

Making News at the Sports Bit



BRAC UNIVERSITY

Name: Nusrat Zaman

ID: 08103015

Department of English and Humanities

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By

Nusrat Zaman

ID: 08103015

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Introduction

News is knowledge and knowledge is power. News always keeps people up-to-date with current events and issues. News is always useful which broadens our knowledge, understanding and outlook and invites curiosity. It has the power to unite and to divide. This news is provided by the media and the field of this news is vast with very little limitations. The media has the power to influence, make or break and shape how people think.

In the world of globalization, the news industry has grown immeasurably and newspapers and news reporting have changed a lot from time to time. From size, shapes, colors to categories, concept and corruption media has gone through heavy renovations over the past decades. The things we are watching on TV have totally changed from our father's and grandfather's time. Through the numerous TV channels of Bangladesh now, viewers can watch news 24 hours on what is happening around them and what is happening around the world.

When you're young, you look at television and think, there's a conspiracy. The networks have conspired to dumb us down. But when u get a little older, you realize that's not true. The networks are in business to give people exactly what they want.

This is how Steve Jobs describes the wonder of television. As a young intern the same spectacle of television attracted me and I decided to work with Independent24 TV, the renowned digital Bangla channel from Bangladesh. Getting attached to "Sports Bit", I worked closely with the sports team under the supervisor Mr. Rubaid Iftekhar Mahbub, Senior Broadcast Journalist and presenter in Independent24.TV.

As my concentration for the BA in English degree was “Media & Culture Studies”, I was required to do my internship in any print or visual media organization. The reason I chose “Media and Cultural Studies” as my concentration was because now-a-days media has become a huge part of the globalized world and I want to be a part of it. Media captures the whole world and presents it to us. I picked Independent TV for my internship because it has a “direct approach towards news” and claims to have certain ethical standards. It is one of the best known TV channels in Bangladesh today and being able to work in this channel was an opportunity that should not have been missed.

As Kurt Loder, an American journalist, in his article, “On News”, comments, “News is anything that’s interesting, that relates what’s happening in the world, what’s happening in the areas of the culture that would be of interest to your audience”. Working in the sports section, I learned how to relate my courses with the work I was doing. Courses like “Writing for the Print Media”, “Editing”, “Translation Studies”, “Cultural Studies” and “Globalization and the Media” helped me look at news, especially sports news in my case, in a different way. I enjoyed applying everything I learned in my courses in my workplace and my interest grew as days passed.

In my report, I will be focusing on sports news; how sports shows can be made, how to write sports article, the style of sports writing, basic skills needed to work in sports writing, and my insights into the process.

With the vision of becoming a part of all its audience’s personal lives, Independent24.TV has a very personal feel to it. The channel seeks to be Bangladesh’s number one 24-hour news channel where viewers will find a full spectrum of news on TV. Their aim is to set the world class standard in Bangladesh’s broadcast industry and their goal is to carry news

and make news. They also wish to make news through investigative reporting in a way that was not done in the country before.

Even though I learned new things and looked at things differently during my internship, I cannot disagree with Marshall McLuhan, who says, in his book, *The Book of Probes*, “All media exist to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values.” In fact, the Media plays a significant role in our everyday lives with full of routines, actions and reactions. Television has become member of numerous families all over the world, since the late 1920s.

Researchers claim that, the success of television as a mass media lies in its achievement both visual and aural content. It not only entertains the viewers, but also keeps them emotionally involved. At the same time we can see what is happening around world by setting in one place. News always keeps us up-to-date about the whole world which is also considered as globalization.

My Internship Experience

Technicalities

I worked at the sports bit with ten other journalists. From there I have learnt their way of writing, how to cover sports news, editing, translating, voicing, interviewing collecting news from different sources to cover a full story, and many other things. The working environment was very friendly and the experience I have gained throughout my internship exceeded my expectations. This experience taught me a lot and is a highlight of my life.

Here I have done my internship at sports bit working on daily sports news from all over the world. I have learnt how to collect fresh news, how to gather all the related news and how to prepare it and make it presentable on television. I learned many new forms of writing news. I also learned how to write edit new after writing it. Though the writing style of news is very different from our regular writing, but it is very simple and short; so that anyone can understand it while watching news on television. The few concepts related to news that I learned during my internship with this channel are discussed below.

