



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**THE INFLUENCE OF NON LINEAR EDITING IN DOCUMENTARY  
VIDEO PRODUCTION**

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**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours  
(Cinematography)  
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THE INFLUENCE OF NON LINEAR EDITING IN  
DOCUMENTARY VIDEO PRODUCTION

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with  
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<b>Acknowledgment</b>	I
<b>Table of Content</b>	II
<b>Abstrak</b>	III
<b>Abstract</b>	IV
<b>Chapter 1 : Introduction</b>	
1.0 Introduction	
1.1 Preface	1
1.2 Background Of Study	3-4
1.3 Statement Of The Study	5
1.4 Research Question	5
1.5 Objective Of The Study	6
1.6 Conceptual Framework	7
1.7 Scope of The Study	8
1.8 Significance Of The Study	9
1.9 Chapter Summary	10
<b>Chapter 2 : Literature Review</b>	
2.1 History of Editing	11-12
2.2 Benefit of Technology	12-14
2.3 Linear Editing	14
2.4 Non Linear Editing	15-16
2.5 Workflow	16-17
<b>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</b>	
3.0 Introduction	
3.1 Qualitative Method	18
3.2 Content Analysis	18
3.3 Food Inc (2008)	19-20
3.3.1 Synopsis	21
3.3.2 Documentary Structure	21
3.3.3 Editing Technique	22
3.3.4 Workflow	22
3.4.1 Synopsis Our Daily Bread (2005)	23

3.4.2 Documentary Structure	24
3.4.3 Editing Technique	24
3.5.0 Content Analysis	24
3.5.1 Synopsis	24
3.5.2 Documentary Structure	25
3.5.3 Editing Technique	25
3.5.4 Workflow	25
<b>Chapter 4: Findings</b>	
4.0 Introduction	27
4.1 Synopsis	28
4.2 Application of Research to Final Year Project	28-30
4.3 Pre-Production	30-31
4.4 Production	31-35
4.5 Post Production	36-38
4.6 Findings	38
4.7 Strength of Project	38
4.8 Project Weakness	38
<b>Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion</b>	
5.1 Summary	40-41
<b>References</b>	42-43
<b>Attachment</b>	44-56

## List of Picture

Picture 1 : <i>Food Inc.</i> , directed by Robert Kenner	21
Picture 2 : <i>Our Daily Bread</i> (2005)	23
Picture 3 : Final Cut Pro video was 6.0.6, Copyright © 2001-2009 Apple Inc.	28
Picture 4 : Original Color	29
Picture 5 : Sephia Color	29
Picture 6 : Camera DVX 102BE	32
Picture 7 : Mini DV Tape	32
Picture 8 : Journey To The Village to Sungai Kepayang	33
Picture 9 : Journey To The Village to Sungai Kepayang	34
Picture 10: Interview with Mr.Charles Duat	34
Picture 11: Interview with Mr.Mujah Ak Nyampah	35
Picture 12 :Interview with Mdm Selukong Ak Ujai	35
Picture 13 : Interview with Mr.Bantin	35
Picture 14 : Editing Process Timeline	36
Picture 15 : Documentary Short Video Poster	38
Picture 16: Documentary Short Video DVD Cover	38



