being given is based on official court documentation. Do not trust any information volunteered to you by parties outside the court. Only what is read, said or put in evidence, in the hearing or sight of the reporter, in open court and in the course of the proceedings can be safely reported. The procedure for your court reporting assignment will be for you to get all spellings and addresses and other particulars from the police prosecutors, clerk of the court or other responsible court official. Again, though, it comes down to the basics of any reporting. You always check and recheck the spelling of someone's name. If you assume the spelling of John Smith as JOHN SMITH, you might find it is real JON SMYTH. In a normal story such a mistake is bad enough, but in a court story you can leave yourself wide open to defamatory action by committing such an error. Even if you get the street name correct, it is not unlikely that there will be a real John Smith living in the same street, and he is not going to appreciate being mistaken for the John Smith being convicted of an indecent exposure offence.

At this point it is essential that you get all of the essential information for the case from the police prosecutor. Your story, when sent to the sub-editors, should include all the following:

- i) The day the case is heard. (Yesterday is not good enough, because the story might be held over for a day. If you use the word yesterday, always put in brackets afterwards the date of the actual hearing.) You will find that often newspaper reports of judicial proceedings are only protected from defamatory action if they are contemporaneous.
- ii) The names of the judge, magistrate, and various counsels of the parties.
- iii) A balanced account of any evidence and its rebuttal. When you have written your story, always take a printout or a photocopy of your original manuscript. This is vital to protecting your own neck in any future inquisition into an expensive defamation or contempt action. It is amazing how easily sub-editors "forget" they chopped out or changed vital information, but if you have your own printout, at least you can argue to your editor to your own defence. Always read and reread your own stories, and

particularly court ones. A mental block in the pressure of a deadline could have you spelling names incorrectly, or even mixing up the names of defendants and their counsel. No matter how pressed you are for deadline, it is better that you miss that deadline than submit a court story you have not personally checked for corrections.

- iv) Always approach a lawyer if in doubt about technical terms. Again, if in doubt, don't leave out-check it with someone who knows. It is your job to ask questions. You are being grossly negligent and contemptuous by publishing false or misleading information just because you were too embarrassed to demonstrate your ignorance of legal term.
- v) Similarly, never submit for publication a report, which you yourself do not fully understand. It is better to miss the story than to play guessing games with points of law or court procedures. If you do not understand a point after it has been explained to you, ask for it to be explained again. If you still don't understand a point after it has been explained to you, ask for it to be explained again. If you still don't understand, and you are too embarrassed to say so, then go and ask someone else. But get it right before you write. When in doubt, find out. If still in doubt, leave out.
- vi) Beware of the opening address by counsel in important criminal cases or public inquiries, such as Economic and Financial Crime Commissions (EFCC). They are only allegations and may not be subsequently proved in evidence.
- vii) Never forget that charges are only allegations until proved by the evidence. The word "alleged" should always preface the statement of an offence. For instance, it is dangerous in the early stages of a case to say that an accused had been seen committing an offence. Such a statement is only alleged.
- viii) Develop good shorthand. It is impossible to cover a superior court adequately without being able to write shorthand.
- ix) Never use an affidavit unless every part has been read in court.
- x) Learn to write clearly and accurately about court proceedings without the slightest tinge of bias.
- xi) In industrial courts remember that union officials and employers' representatives may make allegations for political reasons and great care should be taken to see that they are made in open

- hearing and are recorded in the official transcript before they are used in a report.
- xii) Never be afraid to ask for information. We have already discussed this.
  - xiii) Always accede to the direction of the presiding judge or magistrate that certain facts and allegations must not be published. This action must always be reported to the news editor.
  - xiv) If in doubt about some aspect of a court story, always inform the chief sub-editor.
  - xv) Remember that a misplaced word or name may lead to a writ for libel.
  - xvi) Always record the adjournment of a case and never leave a case half reported. The final result be reported in the first available edition. The half you do not report could be just the half important rebuttal evidence and your readership and jury could be falsely left with the impression of guilt or innocence.
  - xvii) Never use the word “admitted” in a court report unless quoting someone during the court proceedings. Otherwise use “said”.
  - xviii) Check your newspaper’s policy on the publishing of the street numbers of people named in court actions. A good rule is to include them in your copy and let the subs cut them out if they want.
  - xix) Check carefully any doubtful or vital points in the official depositions of lower court cases, particularly inquests. A newspaper is liable if it publishes an error in a court deposition of evidence.
  - xx) Never, ever, adopt a facetious style to a court report or comment or even hint at your own opinions on the case, whether by descriptive phrase or even punctuation. Play a court case straight down the line. Yes, by all means look for the news, but do not treat it as a piece of semi-fiction or an exercise in the new journalism. As Professor Sawyer says: “The newspapers which have made a fashion of slick and humorous journalese in the reporting of police court cases are able to do so only as a result of great experience and under constant supervision of legal advisers; for this style it is also desirable to pick victims who will probably

relish such treatment or will not have the money to take action against it. It would not be possible to defend such reports as fair and accurate, since they are so obviously intended not for public information but for public entertainment.”

