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HANDOUT

MCD404

Audio-Visual Editing

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MCD404

Audio-Visual Editing

Lecture Handouts

Prepared for the students of Virtual University of Pakistan

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1. Introduction to Audio-Visual Editing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define editing and its purpose
- Trace the history of film/video editing
- Explain the editor's storytelling role

Editing is the selection, arrangement and refinement of recorded picture and sound into a coherent finished work. The Soviet montage theorists (Eisenstein, Pudovkin) first showed that meaning emerges **between** shots - the Kuleshov effect proved audiences infer emotion and causation from juxtaposition. From Moviola flatbeds and tape splicing to **non-linear editing (NLE)** (Avid, Premiere Pro, DaVinci Resolve, Final Cut), the tools changed; the editor's job did not: **control time, space and attention to tell the story**.

The editor shapes **pacing** (how long each moment lasts), **structure** (what the audience learns when), **performance** (which take, which reaction), and **meaning** (what juxtapositions imply). Walter Murch's rule: the ideal cut serves **emotion (51%)** first, then story, rhythm, eye-trace, 2D plane and 3D space. In Pakistan's drama, film and growing YouTube/digital industry, editors are the invisible co-authors of everything from Hum TV serials to news packages.

Non-linear editing (NLE)

Digital editing where any clip is instantly accessible on a timeline - versus linear tape editing, which required sequential dubbing. Enables unlimited undo, effects and versions.

SECTION SUMMARY

Editing creates meaning through juxtaposition (Kuleshov). The editor controls pacing, structure, performance and meaning - serving emotion first (Murch's 51% rule).

2. The Language of Shots and Continuity

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Classify shot sizes and camera angles
- Explain the 180-degree rule and continuity
- Apply match-cut techniques

Shot sizes: **ELS** (extreme long - landscape), **LS/WS** (establishing), **FS** (full figure), **MS** (waist up - dialogue workhorse), **MCU** (chest up), **CU** (face - emotion), **ECU** (eyes/lips - detail), plus **OTS** (over-the-shoulder) for conversations. Angles: eye-level (neutral), low (power), high (vulnerability), Dutch tilt (unease), bird's-eye (context/fate). The editor must know this grammar to cut invisibly - a CU-to-CU jump of the same subject **jump-cuts**; cutting LS->MS->CU of one scene flows.

Continuity editing (Hollywood invisible style) preserves coherent space/time: the **180-degree rule** (keep the camera on one side of the action axis so screen direction stays consistent), **eyeline match** (character looks screen-right, next shot shows what they see), **match on action** (cut mid-gesture - door opening continues seamlessly), and matches of lighting, costume and props. **Crossing the line** disorients viewers - avoid unless deliberately disorienting. Pakistani TV dramas live by continuity; music videos and ads deliberately break it for energy.

■ VERY IMPORTANT

The 180-degree rule and match on action are the two most tested continuity concepts. Be able to sketch the axis and explain why crossing it flips screen direction.

SECTION SUMMARY

Shot grammar (sizes/angles) + continuity rules (180-degree, eyeline, match on action) = invisible editing. Break the rules only deliberately, for effect.

3. Montage, Transitions and Pace

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish montage types
- Choose transitions purposefully
- Control rhythm and pacing

Eisenstein's **montage types**: metric (cut by exact length - musical), rhythmic (cut by movement within frame), tonal (cut by emotional tone/light), overtonal (combined), intellectual (collision of ideas - e.g. workers + slaughtered cattle). Modern uses: the **training montage**, the **travel montage**, the **parallel-action/suspense montage** (Griffith's cross-cutting - rescue intercut with danger). Montage compresses time and builds ideas fast.

Transitions: the **hard cut** (default - 95% of edits), **dissolve** (time passing, memory, dream), **fade in/out** (beginnings/endings), **wipe** (stylized, genre), **J-cut/L-cut** (audio leads or lags picture - the sound editor's signature smoothness: hear the next scene before seeing it). **Pace**: action sequences cut every 1-3 seconds; dramas breathe at 5-10; cutting on movement and on beats of dialogue/music creates rhythm. **Pacing rule**: cut when the shot has delivered its information - lingering kills energy, rushing kills emotion.

SECTION SUMMARY

Montage builds meaning by collision/compression; transitions punctuate (cut = default, dissolve = time, fade = finality, J/L = smoothness); pace by cutting on information delivered.

4. The NLE Workflow: From Ingest to Export

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the post-production pipeline
- Organize media and bins
- Manage timelines, proxies and versions

Pipeline: **ingest** (copy cards to redundant drives - 3-2-1 backup: three copies, two media, one offsite; verify checksums) -> **organize** (bins by scene/day, sync audio, multicam grouping) -> **assembly** (selects reel, string-out in script order) -> **rough cut** (story structure, ~all scenes) -> **fine cut** (frame-accurate rhythm) -> **picture lock** -> **sound design/mix + color grade** -> **master/export/deliver**. Never edit from camera cards; never skip backups - Pakistani wedding/event editors learn this the hard way.