## ABSTRAK

### PENGARUH PENYUNTINGAN NON-LINEAR DALAM VIDEO PRODUKSI DOKUMENTARI

TERESA ANAK BILLY BAYANG

Kajian ini adalah bertujuan bagi mengenalpasti akan kesan daripada perkembangan teknologi terhadap pembikinan filem dokumentari terutamanya dalam aspek penyuntingan dalam pasca produksi. Perkara yang menarik perhatian pengkaji untuk melakukan kajian yang lebih mendalam adalah teknologi yang ada mempengaruhi proses aliran kerja dalam pasca produksi dan pengkaji mencari jawapan dengan membuat eksperimen sendiri. Pengkaji mengkaji teori dan mengumpul data daripada analisis kandungan yang dilakukan melalui pembacaan buku dan jurnal berkaitan dengan tajuk kajian. Aspek yang diambil berat oleh pengkaji adalah dengan adanya teknologi terkini di pasaran, dengan adanya perisian yang ada, dapat memudahkan proses aliran kerja dalam sesebuah produksi. Selain itu, dua buah filem iaitu *Our Daily Bread* (2005) dan *Food Inc* (2008) telah dijadikan sebagai kerangka kajian untuk projek yang akan dihasilkan. Pada akhir kajian, sebuah dokumentari pendek berjudul *Cockfighting* telah dihasilkan. Dokumentari ini mengkaji pertembungan antara arus permodenan dan amalan tradisional di kawasan pedalaman Betong, Sarawak menerusi laga ayam.

## ABSTRACT

### THE INFLUENCE OF NON-LINEAR EDITING IN DOCUMENTARY VIDEO PRODUCTION

TERESA ANAK BILLY BAYANG

The purpose of this study was to identify the influence of the development in technology on the production of documentary films, especially on the aspect of post-production editing. The main reason the researcher wanted to study the subject in greater depth, through a self-conducted experiment, was the influence of technology on the workflow process in post-production of films. The researcher studied the theories and collected data from the content analysis, carried out from a review of the literature. The aspect given emphasis by the researcher was that, the latest technology widely available in the market has made it easier for the workflow process in a production. In addition, two films (*Daily Bread* [2005] and *Food Inc* [2008]) were used as the framework for the project that was produced. At the end of the study a documentary about the clash of modernism and traditional practices in a rural area in Betong, Sarawak, entitled *Cockfighting* was produced.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Preface

Technological advancement has brought about many inventions and innovation in this world, including in the video and digital industry that came into existence primarily through the invention of the video camera. The video camera enables film makers to record almost anything around them, be it visual and audio whether in its natural setting or through construction or acting. (The World Book of Encyclopedia, 1995).

Before the term 'non-linear' was used, linear editing was a process used in the past in the post-production of films, before the advent of the digital age. Digital technology left a significant mark in post-production stage in terms of time, manpower, cost, work procedure and the rest, in addition to giving film enthusiasts ample area to explore in film production.

The advent of current technologies gives a lot of advantages to film makers in this age. Apart from the technical tool used in the production stage, numerous new software for editing are also found in the market from which film makers can choose. These software enable film makers to make whatever videos they wish to make. From time to time these software are upgraded to fulfill the needs of end users. . At the end of the study a documentary about the clash of modernism and traditional practices in a rural area in Betong, Sarawak, entitled *Cockfighting* was produced.

The focus is on a rural Iban society in Betong Division which treats cock fighting and betting as a recreation and hobby. Here cock fights involve not only adults but teenagers. This inevitably conveys a negative value from adults to their children. The documentary will also highlight a social issue that arises from this gambling recreation, specifically the negative and positive aspects of cock fighting. The positive aspect of cock fighting is that it could widen a person's circle of acquaintance among the spectators of the sport whereas the negative aspect is that gambling never brings any benefit to anyone's home economy and brings bad influence on teenagers.

## 1.1 Background Of The Study

According to Danceyger, Ken (2002) in *The Technique of Film And Video Editing* (Third Edition) film dates from 1895. When the first motion pictures were created, editing did not exist. The novelty of seeing a moving image was such that not even a screen story was necessary. The earliest films were less than a minute in length and the editing was nonexistent.

D. W. Griffith is the acknowledged father of film editing in its modern sense. His influence on the Hollywood mainstream film and on Russian revolutionary film was immediate. His contributions cover the full range of dramatic construction: the variation of shots for impact, including the extreme long shot, the close up, the cut away, and the tracking shot; parallel editing and the variations in pace. People mostly used films to make actualities.