- xxi) Report with caution the opening addresses of counsel. If they seem to be making outlandish claims of future evidence or testimonies, it could be that their witnesses may not swear up to the counsel’s claims. It is hard then to back down and tell you readers that evidence, which was promised, has not been forthcoming after all.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 2.1**

Buy a newspaper in your locality. Look for three court reports. Cross check the principles and rules of court reporting in those reports you have read. Note your observations and record them for your use.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The standard rules governing Court reporting must be observed by the reporter so that his career will not be jeopardised.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Court reporting is a professional right and that in the court of law, you have no special right to get any information which could not be made available to non journalism trained person, also in the court room.
- The judge reserves the right to allow or disallow the publication of any part of the trial, including names of witness and their address.
- Court reporting requires some basic rules, which include; being careful with the names of persons involved in the case, seeking explanation for facts or terminologies you do not understand well etc.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Write a full report of an aspect of trial involving well-known public officers in your state or locality.

## **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

University of Southern Queensland Study Book, JRN 1000.

## **UNIT 3 KNOWING THE COURTS IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 The Courts in Nigeria: Major Types
  - 3.2 The Hierarchy of Courts in Nigeria
    - 3.2.1 The Supreme Court
    - 3.2.2 The Federal Courts of Appeal
    - 3.2.3 The Courts of Resolution
    - 3.2.4 The Sharia Courts of Appeal
    - 3.2.5 The Federal Revenue Courts
    - 3.2.6 The High Courts
    - 3.2.7 The Magistrate Courts
    - 3.2.8 The District Court (Northern States)
    - 3.2.9 The Customary Courts
    - 3.2.10 The Area Courts
    - 3.2.11 The Juvenile Court
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Court reporting can be one of the most exacting fields of journalism for the reporter. It can also be one of the most rewarding. It is exacting because reporters are expected to report only factual aspects of events they witness or giving account of. It is also rewarding and even fulfilling when such reports keep the reporter from the dungeons of the state security forces or correctional closet. Thus, this unit provides you with the basic information about Nigerian courts that should make your reports more exacting and rewarding.

The daily listing of the cases for any court – from the smallest Magistrate Court through to the High Court of Nigeria – is a great equaliser of journalists. It could be compared with two people sitting down to the same crossword puzzle. They are faced with the same facts, and only their individual levels of skill and wit make the difference between how accurately and quickly they can complete the puzzle. Court cases are the same. A junior reporter has to work with same facts,

debate and judgment as Super ‘A’ grade journalist. Once inside the court, contacts do not come into it, because you can only report what happens in the courtroom. Comment does not come into it. Do that and you may find yourself in contempt of court. Court reporting comes down to being able to apply the basics of journalism. *BEING ACCURATE, BEING FAIR, BEING ON TIME, and DEMONSTRATING NEWS SENSE.*

Finding the right angle on a court story could be the difference between it being buried as court filler or being national news. When you arrive at the courthouse, you are faced with the very same listings as the senior reporter. Every case is a potential story; whether it is two neighbours fighting over their fence, a back-street assault, a drink –driving arrest, or a mass murder...at the very least, there is a story to how it came to appear in court. There are always thousands of cases, which reflect our society’s need for rules to govern the conduct of everyone and for the benefit of the majority.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Describe the system of courts in Nigeria
- List the types and hierarchy of courts
- Describe the types or kinds of cases handled by each of the courts
- Describe basic composition of such courts

## **3.0 MAIN BODY**

### **3.1 The Courts In Nigeria**

Court in Nigeria may be divided into several forms:

- Superior and inferior court.
- Court of records and court other than court of record.

For the first form of classification, superior courts are courts of unlimited jurisdiction and in the strict sense of the term “Unlimited jurisdiction”. There is no such court in Nigeria. But superior courts are so described because the limits to their jurisdiction are minimal and they have the minimal jurisdiction limit depending on the subject matter. The high court of a state is therefore a superior court because it has unlimited jurisdiction throughout the state with respect to the value of the subject matter.

Inferior courts are courts, which has jurisdictional limit with respect to the type and value of the subject matter. The magistrate court for instance is usually subject to supervisory jurisdiction of the high court.

For the second type of court classification, a court of records was formally a court which kept a record of items, acts and judicial proceedings and had the power to punish a person for contempt. Today, however, the strongest essential feature of the court of record is its power to punish contempt and so that any court which has power to punish contempt is a court of record, but any court which does not have such power is not a court of records.

A court of record may be a superior or inferior court e.g. High Court and Magistrate Court respectively. The power to punish a person summarily, at common law, rest with the superior court whether or not the offence is committed before the court or out of the court but and inferior court of record has power still at common law to punish summarily only when the offence is committed in the face of the court. The punishment may be in the form of a fine or an immediate imprisonment.

## **3.2 Hierarchy of Court in Nigeria**

### **3.2.1 The Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court was established in 1963 by the constitution of the Federation, which provides that the judges of the court should include: The Chief Justice of Nigeria and 6 other judges known as justice of the Supreme Court. The law also prescribed that the judges' should not be less than 5 in any occasion, presently how ever the number of justices of the supreme court stands at 10 (ten). The appointment of a person as the chief justice of Nigeria can only be done by the head of state. (i.e. under military regime).

The Supreme Court is the final authority for court matters in Nigeria. It is a superior court of record. It can listen to and consider both civil and criminal cases. The Supreme Court hears appeal from the Federal Court of Appeal.

By the provision of section 117 subsections 2 of the constitution of Nigeria (1963) the Supreme Court has the right to try cases of appeal already decided by the federal court of appeal particularly in the following cases:

- i) Decisions in any civil or criminal proceedings on questions concerning the interpretation of the constitution of the federal or any state law.

