

FUNDAMENTALS OF WRITING NEWS FOR RADIO

- **Overview:**
- Writing news for radio is a different task; different from the way employed for writing news for newspaper or television. While writing for radio following fundamentals must be kept in mind.

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- **News for Once only:**
- Since newspaper can be read for many times a day and it is something that can be picked up for confirming or re-reading news stories whenever one feels like. But this is not the case with radio news. Radio news bulletin goes on air once only. That is why the radio news must be written in such a way that the listener may be able to understand and grasp the contents of the news when he/she listens to it.

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- **Language:**
- It has been mentioned time and again that the radio is a medium that is meant for ears and not for eyes.
- Radio is a verbal communication medium and the language to be used for construction radio content must be spoken, easy and familiar.

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- **Avoid Written Expression:**
- Though what is put on air on radio is first, in most of cases, written on paper and then put on air by the newscaster, but the way the message is written must not be in written expression. The example given below will explain the difference between written and spoken expressions.

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- **Written Expression:**
- “The government,” said the opposition leader, “had created the problems.”
- The same sentence when read out may take the following shape conveying altogether opposite sense.
- The government said, “The opposition leader had created problems.”
- **Expression for Radio:**
- The opposition leader said that the government had created the problems.

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- **Avoid Literary Expression:**
- Literary expression has its own tone and style and is different from journalistic language so must not be used for print or electronic media.
- **Literary Expression:**
- Sweet are the fruits of adversity.
- **Expression for Radio:**
- The fruits of adversity are sweet.

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- **Avoid Inverted Sentences:**
- Because of heavy rainfall, which came yesterday, the city life was jammed.
- **Radio Expression:**
- Yesterday it rained heavily and it jammed the city life.

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- **Avoid Parenthesis:**
- A man, basically a taxi driver, overran a pedestrian.
- **Radio Expression:**
- A taxi driver overran a pedestrian.

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- **Avoid Jargons:**
- Jargons, as has been explained, are specific terms and terminologies which only the experts or the related people of a field can understand. Since radio addresses an ordinary person as well so chances are there that an ordinary person may not get the meaning of the word. These kinds of terms must be communicated through their colloquial equivalents.

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- **Use familiar words:**
- Heavy vocabulary is not encouraged even in written or literary styles. A good news writer, especially when writing for radio, must avoid using difficult words and replace them with easy ones.
- Some example difficult words with their respective substitutes are as under:

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Difficult words	Substitutes
Remonstrate	Argue
To be in Jeopardy	To be in danger
Obliterate	Destroy
Plausible	Understandable
Antagonistic	Against
Loquacious	Talkative
Veracious	Truthful
Abrogate	Cancel
Penury	Poverty

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- **Use of Contractions:**
- Since while reading out news bulletin, the news caster gives an impression as if he/she is talking to the listeners, and in conversational style, the contractions of the following expressions are used unless stress is needed to be given, the news must be written by using the contractions.

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● Should not	Shouldn't
● Is not	Isn't
● Are not	Aren't
● Was not	Wasn't
● Were not	Weren't
● Will not	Won't
● Would not	Wouldn't

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● May not	Mayn't
● Might not	Mightn't
● Can not	Can't
● Could not	Couldn't
● Has not	Hasn't
● Have not	Haven't
● Had not	Hadn't

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- **Abbreviations:**
- Avoid abbreviations especially names of the states, countries, religious titles, months, military designations, holy books etc. For instance, LHR(Lahore), PUN (Punjab), C in-C (Commander in Chief)
- If necessary write with hyphens. F-B-I , Y-M-C-A, U-N, C-N-N, B-B-C
- Don't use symbols. For example “#” for number, “&” for and, “@” for at, etc.

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- **Avoid Quotations:**
- The exact statements of newsmakers can go in newspaper but should be avoided in radio news bulletin. The reason behind is, since the news written for radio is to be read out by a newscaster, he can not readout commas or columns. Commas and columns are used in written expressions and a reader after looking at a sentence within commas instantly comes to know that what is given between the commas is an exact statement of the person, the news is about. As far as radio is concerned, a news caster can not read out a sentence in this way.

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- **Written sentence**
- President said, “New dams are inevitable for the prosperity of Pakistan”.
- **When spoken, becomes**
- President said commas begin new dams are inevitable for the prosperity of Pakistan commas close.
- **Prefer indirect speech**
- The above sentence, when written in indirect speech, will be like this:
- The president said that the new dams are inevitable for the prosperity of Pakistan.

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- **Capitalization:**
- Capitalize generously especially all proper nouns, anything that is important.
- **Avoid Punctuations:**
- In written expressions comma denotes a pause and full stop denotes the end of the sentence, where as when you are writing for radio you must avoid supplying the sentence with commas and full stops.
- In radio scripts, where there a comma is needed, a slash (/) is applied and where there a full stop is needed
- Two slashes (//) are inserted.
- (/) one slash denotes a pause.
- (//) two slashes denote full stop.

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- **Figures:**

- Write figures in words.

- 30,00,000

30 Lacs/ thirty lacs

- 5400

5 thousand 4 hundred

- Rs. 4000

4 thousand rupees

- \$ 6 billion

6 billion dollars

- Rs. 90.50

90 rupees fifty paisas

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- **Complex numbers:**
- Avoid using complex numbers but give round figures.
- 84850-----Almost 85 thousand
- 9.8 million-----Nearly 10 million
- 59 years,7 months & 80 days -----almost 60 years.

REFERENCES

- Radio News Reporting & Production – MCM515, Virtual University of Pakistan
- Barnard, S. (2000) Studying Radio, London: Arnold.

**THAT'S ALL
Thank
You**