Organization is editing: keyword/tag selects, markers for good takes, **subclips**, and clear bin naming ('Sc3_Tk2_good'). **Proxy workflow**: edit with lightweight proxies, relink to full-resolution for finishing - essential for 4K on modest machines. **Versioning**: v1, v2... with date; autosave + project archives. **EDL/XML/AAF** carry timelines between edit, sound (Pro Tools) and grade (Resolve). **Codecs**: ProRes/DNx for editing (intraframe, smooth), H.264/H.265 for delivery (small, hard to edit).

SECTION SUMMARY

Ingest with 3-2-1 backup, organize ruthlessly, cut assembly->rough->fine->lock, then sound and color. Proxies for 4K; ProRes/DNx to edit, H.264/H.265 to deliver.

5. Cutting Dialogue and Performance

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Edit dialogue scenes invisibly
- Shape performance from takes
- Use reaction shots and cutaways

Dialogue editing: establish geography (wide master), then cut on **lines and reactions** - the listener's face often matters more than the speaker's. **Cut on the beat**: trim pauses ('dead air') but keep breathing room for emotion; remove filler words ('uhm') only if unnatural. **L-cuts** keep dialogue flowing under the next shot; **J-cuts** introduce a voice before its face. Match **room tone** under every dialogue edit or cuts will 'breathe' audibly.

Performance shaping: choose takes for the **arc** - the editor often builds a performance no single take contained (a look from take 3, a line from take 1). **Reaction shots** and **cutaways** (hands, objects, the room) hide necessary cuts and add subtext - the audience reads the reaction as the

scene's meaning (Kuleshov again). In Pakistani dramas, where shooting is fast, editors routinely rescue scenes with cutaways and restructured dialogue order.

SECTION SUMMARY

Cut dialogue on beats and reactions; use J/L cuts for flow; lay room tone under everything. Build performances from the best fragments - reactions write the scene's meaning.

6. Audio Editing Fundamentals

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain digital audio basics
- Edit dialogue, music and effects tracks
- Apply EQ, compression and noise reduction

Digital audio: **sample rate** (44.1 kHz music, 48 kHz video standard), **bit depth** (24-bit production), **waveforms** show amplitude over time. Track layout: **dialogue** (DX - king; lav + boom), **ambience/room tone**, **sound effects** (SFX - hard effects, foley, backgrounds), **music**. Levels: dialogue peaks around -12 to -6 dBFS, final mix to broadcast specs (e.g. -24 LUFS for TV in many standards).

Tools: **EQ** (cut rumble below 80 Hz on dialogue, tame harshness), **compression** (even out levels - gentle 2:1 on voice), **de-noise/de-reverb** (iZotope RX industry standard - rescue location audio), **fades** (2-5 frame fades kill clicks at every cut). **Foley** (footsteps, cloth, props recorded to picture) and **ambience beds** make scenes feel real - silence reads as 'broken' on screen. **ADR** re-records unusable dialogue; match tone and sync. Music: score vs source, ducking under dialogue (sidechain or manual keyframes).

■ VERY IMPORTANT

Audio is half the picture: audiences forgive shaky video but punish bad audio. Exam answers should always budget equal attention to the sound edit.

SECTION SUMMARY

48 kHz/24-bit, dialogue-first track hierarchy, EQ/compress/de-noise, foley + ambience for realism, fades on every cut. Mix to spec (-24 LUFS TV).

7. Color Correction and Grading

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish correction from grading
- Apply scopes and primary corrections
- Design looks with secondary tools

Correction (technical): fix exposure, white balance, contrast so shots match - use **scopes** (waveform for luma, vectorscope for skin-tone line, histogram) not just eyes. **Grading** (creative): the look - teal-and-orange blockbuster, desaturated thriller, warm nostalgic drama. Workflow: balance all shots first (correction), then apply the look globally via adjustment layers/nodes.

Primary tools: **lift/gamma/gain** (shadows/mids/highlights), temperature/tint, contrast/pivot, saturation. **Secondary**: qualifiers (isolate skin tones, skies), power windows/masks (darken edges - vignette; brighten faces), tracking. **LUTs** (look-up tables): technical (Rec.709 conversion from log) vs creative (film emulation). Shoot **log/flat** profiles to preserve dynamic range; expose for highlights. Skin tones are sacred - never let the look turn faces green.

SECTION SUMMARY

Correct (scopes, match shots) then grade (the look). Primaries set balance; secondaries isolate; LUTs convert or stylize. Protect skin tones above all.

8. Titles, Graphics and Visual Effects

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Design effective titles and lower thirds
- Use keying and compositing basics
- Apply VFX judiciously

Typography on screen: **lower thirds** (name/designation - keep 5-7 seconds, safe margins, readable fonts - no thin serifs on interlaced TV), **bumpers/openers**, **credits** (check spelling - the classic embarrassment). **Safe areas**: action-safe 95%, title-safe 90% - broadcast still crops. Kinetic typography for promos; subtle for drama. Urdu titles: use proper Nastaliq fonts, check spellings twice.