- iNews: First of all, they have a customized software called iNews from where they can write and edit the news to go on air and there are several terms related to news, for example: Rundown, IV, OOV, Package, SOT, PTC, VOXPOP, Boom etc. I am going to describe all these forms below:

- **Rundown:** Rundown is a list where we can see the time table of the telecast of daily news. It is generally a long list of daily on air schedule.
- **IV:** The full form on IV is 'In Vision'. It can also be called as LINK. When the presenter reads out the IV part of the news, the audience can see the presenter on television. The sentence structure of the IV part has to be very simple and short. No detailed information is given in the IV part. Here is an example of IV which was done by me-

IV: অস্কার পস্টিংরিয়াসরে নহিত বান্ধবী রভি স্টনিক্যাম্পকে নিয়ে সাউথ আফ্রিকায় শুরু হতে যাচ্ছে রয়লেটি টেলিভিশন শো। দেশটির টিভি চ্যানেলে এসএবসিতে প্রচার করা হবে এই শো। গত বৃহস্পতবার পস্টিংরিয়াসরে বাসায় খুন হন রভি। প্রধান আসামী হিসেবে অস্কার পস্টিংরিয়াসকে আটক করেছে সাউথ আফ্রিকান পুলিশ।

- **OOV:** The full form of OOV is 'Out of Vision'. When the presenter reads the OOV part, then the audience or the viewer cannot see the presenter on television. During that time they can see the short video clips on the related news. The sentences of the OOV part have to be very simple and short. The information provided also has to be concise for the report. Here is an example of an OOV done by me-

OOV: এসএবসি জানায় তারা আগামী শনিবার রভিককে নিয়ে বিশেষ ঐ শো সম্প্রচার করবে শোটির জন্য শূটিং ও অন্যান্য কাজ রভি করে গিয়েছিলেন মৃত্যুর আগে তার পরিবার চাচ্ছে চ্যানেলটি বিশেষ এই শো সম্প্রচার করুক। এদিকে, রভির হত্যাকাণ্ডকে পূর্বপরিকল্পিত হিসেবে বিবেচনা না করার জন্য আদালতকে অনুরোধ করেছে পস্টিংরিয়াসরে পরিবার। পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে পস্টিংরিয়াসরে চাচা আর্নল্ড পস্টিংরিয়াস এই বক্তব্য দেন। পস্টিংরিয়াসকে বর্তমানে প্রটিংরিয়র একটি পুলিশ স্টেশনের জেলে রাখা হয়েছে। বৃহস্পতবার তার জামনিরে জন্য শুনানি হবে।

- **Package:** Package is also another kind of OOV, but it has to be written in a detailed way. It is a long detailed form of OOV. In the OOV part, the viewers get to hear the reporter's voice or watch more detailed video clips, VOXPOP or PTC or interview of others, etc.
- **SOT:** The full form of SOT is 'Sound on Take'. The other name of SOT is SINC. When a reliable person gives a speech on related news, then that becomes a SOT. The interview of a general person will not be considered as SOT. For instance, if a Cricket player of the Bangladesh team says something about Cricket, then that will be SOT.
- **VOXPOP:** VOXPOP is just the opposite of SOT. When a general person says something about any incident to a reporter, then that will be a VOXPOP. For Example, if the cricket player Mushfikur Rahim says something about strikes in Bangladesh, then that will be a VOXPOP.
- **PTC:** The word PTC came from 'Piece to Camera'. When a reporter goes to the spot and says something in front of the camera about the news, then that will be PTC. For example: when a reporter goes to the stadium and reports live from the stadium that is called PTC.
- **BOOM:** We all know the common microphone, but during my internship I learnt that it is known as BOOM in the newsroom.

Apart from these technical understanding of terms of concepts, I had a number of jobs to do during my time in the channel. My most important task everyday was to find out fresh news, gather all the news and after that I had to write IV, OOV or Packages for these items. I had to write the reporter's names, anchor's name, etc and as there is a particular Video ID of every news, I also had to put a Video ID on that particular news. After that my supervisor checked it and corrected all my errors. The other concepts I learnt and practiced are Aston, Super, Ticker and Breaking News.

Aston is the designation of the reporter which appears at the time of the broadcast of news on television. Super is the name of important information, which is shown on television during the news programme. Ticker is the moving line at the bottom of the screen that highlights important news for the day. The less important news is shown through ticker and the most important news is shown via breaking news.

