

NOTES PREPARE BY ALEMKENG RICHARD

TYPOGRAPHY

Introduction

Objectives

Main Content

Understanding Typography

Introduction.

The primary effort at converting written material (news, article, feature, advert or speech) into print starts with editing (Nwosu, 1996 p.109). This is true given that editing is the starting point of getting the written copy (usually in typewritten) ready for printing. However, the very first section of printing room where the edited copy gets to for further processing is the typesetting room. This is where the types are selected and typeset to produce the proof. This unit will therefore examine typography and typesetting as part of the essential processes of news production.

Objectives

After going through tutorials in this unit, it is expected that the students to discuss:

- The meaning and nature of typography.
- The process of type selecting and setting.

Main Content

Understanding Typography.

According to Hodgson (1984, p.101):

The type character of a newspaper is to achieved the consistent use of a limited number of typefaces, one main choice on the news pages and perhaps another as the main choice on the feature pages, with a regular variant in use in each case. The import is that consistent use of certain typefaces and type sizes add to the unique personality of a newspaper. By unique personality here we mean those features that are so consistent with a newspaper to the extent they help to distinguish it from other newspaper titles.

In making decision as to the typeface and type size to be used consistently in the production of a given tabloid, the editor and production crew must be conversant with the philosophy of type. By implication, the editor and the production crew should be conversant with the medium's dominant typeface and sizes in order to decide what instruction to give the typesetters. The major decisions to be made with reference to typography therefore border on:

1. Typeface which are usually classified into Roman letters, text types, serifs, sans serifs, italics, scripts and host of others. According to Nwosu (1992, p.244) typefaces have different characteristics, uses, personality and look differently as well as offer varying design opportunities which the editor should know. In addition to knowing the typefaces or designs the editor should know which of the typefaces that best suit his/her purpose for quality production.

2. Type sizes which are usually measured in points or picas. The editor should also be conversant with standard type sizes used in newspaper and other print productions. The common standard sizes usually used in newspaper production are “6 points, 8 points, 10 points, 12 points, 14 points, 18 points, 24 points, 30 points, 42 points, 48 points, 60 points, 72 points and 120 points” (Nwosu, 1992, p.244). It is important to note that:

72 points = 1inch.

12 points = 1pica

6 picas = 1 inch

6 points = 1non- pareil

3. Nature of cases which indicates whether the types are to be printed in capital letters (called upper cases) or small letters (called lower cases) or combination of the two which is upper and lower cases”. Examples will suffice here:

Upper cases = MOTHER

Lower cases = mother

Upper and lower cases = Mother

As noted earlier the editor needs to know all these so as to be properly guided in dishing out type instruction to the typesetter and the printer.

Typesetting

At the editing stage, the editor or the sub-editor usually indicate specific typefaces and type sizes needed to print the headlines, the by-line and the body of the story. The editor stops at that. The actual selection of the types so specified is usually done at the typesetting stage.

Typesetting therefore involves selecting and setting types for each word that constitute the stories. This is done by selecting letters to form words, words that form sentences and sentences that make up the paragraphs of the stories. According to Nwabueze (20-11, p. 80) typesetting refers to: Setting the stories in each page into the characters (type or point sizes and styles) that the readers see when they purchase... it consists of setting stories in body type-size (font size used for the body of the story) and display type-size (the font size used for headlines and captions). This is consistent with Nwosu (1992, p.244) where he submits that typesetting refers to the first conversion of the written or typed

copies (news, speeches, articles etc) into printed forms known as proofs. The first proof that rolls out of the typesetting machine is known as the galley proofs.

Typesetting began with hand setting using the “stick”. The stick is usually a hand-held tray where letters are placed one after the other to form the desired words. This approach was in vogue in the 1800s until 1884 when Ottmor Mergerthaler invented linotype machine which enhanced the process of typesetting. The linotype machine is “used in casting hot lead into a line of type as a key board operator types in the letters” (Nwabueze, 2011, p.81). What is usually done is to:

- cast the hot lead into a line of type
- Use key board to type the letters on the lead.
- Pick by hand the types and place them on page form.
- Take to typesetting room for printing of the galley proofs. It is important to note that with the advancement in technology, other forms of typesetting have emerged over the years. Different forms of typesetting therefore exist and these are:

I. Hand setting which is the very first attempt at setting types and which is rarely used in Nigeria today.

II. Hot-metal typesetting (which is of two types viz: mono-type and lino-type machines).

III. Photo-chemical typesetting.

IV. Computer typesetting which can be done using compugraphic machines, laser systems or digitized cathodes ray (ORT) machines. Whichever approached used, the fact remains that news copy must go through the typesetting process before the actual printing can take place.