- ii) Decisions on any civil or criminal proceedings on questions as to whether any of the provisions concerning the fundamental rights are contravened in relation to a person.
- iii) Decisions in any criminal proceedings in which the federal court of appeal has affirmed a sentence of death imposed by another court or tribunal.
- iv) Decisions concerning disputes between the federal and state or between states or in such cases as may be enacted by law.

The Supreme Court of Nigeria as the highest court for Nigeria has contributed in no small measure to the development of law. Paramount among such contributions has been their role as the supreme moulder of the law, particularly, in criminal and constitutional law.

### **3.2.2 The Federal Court of Appeal**

The Federal Court of Appeal is a superior court of record established in October 1, 1976 by the constitution of the federation. By the provisions of the constitution, the judges of the federal court consist of the president of the court and at least 21 other judges styled justices of appeal. The judges are appointed by the highest ruling body then the supreme military council after consultation of the advisory judiciary committee. The court is mainly the court of appeal and has exclusive jurisdiction to hear appeal from the state high court, the federal revenue court and such other courts or tribunals as may be specified by law.

### **3.2.3 The Court of Resolution**

This is a kind of court that exists in each of the ten or more Northern states in Nigeria. It has the chief judge of the state as the president. Others including the grand Khadi, a judge from the High Court nominated by the Chief Judge and another judge from the Sharia Court of Appeal nominated by the grand caddy (Khadi).

In cases where the opinion of these judges differs concerning an issue or matter brought before the court, the opinion supported by the chief judge is usually declared as the opinion of the court. The court has jurisdiction to resolve conflicts arising between the high court and the Sharia Court of appeal. In cases where there is no such conflict the court of Resolution describes which of the two courts actually has jurisdiction. It should be noted that no occasion has ever arisen for the convening of the court of Resolution in the country.

### 3.2.4 The Sharia Court of Appeal

The Sharia Court of Appeal also applies to the ten or more Northern State of the Federation. It is seen as the superior customary court of records, which consider cases from the upper area court. Such cases involve Muslim personal laws. By definition, Moslem personal law consists of the Muslim Law of the Maliki school governing the following matters:

- i) Moslem laws concerning marriages constituted according to that law and including the dissolution of such marriages. It also concerns certain family relationship, which relate to the marriage under question or the guardianship of an infant equally connected to the marriages under question.
- ii) Moslem laws regarding gifts, will or succession where the endower, donor, testator or deceased person is a Muslim.
- iii) The court also considers matters concerning infants, prodigal or person of unsound mind who is a Moslem. It equally deals with the maintenance or the guardianship of a Muslim who is physically or mentally infirm.
- iv) The court also entertain question where all the parties to the proceedings (whether or not they are Moslem) have by writing under their hand requested the court that hears the case in the first instance to determine the case in accordance with the Moslem law.

The quorum for the sitting of the court is limited to two Judges and the eligibility of persons to be appointed, as a judge must include the following:

- (a) Must be a Moslem.
- (b) The person must not be less than 35 years.
- (c) Must have been in adviser on Moslem law in the service of a native authority for not less than 10 years.
- (d) Must be a holder of certificate showing that he is knowledgeable in the study of Sharia law.
- (e) Must be a distinguished scholar in Islamic study. It should be noted here that legal practitioners are not permitted to appear for any party before the court.

### 3.2.5 The Federal Revenue Court

This was established by the Federal revenue court decree of 1973 as a federal High Court of Justice. It has the president and usually four (4)

other judges appointed by the head of state. Judges of the court are so appointed after consultation of the advisory judiciary committee. A single judge duly appointed can constitute the court.

The court has civil and criminal jurisdiction referring to the revenue of the federal government connected with or pertaining to the taxation of companies, payment of custom, excise duties, banking, foreign exchange, currency and other fiscal measures. Such areas of jurisdiction usually recognize the operation of the company decree of 1968 as well as other enactment that relate to the copyright, patterns, designs, trade mark etc.

The three other court that come after the Federal Revenue court are:

- a) State High Courts
- b) Magistrate Court
- c) Customary and Area courts.

### **3.2.6 High Courts**

On creation of Lagos state in 1967 a High Court was established by the constitution of the Federation as amended by the states decree, 1967. Similarly the constitution of Northern Nigeria as amended by the 1967 Decree established a high court for Kano and another for Kwara State. As amended by that same decree the constitution of Eastern Nigeria established a High Court for Rivers State in 1976. On creation of the new states, a High court for Bendel State was established by the court, for the Mid Western Nigeria as amended by the state Decree 1976. By the constitution of Western Nigeria a high court for each of the states of Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo was established as amended by the 1976 decree.

By that same decree a high court for each state of Anambra, Cross River, Imo and Rivers were established by the constitution of Eastern Nigeria and High court for the states of Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gongola, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Niger, Plateau and Sokoto was established by the constitution of Northern Nigeria as amended by that same decree.

The structure, organization and jurisdiction of the state High courts are generally uniform. The High Court of each of the Northern states consists of the Chief Judge of the state and at least five other judges.

The high court of each of the states of Anambra, Bendel, Cross River, Imo, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Rivers consists of the chief judge of the state and at least 6 other judges.

Concerning jurisdiction, the High court of each of the Northern states is not empowered to issue in relation to any proceedings in any area court or in the Sharia court of Appeal an order of ‘Mandamus Certiorari’ or prohibition or an injunction in lieu of ‘quo warranto’.