Keying: chroma key (green screen - even lighting, 6+ feet subject distance, no green spill on talent, despill in post); luma keys. **Compositing**: layers, masks, tracking (point/planar - Mocha), screen replacement, sky replacement. **Speed ramping** (optical-flow slow motion), **stabilization** (warp stabilizer - with subspace caution), **clean-up** (remove boom mics, logos). VFX rule: the best effect is invisible; fix story problems in the edit, not with plugins.

SECTION SUMMARY

Titles: readable, safe-margined, spell-checked (Urdu in proper Nastaliq). Keying needs even green + distance; compositing layers tracked elements; invisible VFX beats showy VFX.

9. Editing for News, Drama, Documentary and Digital

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Adapt editing to each genre
- Edit news packages under deadline
- Optimize for YouTube/social platforms

News (ENG packages): 90-second inverted pyramid - lead with the news, soundbites over b-roll, natural sound pops, tight 1-2s shots, voiceover-driven; deadline editing means cutting to the script, not discovering the story. **Drama**: performance-first, invisible continuity, emotional pacing; Pakistani serials shoot multi-camera fast - the editor manages eyelines and reaction rhythm across episodes.

Documentary: the edit **writes** the film - paper edit from transcripts, assembly of arcs, interviews cut for concision (cut the question, keep the answer's essence; never distort meaning), b-roll illustrating narration, archival integration. **Digital/YouTube**: hook in 5 seconds, jump cuts and pattern interrupts for retention, captions (most watch muted), chapters, 16:9 + 9:16 + 1:1 versions, thumbnail-driven first frames. **Ads**: 6/15/30-second architectures - single idea, logo/CTA end-frame.

SECTION SUMMARY

News = fast inverted-pyramid; drama = invisible performance; documentary = the edit writes the film; digital = hook fast, caption everything, cut vertical too.

10. Delivery, Codecs and Archiving

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Choose delivery specs per platform
- Explain containers vs codecs
- Archive projects properly

Codec (compression method) vs **container** (file wrapper): H.264 in MP4 (universal delivery), H.265/HEVC (half the bitrate - 4K streaming), ProRes/DNxHR in MOV (mastering), AAC audio. **Bitrate ladders** for streaming (1080p ~8-12 Mbps, 4K ~35-45 Mbps); **CBR** for broadcast, **VBR 2-pass** for file delivery. YouTube/Facebook recompress - upload high-bitrate masters. TV

delivery: broadcasters specify wrapper, codec, loudness (-24 LUFS), closed captions.

Mastering: export a high-quality master (ProRes 422 HQ), then compress deliverables from it - never compress a compressed file twice. **QC:** watch the whole export on a different screen, check audio sync, captions, legal levels. **Archiving:** project manager 'collect files', consolidate media, label drives (project_date_version), keep camera originals + project + masters; LTO tape for professionals, mirrored hard drives for the rest. An edit you cannot reopen is an edit you never made.

SECTION SUMMARY

Master in ProRes/DNx, deliver in H.264/H.265 per platform specs, QC everything, archive originals + project + masters with clear labels.

11. The Editor's Craft: Ethics and Career

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss editing ethics
- Explain client/director collaboration
- Outline career paths in Pakistan

Ethics: **documentary truth** - cutting must not fabricate meaning (the reordered interview that reverses someone's position is a lie); **news integrity** - no staged or misleading b-roll; **consent and dignity** - especially with vulnerable subjects; **plagiarism** - music and footage licensed (YouTube Content ID punishes theft). The editor's power over meaning is a moral responsibility.

Collaboration: the editor serves the **director's vision** while bringing fresh eyes - the first assembly should be the editor's honest cut, then notes rounds (be precise: 'the scene sags at 0:42 because...' not 'it feels off'). **Client management:** fixed revision rounds, written change requests, kill fees. Careers: assistant editor -> editor -> senior/finishing editor; specializations (trailer, colorist, sound editor, online editor); freelancing via portfolios/showreels. Pakistan's market: TV channels, production houses, news, weddings/events, and the booming creator economy - versatility (shoot + edit + grade) wins early.

SECTION SUMMARY

Edit truthfully (especially documentary/news), license everything, collaborate with precise notes, and build a showreel - versatility opens doors in Pakistan's market.

12. Exam Pointers

High-yield topics

- Kuleshov effect; Eisenstein montage types; Murch's 51% emotion rule.
- Shot sizes/angles; 180-degree rule (with diagram); match on action; eyeline match.
- Transitions: hard cut, dissolve, fade, wipe, J-cut, L-cut - when each is used.
- Pipeline: ingest (3-2-1 backup) -> assembly -> rough -> fine -> lock -> sound/grade -> master.
- Dialogue editing: room tone, L/J cuts, ADR; audio specs (48 kHz/24-bit, -24 LUFS).
- Color: correction vs grading; scopes (waveform, vectorscope); lift/gamma/gain; LUT types.
- Keying requirements; safe areas (90/95%); codec vs container; ProRes vs H.264.
- Genre differences: news package structure, documentary paper edit, YouTube retention editing.
- Ethics: documentary truth, news integrity, licensing.

SECTION SUMMARY

Every answer: name the technique, state its purpose, give a concrete example. Examiners reward editors who think in story terms, not button terms.