: Conclusion

Typesetting is an essential aspect of newspaper production process. Although the editor is not meant to undertake typesetting, he/she should understand the typeface, families, and sizes in order to properly instruct the typesetter or compositor on choice of types to set.

Summary

This unit treated one of the essential aspects of newspaper pre-production process which is typesetting. Precisely, typography and typesetting process were treated. Self Assessment Examination:

Write a short note on typography with emphases on the meaning, forms and sizes.

6.0: Tutor-Marked Assignment

Define and explain typesetting as an essential aspect of newspaper production.

7.0: References/Further Reading.

Hodgson, F.W. (1984) *Modern Newspaper Practice*; London: Heinemann.

Nwabueze, C.D. (2011) *Magazine and Newspaper Management and Production: An*

Introduction; Owerri: Topshelve Publisher.

Nwosu, I.E. (1996) *Effective Media Writing; Mass Media, Advertising, PR and Promotion*;

Enugu: E-Nok Publishers.

Nwosu, I.E (1992) "Public Relations Publication: Principles, Types, Readership, Contents,

Editing and production" in I.E. Nwosu and S.O.Idemili (eds.) *Public Relations:*

Speech, Media Writing and Copy, Enugu: ACENA Publishers.

What Typography is allabout?

Simply put, typography refers to the use of types. In Unit 3 of module 2, a lot was said about types and type composition. The word 'type', as explained in that unit, refers to a letter, number, or any other character used in printing. Types are not used just anyhow, because as explained in the introductory part of this module, wrong use of type could impede communication.

Typography involves careful study, selection, composition and use of types in such a way as to enhance effective communication. Although the phrase 'typographical error' is now often misused, it originally meant an error in typography, most often the use of a wrong type at a point in time. Similarly, typographical pluralism refers to a good combination of types in such a way that an excellent or a visually pleasant pattern is created.

Studying and Practising Typography

There are principles that should be kept in mind when studying and practising typography.

Typography should help communication

The best typography goes unnoticed

Or, as the doyen of American typography, Edmund Arnold, puts it in his seminal book *Modern Newspaper Design*:

...a fundamental truth of typography (is) rarely do we find a nonfunctional element: almost invariably the non-functional is also the malfunctional. If an element fails to do a good job, it usually does something that is bad. There are a

number of things we can deduce from the forgoing statement of Edmund Arnold. Let us look at just two of these:

(a) Typography is not a random selection of typefaces, nor is it a haphazard work. Rather, it is a conscious effort to communicate effectively through the careful and proper selection of typefaces that can best serve the purpose.

Typography, in that sense can be likened to sculpture. The sculptor is usually a careful and diligent person. He carefully carves out a piece of work with a pre-determined objective, and all the elements he selects are carefully chosen to contribute to the realization of that objective which he has in mind.

(b) There is no redundancy in typography. Every element selected is functional. If any element does not contribute to the realization of the ultimate objective, it automatically detracts from it.

Comprehension of Type

As Baskette and Scissors (their books on typography have become classics – and their names bywords in all English – speaking newsrooms) say in *The Art of Editing* (1977):

The foremost objective of good typography is to select legible typefaces.

They (must be) easy to read and enable a person to read faster than he (she) could with less legible faces, (and) encourage the reader to read more of what has been printed simply because they present fewer obstacles to reading. (p.242) Simply put, Basket and Scissors are saying that typography must be reader-friendly. There are four elements that can be derived from their statement above. These are:

(a) Typography must aim at, and achieve legibility.