There is no such prohibition in any of the southern states. In all the states where customary or area courts exist, the high court has no original jurisdiction to try customary law cases. Such are reserved for the customary courts vested with the power in the applicable law.

In each state, the high court in the exercise of its original jurisdiction is constituted by a single judge. In the northern states, the high court sitting, as a court of appeal is constituted by 2 judges except when sited in its notice Appellate Division such cases are constituted by 3 judges including a judge from the Sharia Court of Appeal.

In Southern states, High court constituted by a single judge in its jurisdiction but in Lagos State, it may be constituted by 3 judges. High courts generally are court of unlimited jurisdiction being unlimited with respect to the monetary value of the subject matter of the case.

### **3.2.7 The Magistrate Court**

It is constituted by a single Magistrate. Every state in Nigeria has a Magistrate court. Magistrates are divided into any of these classes, in each state i.e. the basis of defining the jurisdiction and powers of each magistrate.

In some states some persons are designated Magistrates of specified classes, which classes are not provided for under the law. Appointments to grades of Magistrate that are legally non-existent are irregular and do not confer any jurisdiction on appointee.

In each state, a person is appointed Magistrate, other than magistrate Grade III by the interim judicial Committee established for the state and the power to appoint a person magistrate Grade III is vested in the chief Judge of the state.

Under the law in force in some states, a person is not eligible for appointment as a magistrate unless he is qualified to practice as a barrister and solicitor in a court of unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters, and he has attained a specified minimum of post-qualification experience expressed in terms of years.

Civil Jurisdiction of Magistrate (in Southern States) is generally uniform but as a governing rule, a Magistrate has no original jurisdiction in any

civil case, which raises any issue as to the title to land or to any device, request or limitation under any will of settlement. Civil Jurisdiction in every other state varies from state.

Magistrate Courts have jurisdiction to deal with criminal cases summarily. There is no provision for authorising any magistrate to impose punishment greater than the maximum prescribed in relation of his grade. However adequate punishment provisions cover only cases punishable with fine or imprisonment or both, with or without whipping or less penalty. They do not cover capital offences and so Magistrates have not jurisdiction for the summary of trial of capital offences.

### **3.2.8 District Courts (Northern States)**

A District Court is a court of civil jurisdiction; it is an equivalent of a Magistrate Court in any of the Southern States. Its jurisdiction is similar to the civil jurisdiction of a magistrate court in any of the Southern States. As modified by the states decree of 1967 each of the then 6 Northern states, on creation of the states in 1967 had district courts established by the District Court Law. By virtue of the states Decree 1976, similarly each of the present 10 Northern states have district courts established by the district court law.

A district court is constituted by a single judge. The district court judges are divided in 4 classes namely Senior District Judge, District Judge Grade I, District Judge grade II, and District Judge Grade II. District Court judges other than district judges grade III are appointed by the interim judicial committee established for the state and district judges II are appointed by the chief Judge of the state.

The district court has jurisdiction subject to prescribed monetary value limits where the subject matter is money or is capable of estimation in terms of money.

### **3.2.9 Customary**

These are courts established essentially for the administration of customary law. In the then 19 states this court was established in 17 states but exceptions were in the then Bendel and Imo state.

In Lagos state, the customary court is governed by the customary courts law. Under the law Attorney General for the state is empowered to establish by warrant customary courts of a single grade outside the city of Lagos.

There is no provision for the establishment of customary court in the city of Lagos. Section 2 of the law provides that a customary court shall consist of a president and at least two or four members as the case may be (The president and 3 other members to telling (4).

For the purpose of hearing any case in a customary court 2 or 3 members shall form a quorum where the court consist of 3 or 5 members respectively i.e. either the president and 2 other members or the president and 4 others members.

Customary Court members including the president, are appointed by the interim customary courts judicial service committee for the state.

Qualification for membership include:

- a) He is a literate in English language.
- b) He possesses at least primary and standard IV certificate or its equivalent and suitable experience.
- c) He is a native of the area of jurisdiction of the customary court.

A customary court in a state has civil and criminal jurisdiction in 2 classes of cases:

- a) Matrimonial cases and other related matters between persons married under customary law.
- b) Suits relating to guardianship and custody of children under customary law.

Jurisdiction over the following cases provided the monetary claimed or the subject matter claimed does not exceed ₦100.

- a) Matters relating to inheritance upon intestacy and the administration of interstate estates under customary law.

The customary court has no jurisdiction in such cases, homicide, treason, any other capital offence, rape, procuration, defilement of girls and offences against the enactments relating to official secrets.

Maximum punishment, which a customary court is to impose, is as follows:

- a) Imprisonment – as term of one month fine – ₦200.

Customary court has jurisdiction over all Nigerians under the general supervision and control of the Ministry of Justice of the state.

Customary court rules consists rules of practise and procedure in the customary courts.

### **3.2.10 Area Court**

Area Court exists in most Northern States of the Federation. They are established by warrant of the state chief judge, they have civil and criminal jurisdiction as dictated by the edict establishing them. They particularly have unlimited jurisdiction in Matrimonial cases between persons married under customary laws as well as issues concerning guardianship.

### **3.2.11 Juvenile Court**

These are courts established for the trial of young offenders as well as for their relatives. These courts exist in the southern part of the country, they do not exist in Northern state, what exist in the northern states is normally treated under the children or young person's law, it has as its substance the protection of the young person.

A child by this law is one who attends the age of 14 (fourteen years) young persons are those who have attended the age of 14 but not attended the age of 17 or 18.