In digital video editing, non-linear editing (NLE) is a method that allows you to access any frame in a digital video clip regardless of sequence in the clip. This method is similar in concept to the "cut and paste" technique used in film editing from the beginning. This method allows you to easily include fades, transitions, and other effects that cannot be achieved with linear editing.

Currently there are various technologies used to enable film makers produce their films, for example sophisticated yet affordable video cameras, software and hardware for editing and the like. Digital technology has several advantages, among them its reliability; also the majority of related equipments and tools needed to do film editing are portable; hence easy to carry everywhere one goes. In addition to being user friendly Also, it is very user friendly and affordable. This

easy availability plus affordability of technology has given a boost towards documentary production. This is because with the continuous development of technology, indirectly it helps to increase production, creativity, participation and accessibility.

## 1.2 Statement Of The Problem

In this study the researcher attempts to trace the influence of digital technology advancement in documentary making. Some of the problems that draw the attention to the researcher are:

There are various digital technologies used in making documentary films. Digital technology influenced video documentary making especially the workflow in post-production.

## 1.3 Research Question

A research question is something that appeals to the researcher about the subject she wishes to study in greater detail. This study is guided by the research question that the researcher has come up with. The essence of the study is in finding an answer to the research question. Essentially in this study the researcher wants to find out how technology has brought about changes in the post-production stage of film making:

i. How has the technologies influenced bring changes in the post production?

#### **1.4 Objectives Of The Study**

An objective is the main guide of any study; without it a study has no direction. This study on non-linear editing takes a look at the role of technology in the production of a video documentary. In this regard, the researcher also studies the work process involved in a film production. After the two objectives have been achieved the researcher will produce one short documentary video based on the outcome of the study. The objective the present study are as follow:

- i. To trace the role of digital technology in the development of video documentary in post production.
- ii. To study in greater detail the workflow in post production.
- iii. To produce a short documentary by using non-linear edit.



## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the 'backbone' of any study. It is critical in ensuring that the study does not go off track and achieves its aims and objectives. In this study a conceptual framework is formulated to ensure that the aims and objectives of the study are achieved. In general, the study derives form text and theory as well as from film analysis.

At the initial stage of the study, the researcher will search for information on the existing technology used to produce films through a review of the literature. This includes the development of technical tools and their impact on film production. This exercise will enable the researcher to come up with a theory on the subject. At this stage the researcher focusses on how the development of technology enables film makers to produce films without apparent limit.

The next step taken by the researcher step is to do a literature review on the various techniques used in film editing, including non-linear editing. This step is relevant to the study because at the post-production stage of a film, this knowledge will become a guideline for the researcher in performing the work at that stage. The researcher focuses on the work process in the production of a film. In a full film production there are: pre-production, production and post-production.

Subsequently, the researcher will analyze two documentary films, namely *Food Inc (2008)* and *Our Daily Bread (2005)*. The researcher will look back at the editing aspect, especially on workflow and the documentary method. Apart

from that the researcher will not disregard the narrative aspect of a documentary film because it is very important in presenting a story.

## **1.6 Scope Of The Study**

The scope of a study is the limitation of the study that the researcher wants to focus on. This particular study only involves the influence of technological development that brings changes in the process of post-production of a film, that is the editing stage. The researcher looks at the work process in the post-production stage. For this purpose the researcher studies two documentary films, *Food Inc.* (2008) and *Our Daily Bread* (2005) to analyze the content and the visual and to observe the process in the post-production stage. This study will be conducted solely by the researcher since it is a study through observation.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study focusses on non-linear editing that has brought about changes in the work process in the post-production stage of filmmaking. For this purpose the researcher use two documentary films, *Food Inc.* (2008) and *Our Daily Bread* (2005) to study the related matters..