(b) There must be ease of reading

(c) Typography should facilitate reading speed

(d) Typography should encourage reading, in other words, it should not be a wet blanket

Another writer on the subject of typography, Colin Wheildon came with some facts and figures to serve as a guide. Under the guidance of Edmund Arnold, he carried out a five-year study in Sydney, Australia, from 1982 to 1986 to find out more on some of the key elements of typography.

A summary of Wheildon's findings is as follows:

Body

Serif type GOOD 67% Good Comprehension

Sans serif typeBAD12% Good Comprehension

* Justified typeGOOD 67% Good Comprehension

**Ragged right typePOOR38% Good Comprehension

*** Ragged left type BAD 10% Good Comprehension

Line Lengths

More than 60 character BAD 38% Find it hard to hard

Less than 20 characters Bad 87% find it hard to hard

* 'Justified type' means that the type has been set so that the lines of type are all exactly the same length so that all the left hand ends line up with each other, and the right hand ends also line up. Virtually all reports in newspapers are set 'justified'.

** 'Ragged right' means that the type has been set so that all the left hand ends of the lines line up, but not the right.

*** 'Ragged left' is the opposite to 'ragged right'. That is to say, only the righthand ends of the lines line up.

Headline

Little difference in comprehension between Serif and Sans serif type

All Upper-Case type POOR 55% Good Comprehension

Upper-and-Lower Case type GOOD 90% Good Comprehension

Use of Colour:

Generally, colour increases noticeability of headline by about 60%, but decreases comprehension.

Low chrome colour POOR 52% Good Comprehension

High chrome colour BAD 17% Good Comprehension.

Based on this information, general typographical choices are clear if the first principle is to be applied, namely to help communication. Body copy should be set justified (lined up both sides) and in a serif typeface. The computer is handy for the task of justifying copy. The old adage that an ideal line length is one and a half alphabets, or about 40 characters, seems to be true. Headline should only be set in upper-and-lower case. Capital headlines may help page design (part of communication) but not comprehension. Coloured type inhibits comprehension, but

helps page design. It should only be used sparingly, and then only in muted tones. I wonder what the findings would be if Wheildon's kind of study is replicated in 21st century Nigeria. Some of the findings would still be valid, and indeed, would serve to reinforce the principles deriving from the study. For example, readers in 21st century Nigeria may be in more haste than readers in Wheildon's 1982-86 Sydney. This implies that errors in typography in Nigeria today may create more hindrance to comprehension than such errors did in Sydney at the time Wheildon carried out his study. This calls for more hard work and diligence on the part of the Nigerian who is involved in typography if appreciable comprehension is to be achieved. This becomes even more imperative, considering the low reading culture in the country today. Experts say that Nigerians are not reading enough. Newspapers are among the things that Nigerians are not reading enough, and there are several reasons.

There are more audience -friendly sources of information and entertainment, including radio and television, and these are diverting people's attention from good old newspaper. Typography should not become another source of distraction. Rather, it should be so properly done that it becomes an attraction, leading readers back to the newspapers.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain what typography is, and why it is very important in layout and design.

CONCLUSION

Much time, energy and other resources can be saved if the basic principles of typography are well understood and put into practice. The way to understand is to study and then go on to practice what was studied. Since typography goes a long way in influencing comprehension, it is wise to invest in it. Interestingly, a number of published resources exist both locally and internationally to assist those who desire to improve upon their knowledge of typography. In this chapter, for example, we have referred to the works of Edmund Arnold, Baskette and Scissors, and others. Many other local works by Akinfeleye, Okoye, and others are available and could assist in better understanding of typography.

Types of Headlines

Many headlines have to be written to exactly fit the space allocated by whoever designed the page. However, use of a variety of headline types, or formats, prevents a newspaper from looking boring and allows the subs to brag about just how creative they are. The following are few types of headlines that could be used to make a page look attractive:

Fullout – All the lines of the headline fit the space exactly. Most tabloids and ethnic newspapers make use of this.

Flush left – All the lines of the headline are aligned on the left-hand side, but are uneven on the right-hand side (this unevenness shouldn't be too obvious). A flush

left headline is usually the easiest to write, but over use can give the paper a 'squared-off look'.

Centred – Each line of the headline is centred across the column space.