The juvenile court is constituted by the Magistrate sitting with other members appointed by other appropriate authorities.

- a) Juvenile Courts are not expected to be tried in public. Those that are permitted to be there should have the permission, for example, the journalist. This is done because the children are not supposed to mix up with the adult to avoid further corruption.
- b) No publication is expected to be made, but if it must be, the authority responsible do this should avoid exposing the identity of those involved (the children).
- c) All alternative punishment should be sort for to deal with such cases.
- d) No death sentence is permitted.
- e) It is not practicable in Nigeria.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 3.1**

Present in a tabular formant, the types, composition, jurisdiction of the courts operating in Nigeria.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The study of the different Courts in Nigeria by the reporter is both an academic and professional exercise as it helps to make his reports exacting and rewarding.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt about the (1) the kinds of courts operating in Nigeria (2) the composition of the courts, (3) the kinds of cases that are presented within such courts (4) the limitations of the courts in the scope of cases handled by them. It is hoped that this exposure would help the journalist approach his/her assignments responsibly.

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Account for the kinds and scope of jurisdiction of courts operating in Nigeria.
2. Discuss why the knowledge of these courts is essential for journalism practice

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Elias, Teslim. A book on “Communication Law & Ethics”.

## **UNIT 4     DEFAMATION LAW**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 The Tort of Defamation
  - 3.2 Libel Actionable per say
  - 3.3 Exceptional Cases in which Slander is Actionable per say
  - 3.4 Special Damage in Slander
  - 3.5 The Innuendo: Meaning and Types
  - 3.6 Defences to Defamation
    - 3.6.1 Justification (Truth)
    - 3.6.2 Fair Comment
    - 3.6.3 Absolute privilege
    - 3.6.4 Qualified Privilege
    - 3.6.5 Malice
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The tort of defamation occupies a prominent place in Nigerian law as it does in the laws of most African countries in which the common law applies. The immediate post-independent period in Nigeria was characterised by vigorous political activity supported by an articulate and free press. It is significant that the plaintiffs in defamation actions in the early '60s' included most of the leading political personalities of the time and that there was barely a national newspaper which was not a defendant in at least one of such actions during the period.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define defamation law
- Identify the types of tort of defamation.
- Explain knowledge of Innuendo.
- Study some cases.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 The Tort of Defamation**

Defamation is concerned with injury to reputation resulting from words written or spoken by others.

A defamatory statement may be defined as one, which tends to:

- i) Lower the plaintiff in the estimate of the right thinking members of the society or
- ii) To expose him to shame, contempt or ridicule or
- iii) To cause other persons to shun or avoid him or
- iv) To discredit him in his office, trade or profession
- v) To injure his financial credit.

The words contained of, must tend to injure the plaintiff/s reputation in the minds of right thinking people generally not merely in the minds of a particular section of the public. Any written or spoken words which fall within one or more of the five definitions listed above may be defamatory. The following are examples of statements held defamatory by the Nigerian courts:

- i) That a medical practitioner had a fake degree and that he exploited the public.
- ii) That a public official was corrupt or had been arrested on suspicion of corrupt practices.
- iii) That a legal practitioner had defrauded his clients.
- iv) That a university lecturer had committed adultery with a female student.
- v) That a female teacher was a bad woman etc.

It may be noted at this point that there is an initial presumption that a defamatory statement is untrue; but if the defendant can prove that the statement is substantially true, it will have a complete defence to an action for defamation. This is the defence of justification which will be considered later.

#### **• Libel and Slander**

There are two types of defamation:

- (a) Libel

## (b) Slander

- **Libel** is defamation in a permanent form – the most common being written or printed words contained in a newspaper, a book, a letter, a notice and etc. Defamation is also in a permanent form if contained in a painting, a cartoon, a photograph, a statue or a film. Also by the defamation law of 1961, section 3 CAP 32 Laws of Lagos State, which is identical to Sec. 1 of the English Defamatory Act of 1952, defamatory words contained in a radio broadcast are to be treated as being in a permanent form.

Television broadcasts are also within the ambit of the sections, which define words as including pictures, visual images, gestures and other methods of signifying meaning.

The Defamation Law of the Eastern States expressly provide that broadcasting includes publication for general reception by means of a wireless telegraphy or television.

- **Slander** is defamation in transients form most often through the medium of spoken words or gestures. It is sometimes said that libel is addressed to the eye while slander is addressed to the ear. The differences between libel and slander is that, whereas libel is always actionable per say, and that is, without the need to prove actual or special damage Slander is not actionable per say except in special cases.

### 3.2 Libel Actionable Per Say

This means that whenever a libel is published, the law will presume that damage has been caused to the plaintiff's reputation and will award him by way of compensation.

In case of NTHENDA VS. ALADE reported in 1974, 4 East Central State Law reports (ECSLR) page 470, the plaintiff brought an action against the proprietor, the editor and a reporter of the Lagos weekend newspaper alleging that an article published in the newspaper was defamatory of him. The defendants argued that the plaintiff's action should fail, as he had not proved that he had suffered any actual damage as a consequence of the publication. Judge rejected this contention saying that in an action for libel, the plaintiff need not prove malice in law and need not prove that he has suffered any actual damage as a result of the publication.

