Unit I

Understanding/Introduction to News

24/11/21

Lecture #1

The meaning of news:

* No homogenous definition. Typically used to describe non fictional, current mass media relevant in its immediate environment.
* Not mere ‘information’, but information in particular that is *of interest to its audience*, disseminated & distributed promptly on a large scale.
* 5W1H

25/11/21

Lecture #2

Elements/’Ingredients’ of news:

Timeliness, Proximity, Prominence, Oddity, Consequence, Conflict, Controversy, Emotion, Usefulness, Human Interest, etc.

Nature: perishable.

29/11/21

Essay #1: On the Responsibility of Media to Society

[A Shared Delusion](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eQF6QIEMvBE95Vwpzk1QfjWrznDSzO6HBR9dgmKSAo0/edit?usp=sharing)

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Lecture #3

Hard v Soft News:

Soft News: entertainment news, sports news, celebrity news, emotional human interest stories, etc. i.e. the portion of news media assigned to non-essential or non-urgent information. Editorials, subjective, emotional. Relaxed deadlines. Non-[perishable.

Hard News: Crime reporting, political news, policy related changes, calamities, public disturbances etc. i.e.news media that warrants immediate & urgent prioritising & publication. Fact heavy, objective, impersonal. Shorter deadlines. Highly perishable. Citation of sources.

([Hard News & Soft News](https://youtu.be/jCAJe0d4aFM))

Inverted Pyramid structure: most important -> less important.

News Gathering Process:

In summary: Whatever works lol

[What is the process of news gathering and how do journalists add value to news?](https://youtu.be/TAgnvALrEhY)

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Basic Components/Conventional Structure of a News Story:

1. Headline
2. Byline
3. Dateline
4. Lede (1st para)
5. Body (nut graph, bg, cosmic quote)
6. Conclusion

[HARD NEWS-SOFT NEWS AND BASIC COMPONENTS OF A NEWS STORY (google.com)](https://classroom.google.com/c/Mzk1MDg4MjY1ODQ0/m/NDMwNzM5NDg4ODU3/details)

Importance of Attribution, merits v demerits, etc.

Achieving/Alluding Balance & Fairness:

Impersonal, neutral language. Covering both sides. Attributions & evidence. Formality.

2/12/21

Tutorial #1:  News analysis by medium/broadcaster

8 o’ Clock Morning News Hour by Channel:

Criteria of judgement:

1. News coverage:

How much airtime is given to actual news v promotional material, no. of headlines covered (major national & int. headlines of the morning were - cancellation of tennis tournaments in China, functionality of RT-PCR for Omicron detection, Mamata Banerjee’s 2024 Lok Sabha campaign, the suspension of 12 opposition MPs from Rajya Sabha, upcoming health meet regarding travel restrictions, & the vaccination status of 125cr Indians), whether local stories are included, etc.

1. Objectivity/Angle: Whether the presentation manages to remain neutral & unbiased.
2. Clarity: The cohesiveness of presentation, keeping in mind the program format, screen layout, as well as language.

1. Times Now:

Format: Studio news read.

Layout: Single reader no marquee.

Remarks: The topics covered were few & the broadcast dedicated the majority of its airtime to advertisements. Several important headlines such as that regarding the status of tennis player Peng Shui’s safety. No local news stories were covered, but the language was clear & objective, & the layout was non chaotic, though more information could have been covered through news marquees. Neutral stances.

1. India Today:

Format: 1v1 Debate

Layout: Multi panel + marquee

Remarks: The marquees covered sports news + major headlines, no local stories. The prime story was Mamata’s Lok Sabha campaign, the chosen format was a moderated debate b/w a spokesperson each from TMC & Congress (Sushmita Dev & [Su]priya Shrinate respectively). The layout was clean & the format was non chaotic. The debate was civilised if pointless. The presenters let the guest speakers take a lead on the conversation & were neutral in mediation & stance. There were no ad breaks in between the program.

1. CNN News18:

Format: Awareness Drive

Layout: Documentary

Remarks: Well executed awareness piece on vaccinations. Discussed Dalai Lama’s vaccination, the viral video of the same, & contained interviews from his followers in rural areas & how they were affected by his example. The point of view was neutral enough, though being a health PSA it didn’t need to be. Significant advertisements.

1. Mirror Now:

Format: Offscreen newsreader

Layout: Single screen presentation + marquee

Remarks: A typical news reading covering a wide range of int. & national news topics (included the highest no. of major headlines out of all 5 channels). No local news stories, but less time spent on advertisements, which was instead utilized to detail each headline in brief. Additional focus was on international news (France lifting Africa travel ban, Japan’s vaccination status). Stances were neutral, but the marquees were epileptically animated & non coherent.

1. NewsX:

Format: ??? 1v1 debate, heavily moderated.

Layout: Spotlighted screen + panelists + marquee

Remarks: Atrocious presentation. The spotlighted screen was a frozen shot from a parliament session, the subject of date was untitled, though if I were to hazard a guess it would've been a debate regarding the suspension of 12 Opposition MPs from Rajya Sabha. The hosts were not neutral, refused to let the Congress spokesperson speak, & the presentation had its own stance in favor of the suspension. There were, at most only 2 panels on screen, occasionally one, or no panel at all, with at *least* three speakers. The marquees were incomprehensible, no local news.

1 hour split b/w five different channels is not enough to conclusively speak about the quality of any of them; India Today’s format was better, but it is wholly possible that were it discussing a subject that concerned the current government, it’s reporting would’ve been no less biased than newsx’s. In conclusion, my takeaway would be that most news channels are certainly capable of non-biased reporting, implying that when they don’t it might be due to external pressures if not direct coercion, news quality is program & time slot dependent, promotional media takes away from any channel’s credibility & efficiency but is unfortunately a necessary evil, & the modern news hour format needs to change.

Other interesting stories presented:

* Munawar Faruqui’s arrest: OpIndia v Mojo by Shruti Patel
* Mamata’s 2024 Campaign: Zee News v News Bharati by Dairya Mishra
* Vir Das’ Monologue & resulting outrage: Republic World v NDTV by Srishti Singh