On the third and fourth week of my internship I have learnt where I could get the daily fresh news on sports, from where I have to find out the news, which news is more important than the other one, what news will go first and what will go later, how to make a complete news, and many such details.

As I was working on sports, here I have seen that for national sports news there are sports teams, who always go for the assignments and they take the video footage, interview of the players daily. They prepare the package on the basis of their reports, which they collect from their assignment. There are also other online news sources like www.banglanews24.com, from where I could get the national news on sports.

On the other hand, for international sports news they have their own wire named ATPN from, where I collected updated news on daily sports. There are also other sources from where I got news like- BBC News on sports, www.espn.com, www.telegraph.co.uk, www.goal.com. After going to the office every day, I had to check these websites for knowing what is happening in sports all over the world, find out the fresh news from there and pick out the important news from these websites and then hand them over to the supervisor.

Sometimes my supervisor asked me to find out the latest news, which is important from ATPN or sometimes he chose a topic for me to translate from English to Bengali. As I was

working at Desk and was not going for the assignments yet, so for national news, I use the Bangla news websites to make the IV and OOV. After making the IV and OOV, I had to find out the related video on ATPN. If a video was available then I had to download it and convert that video into MOV-Quick Time by using the software Xilisoft. After converting the video I had to go to the panel from where the editor edited the video footage and I had to marry the video with the video id of my OVV, written by me. If everything went ok then my OOV would go on air and the presenter read it which the audience could see on television.

Further into the weeks of my internship I learnt how to give voice, how to do phono and how to do studio live. To give a voice there is a separate room from where anyone working there can record their voice and can save it. During on air, there is a time, where we can hear the voice of the reporter, but do not see him/her. That voice is given from this room. I have learnt how to give this voice and how to save it. If my voice sounds alright and is edited well, then it could be broadcast on air after being checked.

Next, I learnt how to do phono. Phono is when the reporter gives his or her report over the phone from the spot. I practiced how to do phono. On the phono, there was a person who asked the question about the incident from the studio and I had to give the answer to that question and that would be aired live during the news.

The other thing I learnt was how to do 'Studio Live'. In 'Studio Live', after coming back from the assignment, I had to present a report on all the news gathered from the assignment at the studio, which would go online during the news. I also practiced how to do Studio live.

My Internship Experience

Assignments

In the latter weeks of my internship, I had gone to the Mirpur Sher-E-Bangla National Stadium for an assignment with our sports team. There I watched a game of Bangla Nari Cricket. After finishing the match I gave the latest update of scores to our other team members over the phone, who were working on desk. There I also learnt how to take interviews of the players. I learnt how to ask them questions, how the videographer took the videos, etc.

On another occasion, I went to the Bangabandhu National Stadium and there I attended a press-conference on a match between Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Rasel. There was a discussion on what time the match will be held as there was a strike on that day. They decided that the match will be held after 6 p.m. There I observed how a press-conference is held and how the reporter asks questions and notes down every important detail about the event. After that we went to the Dhanmondi Club BAFUFE and there we took an interview of the coach of Sheikh Jamal named Josef Afuse. We also took the interview of the striker named Alfred and the captain of their team named Hasan Al Mamun. There I learnt how to and what type of questions have to be asked to cover sports news based on interviews.

The following week I took the interview of a Bangladesh cricket player named Sahriar Nafis. In the interview, the topic was on the second test of Srilanka and the match between Bangladesh vs. Zimbabwe. I asked him questions like what his expectation was, how their preparation was, etc. I took another interview of a cricket player from Bangladesh named

Enamul Haq Junior. There also the topic was the test series between Bangladesh and Srilanka.

Through this interview we came to know about their performances. What I found interesting to know was that the spinner of the Bangladesh team was getting fewer wickets. Thus gradually I came to learn how to take studio interviews.

My Internship Experience

Theoretical Understanding

Steps for Making News

I found a number of steps necessary for making news, which I will be discussing briefly.