Both malice and damage are presumed from the publication itself, in the absence of lawful excuse. In case of WILLIAMS VS. WEST AFRICA PILOT reported in 1961, NO 1, All Nigeria Law Report, Page 866 it was held that once a publication has been found to be libel, the law acknowledges damages. See also the case of CARONER VS. The Sketch Publishing Company Ltd, reported in 1979, 3 Law Reports of Nigeria (LRN), pg. 276). The plaintiff is entitled to recover a large sum if, in a libel action, he can prove that he suffered actual damage.

### 3.2 Exceptional Cases in Which Slander is Actionable Per Say

Slander as we have seen is generally not actionable per say. This means that no action will lie unless the plaintiff can prove that he has suffered some actual loss. For example that he has been dismissed from his employment as a result of slander. However, slander is actionable per say in the following cases, and so will have the same effect as a libel:

- i) **Imputation of Crime:** It is slander actionable per say to allege that the plaintiff has committed a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment. For e.g to call the plaintiff a thief. In the case of AGOAKA VS. EJIOFOR, reported in 1972, 2 ECSNLR, Pg. 109. in that case for instance the defendant falsely accused the plaintiff in a village gathering of having stolen his cocoyams. It was clear from the evidence that the plaintiff had suffered no actual damage and ANIAGOLU (J) held that the plaintiff was entitled to recover general damages for slander. Note that to be actionable per say, there must be a direct assertion of the guilt. A mere allegation of suspicion is not sufficient and the crime alleged must be punishable corporally i.e by imprisonment etc. See the case of FARASHI VS YAKUBU, reported in 1970, Northern Nigeria Law Report, pg 17 where the plaintiff had committed adultery with defendant's sister-in-law. Actual damage was not proved but the court said: "It is well settled law that damage need not be proved where a person is accused of a crime".
- ii) **Imputation of Certain Disease:** it is actionable per say to say that the plaintiff is infected with certain infectious or contagious disease. Since this will tend to cause other persons to shun or avoid him.
- iii) **Imputation of Unchastity** or adultery concerning any woman or girl is actionable per say.

- iv) **Imputation Affecting Professional or Business Reputation** e.g that a surgeon is incompetent, a banker is fraudulent, and engineer has no technique, a lawyer knows no law, a trader is insolent etc.

### 3.4 Special Damage in Slander

In cases of slander, which are not actionable per se, the plaintiff, cannot recover damages merely on account of his loss or reputation. He will be able to recover only if he can prove that he has suffered some special or actual damage. Special damage here means loss of money or of some material or temporal advantage such as loss of employment, loss of a client, refusal of credit, loss of the hospitality of friends who had provided material things like food, drinks etc.

It is well established that words spoken as mere vulgar abuse or insult are not actionable in slander. Whether particular words constitute slander or mere vulgar abuse depends upon the circumstances in which they are spoken. In the case of *BENSOH VS. WEST AFRICAN PILOT LIMITED*, reported in 1966 in Nigeria. *Monthly Law Report III, IKPEAZU (J)* rejected the contention that a report in the defendant's newspaper to the effect that the plaintiff was an idiot was mere vulgar abuse and not actionable. What the plaintiff must prove is libel and slander:

- i) That the words were defamatory
- ii) That the words referred to the plaintiff
- iii) That the words were published to at least one person other than the plaintiff

### 3.5 The Innuendo

Innuendos in the law of defamation are of two types:

- i) The True or Legal Innuendo
  - ii) The False or Popular Innuendo.
- i) **True or Legal Innuendo:** Here, the plaintiff contends that although the words used are not defamatory on their face, they do convey a defamatory meaning to persons to whom they are published because of certain special facts or circumstances not set out in the words themselves but known to those persons.

For instance, a statement that Mr X was a frequent visitor to a house at No. 10 Lagos Street is perfectly innocent as its face, but it connotes other meanings, since it may be defamatory if it was published to other persons who knew the special facts that No. 10 was the special Headquarters of prostitutes or armed robbers etc.

- ii) **False or Popular Innuendo:** Here the plaintiff contends that the words are defamatory not because of any special intrinsic facts or circumstances known to those to whom the words were published but because of some defamatory inference which reasonable persons generally would draw from the words themselves e.g. in a caricature, nick name. A false innuendo goes beyond the literal meaning of the word.

### 3.6 Defences to Defamation

#### 3.6.1 Justification (Truth)

The defendant should not plead justification unless he has good reason to believe he will succeed as failure to establish the defences will usually inflate damage awarded.

#### 3.6.2 Fair Comment

On a matter of public interest based upon facts truly stated, made honestly, and not actuated by malice.

#### 3.6.3 Absolute Privilege

This is a complete defence to an action for libel or slander however false or defamatory the statement may be and however maliciously it may have been made. It arises in those circumstances such as proceedings in the legislature or in a court of law. Where public policy demands that persons should be able to speak or write with absolute freedom without fear or liability for defamation. This includes communication made by one officer of state to another in the course of his official duties.

#### 3.6.4 Qualified Privilege

Both absolute and qualified privilege exists for the same fundamental purpose and that is to give protection to persons who make defamatory statements in circumstances where the common convenience and welfare of society demands such protection. But whereas absolute privilege is limited to a few well-defined occasions, qualified privilege applies to a much wider variety of situations in which it is in the public

interest that persons should be able to state what they honestly believe to be true without fear of legal liability.

The main difference between the two is that a plea of qualified privilege will be defeated if the plaintiff proves that the defendant in publishing the words complained of was actuated by express malice whereas in absolute privilege, the malice of the defendant is irrelevant.