The researcher studies in greater detail the wrok process in the post-production stage of film making through a review of the related literature. The main significance of the study is that the reseacher intends to see the effects of technological development in terms of changes in the film industry. In this study the reseacher looks atthe subject through documentary videos. The result of this study could help documentary film makers plan and execute their work process smoothly in the post-production stage. This study can also be a reference to film makers on how technology can give a positive impact in the production of a film. Apart from that this study is an eye-opener for film makers in that to produce a good documentary video one needs to employ a certain work process to produce a quality film.

## 1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study focussed on the development of technology that has brought much advancement in the production of documentary films. In addition to user friendliness, the technology has enabled film makers to increase their level of creativity and productivity in film production.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 History of Editing

In the past, traditional film editing was done in a linear fashion. The film was literally cut into long strips divided by scene and take, and then glued or taped back together to create a film in logical sequence. This was time-consuming, tedious, and highly specialized work. All or most of any given scene had to be completely shot before editing could begin. Hence the researcher intends to examine the principal role of technology in the production of a documentary film. For this purpose the researcher will examine the history of film editing, the advantages of current technologies and in greater detail, the work process in the production of a documentary.

Dancyger, Ken (1997) authors of *The Technique of Film And Video Editing* (Third Edition) says the pivotal year in Porter's work was 1903. In that year, he began to use a visual continuity that made his films more dynamic. Melies had use theatrical devices and playful sense of the fantastic to make his films seem discovered that the organization of shots in his films could make his screen stories seem more dynamic. He also discovered that the shot was the basic building block of the film. As Karel Reisz (1968) authors of *Technique of Film Editing* suggests,

*"Porter had demonstrated that the single shot, recording an incomplete piece of action, is the unit of which film must be constructed and thereby established the basic principle of editing"*

According to Andrew Tudor (1974) in *Theories of Film*, Eisenstein achieved so much in the field of editing that would be most useful in the present his theory first and the look at how he put theory into practice his theory editing has five components : metric montage, rhythmic montage, tonal montage, overtonal montage, and intellectual montage.

## **2.2 Benefit of technology**

According to Sheila Curran Bernard (2004), many of storytelling issues covered elsewhere in the book come into play again in the editing room. On the majority of films, story and structure do not truly come together until the editor begins to assemble and pare down filmed material. Several version of the film may be cut before the best point of attack is identified. According to Rabiger,

Micheal (2004) editing is not just assembly to a plan but more like coaxing a successful performance from an imperfect and incomplete composers score. This operation requires you to see, listen, adapt, think, and imagine as you try to fulfill something to the best of its emerging potential. In 1992, director James Cameron said:

*“From the standpoint of the filmmaker, we’re going to reach a point in a few years where we’re going to think of post production in a different way.”*

Non-linear editing started to be used around the 1990s. This type of editing possesses has brought many advantages to users. When we compare the two systems, that is film and digital, there are so many differences that we can see. According to Case, Dominic (2001) digital technologies provides an alternative to Tradition methods at every stage of production and post-production. Each systems is suitable for some project and not others. Among the differences from the viewpoint of digital system:

#### **Image Capture:**

- Tape is cheaper compared to film
- Smaller. Easier to review and edit

#### **Editing:**

- A more flexible process
  - More special effects from the softwares that are used
- differences in systems from the view point of films.

### **Image Capture:**

- A clearer resolution compared to digital
- Can be stored in film form for the long term

### **Editing:**

- Sometimes out of sync, because this process needs a great attention to detail
- When new software is introduced, the workforce must be retrained.

## **2.3 Linear editing**

Morris, Patric (1999) says the term of linear editing arrived after the advent of computerized non linear and, while the designation may well have originated from some sales pitch, it has stuck and is in many ways an appropriate term. Linear videotape editing is the copy or dup editing process where shots are selected and copied from the source tape to the record or edit tape.

According to Northwest Community Television, linear editing is known as the process of transferring segments of video and/or audio from raw footage tapes onto a record tape. These segments can be taken from any location on your original tapes and edited onto the record tape in sequence. The finished program is called the “edit master” or “master” tape.