1. Finding something to write about: First of all, I had to decide what my topic is or from what angle I was doing my story. To make a story, I had to go for the assignment with my sports team to collect all the news and scores, so that I could make proper news on that topic. In some cases, we had to find out if there was any press conference going to be held on sports, from which we could get a story.
2. Taking interviews: I had to take interviews for my news stories. I had to ask the participants' questions related to what I was going to cover and combine the answers into a report.
3. Choosing the best quotes: I had to note down the important parts of the interviews, so that I could use those in my news reports.
4. Reporting: I had to make a report on that interview, which would carry all the answers of the questions, which a news audience might have liked to ask. This information must be correct and therefore double checking is needed in this stage.
5. Being objective and fair: A news story is not about what I think. So I have to write it based on what I covered through my assignment. My personal opinion should not be a part of my report.

6. Crafting a great lead: To craft a great lead, I needed to think about what makes my story unique and what I find interesting about it. Then I had to find a way to convey that interest to the audience so that they find the news worth reading.

7. Structuring the rest of the story: Though crafting a great lead is important, structuring the rest of the report to keep the audience engaged is also very important. News writing is based on the idea of conveying as much information as possible and as quickly and efficiently as possible. In that case, I had to keep in mind that the “inverted pyramid” format is followed in some reports. According to this model, the most important information will go to the top of the story and the least important will be at the bottom. However, the nature of the news can be such that the “inverted pyramid” may not be suitable for them; then I had to make sure that all the information is presented in the news in a smooth, concise way.

8. Attributing the information gathered from the sources: It is important in news stories to be clear about where the information is coming from. Attributing the information in the story makes it more credible, which will build the trust with audience.

9. Getting started on a follow up story: In this case, an already known story has to be developed. So I had to think about the cause and consequences of the story I was covering to write the developing reports.

Covering Sports News

Sports news is in the sports section of a newspaper or on television in which the sportswriter reports the scenes of sports, tournaments and games such as athletics, football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, handball, table tennis, boxing, swimming, gymnastics, golf, shooting, rowing, rugby football, hockey, billiards, wrestling, bowling, cycling, weightlifting,

etc. Sports coverage can be divided into four kinds of stories: sports news, game results, profiles and opinion pieces. I found the following steps to be essential in the making of sports news.

1. Storyboard: To cover sports news, at first, I had to follow a storyboard on which sports our team would working on.
2. Location: Then we had to find out where the game would be held and after that we had to go there with the videographer so that we could take shots for making the news and take interviews of the players.
3. Equipment check: Before leaving for the assignment, equipment check is very important. There is a unit for checking that the batteries of the equipment are fully charged and that there is space on the memory cards for recording news and that the boom is fully charged.
4. Lighting: Lighting is very important and the videographer must be conscious about it, whether it is indoor or outdoor shooting.

Like the other forms of journalism, sports journalism can be dynamic, interesting, informative and original. To become a sports journalist, he or she needs to develop reporting skills by covering organized, high-level sports. Similar to the other news, the main elements of a good sports story are a catchy lead, clear focus and lots of quotes. Sports news has to be precise, concise, lively, and attractive and using informal language so that it can catch the viewers' attention. The language of sports writing should be plain and correct. When making a sports match report, some things have to be noticed—that the information is correct and the source is reliable. When writing a sports report, it is very important to give other information about the players in the team to draw the audience's attention. The important thing is the title should be catchy to draw their attention. Scores should always be up to date, so that the audience can enjoy.

The most important thing about writing sports news is that a journalist cannot look like he or she is taking sides. When he or she goes to watch a match, he or she has to write down important notes so that s/he can remember important points of the match that may not be noticed by other journalists, so that the news s/he covered becomes different from other channels.

When writing a sports report based on websites, the reporter has to be very careful about the correct website sources she or he is using. When using a website, it is important not to copy their whole story, s/he can use it as a guide for facts and sources so that the news looks original.

Another important lesson I thought was necessary to share is that the work should always be saved in the computer so that if the computer or internet crashes, one can get back his/her work easily. It is also very important to check the work over and over again for spelling mistakes, factual errors, grammar and other various things. There are some steps to write a sports news, which are being discussed below.

Step one: In this step there will be all headlines of the sports news, which will draw the viewers' attention to watch the news. All the important sports should be here. In one report there will be 3 headlines on different types of sports news, which will emphasize the current sports story.

Step two: In this step there will be the elaboration of the sports news. Here will be the entire detailed story. The most important information has to be on top, and the least important at the bottom.