### **3.6.5 Malice**

It destroys qualified privilege. See the case of OWEN VS. AMALGAMATED PRESS of Nigeria Ltd., reported in 1997, Lagos Law Report, Page 6.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 3.1**

1. Distinguish 'defamation' from 'libel and slander'
2. What are the three basic essential element of defamation?
3. Why are there exceptions in slander that is actionable per say?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The role of the editor is relevant here. Technically, in law, he is liable along with the writer for any libellous or seditious material in his newspaper. Care must therefore be taken to avoid infringements.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Defamation generally covers any statement made by someone towards another person or what the person does, with the established intent to disparage, or cause a person to be demeaningly estimated in the perception of right thinking people.
- Defamation manifest in two forms namely, libel and slander
- Justification, Fair comment, privileges (absolute and qualified and malice can be pleaded as defences to defamation.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Comment on the necessity or otherwise of the law of defamation to the practice of journalism in Nigeria. Not more than three pages, typewrite or typeset on an A4 size of a paper.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Elias, T. O (1969) Nigerian Press Law: Lagos, Unilag Press.

Momoh, Tony (2002) Nigerian Media Laws. Lagos: Efu Media Associates Limited.

Pember, Don R. (2002) Mass Media Law. New York: McGraw Hill Company

Umoh, Peter (1990) "The Nature and Scope of Mass Communication Law" in Emmanuel Akpan (ed) Communication Arts Principles, Practice and Applications, Uyo: Modern Business Press.

## **UNIT 5      COPYRIGHT LAW**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Copyright Law: What it Means
  - 3.2 Who is Entitled to Copyright
  - 3.3 What is entitled to copyright
  - 3.4 Conditions for Entitlement
  - 3.5 Infringement of Copyright
  - 3.6 Action for Infringement
  - 3.7 Duration of Copyright
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The law of copyright is one of the most important legislature provisions that affect the journalists. The knowledge of such a law by the journalist, helps him/her to avoid making claims of ownership, of creative works that are not rightly and originally his or hers. This unit, therefore, takes you, the reader, through the basic provisions of the law of copyright in Nigeria. How the law affects you, will be best understood after you might have completed the study.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain what copyright is
- Describe who is entitled to copyright
- Identify what is entitled to copyright
- List the conditions that govern copyright entitlement.
- Identify situations in which copyright is infringed
- Describe action for infringement
- Determine duration of copyright

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Copyright Law: What it Means**

The law of intellectual property protects things, which are created by people's skill, labour and investment of time and money. Patents protect scientific developments and trademarks prevent unfair advantage being taken of the goodwill of establishing businesses. The law of copyright protects two kinds of copyright in books script, etc. It also protects the investors who provide the technology necessary to produce broadcasts, films and records. Copyright is the exclusive right to use materials in certain ways. The law of copyright is important to journalists because it determines what they can quote or use in their reports. It is also important to establish what rights a journalist, newspaper or television has to prevent others from exploiting their own work and prevent other from taking the benefit of it.

The Nigerian copyright law was governed by the 1970 copyright Acts until was replaced by a new copyright Acts of 1988. Today it is governed by the copyright Acts, CAP 68 1990 laws. So the copyright law in Nigeria confers on the copyright owner /holder the exclusive right to control inter-alia the reproduction, production, publication, performance, broadcasting, adaptation and distribution of any of their literary, musical, graphic and architectural works in works in Nigeria. It is therefore the exclusive right of the owner of certain works, which qualify, for protection to reproduce, communicate to the public or broadcast / translate, or adapt the whole work or a substantial part of the work either in any other form, recognizably derived from the original.

The owner has a right to restrict others from using his work in any form without permission; unless such a user falls within certain recognized exception which amount to fair dealing, e.g. research, criticism and review. Copyright however, does not extend to ideas. It is confined to expression which are fixed in a definite / permanent medium, because copyright has been defined as a right which float in the air, only to crystallize, clutch or fasten unto and protect any work that satisfies the conditions for eligibility.

#### **3.2 Who is Entitled to Copyright?**

Under our law, certain categories of people are entitled to copyright. These include; the owner, the author, the assignee, the likeness and the government. The author of a work is the first owner of the copyright. He is the person who actually writes, compiles, composes or draws the work in question. Although the idea of the work may have been subsisted by another. Where the work is that of a joint authorship. Then

both of them are at the same time entitled to copyright provided the conditions stipulated by law are fulfilled.

By Section 9 sub-section 2 of the Copyright Act of 1988, if the author of a work was in the employment of some other person under a contract of service, or apprenticeship, and the work was made in the course of his employment by that persons, he is nevertheless entitled to copyright as the first owner of copyright. Where any work has been prepared, published or made by or under the direction or control of either the government, state authority or prescribed international authority, the copyright in the work belongs in the absence of any contrary agreement, with the author.

### **3.3 What is Entitled to Copyright?**

Section 1 of the Act stipulates the different kinds of works eligible for copyright. These are:-

- i) Literary works
- ii) Musical works
- iii) Artistic works
- iv) Cinematograph films
- v) Sound recordings
- vi) Broadcast.

### **3.4 Conditions for the Entitlement**

By the Act, both published and unpublished literary, musical or artistic works are covered, but such works must first be:

- i) Original and
- ii) Fixed in a definite medium.

### **3.5 Infringement of Copyright**

By Section 14 of the copyright act, copyright is infringed by any person who without the license or authorization of the owner of the copyright:

- (a) Does or causes any other person to do an Act, the doing of which is controlled by copyright.
- (b) Imports into Nigeria, otherwise than for his private or domestic use any articles under which infringement takes place under (a).
- (c) Exhibits in public in respect of which copyright is infringed under (a).

- (d) Distributes by way or trade, offers for sale, hire or otherwise, or for any purpose prejudicial to the owner of the copyright any article in respect of which copyright is infringed under (a)
- (e) Makes or has in his possession, plates, master tapes, machines, or used for the purpose of making infringed copies of the work.
- (f) Permits a place of public entertainment or of business to be used for a performance in the public of the work. Where the performance constitutes an infringement of the copyright in the work; unless the person permitting the place to be so used was not aware and had no reasonable grounds for suspecting that the performance would be an infringement of the copyright.
- (g) Performed or causes to be performed for the purposes of trade or business or as supporting facility to a trade or business any work in which copyright subsists.

### **3.6 Action for Infringement**

Section 15, sub-section 1 of the 1988 Copyright Act says “subject to this Act, infringement of copyright shall be actionable at the suit of the owner, assignee or an examine licensee of the copyright as the case may be in the Federal High court, exercising jurisdiction in the place where the infringement occurred. And in any action for such an infringement, all such relief by way of damages, injunction, accounts or otherwise shall be available to the plaintiff as is available in any corresponding proceedings in respect of infringements of other proprietary.

### **3.7 Duration of Copyright**

Literary, musical or artistic works other than photographs last for 70 years after the end of the year the author dies and if the author was government or body corporate then it is 70 years after the end of the year, which the work was first published.

For cinematograph films and photographs, it lasts for 50 years after the end of the year the work was first published. For sound recordings, the duration is 10 years after the end of the year the recording was first made. For broadcast, it is 50 years after the end of the year the broadcast first took place. With regards to Performers rights, it is 50 years after the end of the year from which the performance first took place.

A reported case on Civil Remedies (as opposed to Criminal Remedies), a civil course of action on infringement of copyright arose in a Nigerian case named, *Plateau Publishing Co. & Others Vs. Adophy Reported in*

1986 for Nigerian Weekly Law Reports, Parts 33 & 34. page 205. In this case which was finally decided by the Supreme Courts, originated from the Federal High Court in Sokoto and was equally heard by the Court of Appeal. The Plaintiff/Respondent (meaning the plaintiff was at the lower court while the defendant lost at the lower court) in an action filed at the Federal High Court Sokoto, holden at Jos, claimed against the defendants N200,000 being damages for the infringement of his copyright and N50,000 as special damages for the same infringement of copyrights. He also claimed an account of all profits made in the publication of the plaintiff's work and a perpetual injunction against the defendants from any further sale use or dealings in the plaintiff's work. The work which was allegedly infringed in an article titled "After Tarka, what Next". Special Tribute"; written by the plaintiff. The plaintiff alleged that he sent the article to the first appellant Plateau Publishing Co. for publication, but it was not published. The plaintiff again alleged that the same article was subsequently published by the first appellant under a different name of one Ymasin as the author and without any license or authority from him at all. The said Ymasin was sued as the Third Defendant, the publication was in the *Sunday Standard* of 4th May, 1980, and was headed "Lessons from Tancaism: A Tribute Feature from Ymasin". So the defendants were sued jointly by the plaintiff/respondent. The first Appellant, Plateau Publishing Company Ltd. Pleaded in the statements of Defense that the publication was not a reproduction of the article written by the plaintiff and that the publication was not the work of the plaintiff, and that they did not publish the plaintiff's work.

At the trial the first Appellant, being the Plateau Publication Company, led evidence to show that at the time of the publication of the said article, they did not know that copyright in the article existed in the plaintiff/respondent. They sought refuge under Section 12 of the Copyright Act 1970.

The trial Court found the plaintiff guilty, awarded him N25,000 damages and N10,000 as additional damages. The perpetual injunction sought was also granted. On Appeal, the award of additional damage of N10,000 was set aside, the Court of Appeal did not interfere with the award of N25,000 damages. On further Appeal to the Supreme Court, it was held unanimously dismissing the Appeal among others that the relief available to the owner of the copyright for an infringement of the Copyright under Section 12 of the Copyright Act 1970, is not damages but an account of profits in respect of the infringement whether any other relief is granted under the Section or not.

### Self Assessment Exercise 5.1

1. What are the two fundamental reasons that qualifies a work that exclusive right not open to others?
2. What are the different kinds of works covered by the copyright law?

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The journalist must be creative in his writing and avoid contravening the copyright law as this can affect his entire career.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- That copyright protects intellectual works which time and money must have been made.
- That originality of the creative work and, the fact that it is expressed in a recognizable and validated medium of expression like article, drama etc.
- That copyrights lost of creative works such as: literary, musical, artistic, cinema films, sound recording and broadcast programmes.
- That for a number of reasons, copyright is infringed when a person (like the journalists) uses someone else' work without the authorization of the owner.
- Copyright of any work has an expiration date.

### 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Why does and should copyright matters concern the journalist? Write a page, typewritten or, typeset answer.

### 7.0 RECOMMENDED TEXT FOR READING

Elias, T. O. (1965) The Nigerian Press Law. Lagos: Unilag Press.

Momoh, Tony (2002) Nigerian Media Laws. Lagos: Etua Media Associates Limited.

Pember, Don R. (2002) Mass Media Law. New York: McGraw Hill Company.