Step Three: There will be interviews of the players related to the current game. The reporter should ask the players questions about the game on behalf of the viewers and the player has to answer all these questions, so that these can fulfill the curiosity of the viewers of the

current game. The main purpose of these interviews is getting more background information on the subject.

After learning about the 'Propaganda Model' in the Globalization and the Media course, I could clearly see its elements in the media world through my experiences at the Independent TV. According to the book, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, published in 1988 by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, "A Propaganda Model" focuses on the filters that influence the coverage and broadcast of news on the media. This propaganda model has five filters, which now-a-days are dominant in every aspect of the media. These filters are:

1. Ownership and Profit Orientation.
2. Funding and Advertising
3. Source
4. Flak
5. Anticommunism

Except the 5th filter, all the others are dominant in the Bangladesh media scene. If we think about the first filter we have seen that the size, ownership and profit orientation do matter on the TV channel. The channel which is more popular or seen by the people is totally dependent on how big the channel is. How many reporters are there for working, how many news they are covering daily. This is also matter how much money they have and how much money they want to make. The relationship with the other channel does also matter. "Promoted a greater collective confidence by repeatedly emphasizing the potential power of working people to effect social change through the force of combination and organized action." So size,

ownership and profit all these are related to each other in media. . Most TV channel companies in Bangladesh are owned by rich and influential people, large corporations and political parties. These people always have their own interests in mind and they project their ideologies, beliefs and biased point of views.

Similarly the second filter is advertising and according to this filter the advertisement of TV channel does also matter. “Advertising has played a potent role in increasing concentration even among rivals that focus with equal energy on seeking advertising revenue. A market share and advertising edge on the part of one paper or television station will give it additional revenue to compete more effectively –promote more aggressively , buy more salable features and programmes –and the disadvantage rival must add expenses it cannot afford to try to stem the cumulative process of dwindling market (and revenue) share. Media organizations, especially TV channels rely 100% on advertising for their finance and funding. As a result the advertisers and the advertising departments get first priority. They get the first take on every page and the news comes after they are done placing their ads. If the ads are big and takes up more time, then the news are cut down to meet their needs. As a result news and reports lose details and news becomes less informative and somewhat biased.

The third filter is called sourcing mass media. “The mass media are drawn into a symbolic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest.” After politics, sports are the most widely seen news in Bangladesh. Mostly dominated by Cricket, the sports pages generate big money for the news industry. With globalization we are able to access advanced technologies, utilities, opportunities and sources, while the Sports Journalism platform is getting wider day-by- day, but at the cost of quality, originality and integrity.

The fourth filter is Flak where it refers to the negative responses to a media statement or program. Journalists of Bangladesh probably face more flak than anywhere else in the world. Journalists are constantly being threatened, pulled off stories and killed.

A Personal Account

During my journey at “Independent24. TV”, there were some issues that caught my attention, which I cannot ignore. I realized that sports journalism requires a vast knowledge base,

personal sacrifice and dedication towards the world of sports. This form of journalism is believed to be glamorous, fun and exciting and for the journalist it represents the big organizations such as *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* etc. But for a developing country like us, sports journalism is very different. Here, sports reporters run around from one federation / stadium/ board to others in immense heat, humidity and traffic; while the editors and sub-editors collect foreign sports news from on-line sources.

A huge trend in the Bangladeshi media scene is the handing out of gifts (Cell phones, Lamps and various electronics) to reporters after a press conference. This trend is seen mostly in sports press conferences, but not in political ones. In political journalism, however, reporters are taken abroad with political members to cover certain events, free of all costs, this is called “gift with a price tag” and it is an obvious one.

For a country suffering from an awfully unstable condition like Bangladesh’s journalism economy moonlighting is very common. These reporters in general have long working hours and get very little pay; so more often occupy themselves in more than one organization or the sports journalist may be working as a political journalist for another newspaper or website and this hinders their focus on the specialized field.

Conclusion

Not ignoring the fact that I was doing three other high level courses along with my internship, I have enjoyed every aspect of it. My twelve weeks at the Independent24 TV may

have not taught me every aspect of journalism, but it has broadened my understanding of it. I have met a lot of interesting people and made a lot of new friends. I have experienced how a group of people of similar interest work in a friendly and respectful environment with efficiency and effectiveness. I am honored to have been a part of them.

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