

Learning by Ear – Media & Information Episode 6

Learning by Ear 2009

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EPISODE 6

CHARACTERS

Announcer:	Male/female
“Young Junior”	Male, 15 years old
“Sister P.”	Female, 16 years old
“Charlie”	Male, 18 years old
“Ezra”:	Male, 22 years old. Brother to “Young Junior”.
Film Director	Adult male

INTRO/NARRATOR

Hello and welcome back to another episode of our Learning by Ear series, “Media & Information”, and, in case you have missed out on some of the action, let me tell you that things are really moving fast! Last time, Charlie, Young Junior and Sister P went to see the director of a school of journalism to find out about training. On their way back they bumped into a film crew and became interested in learning more about TV. Will they end up running a TV station instead of a community radio after all? Let’s join them on the film set.

SCENE ONE

Outside where the filming is taking place, there is total silence.

1. Film Dir: (Shouts) “Silence on the set please. Scene One. Take Four - and.... action”.

SFX A clap is heard.

2. Film Dir: Cut! That was good. We are going to change the angle of the camera now and the two of you just have to cross over again from left to right and remember, don’t look at the camera. Ok?
3. Charlie: Excuse us, sir.
4. Film Dir: Yes, what do you want?

5. Charlie: Ah, yes, well, I am Charlie, she is Sister P and he's called Junior. We are new students here in the department of journalism and we are keen to find out about your work, if you don't mind.
6. Film Dir: Well, I can give you a few minutes while they are resetting the cameras. So, what do you want to know?
7. Sister P: My dream is to work on TV but I have no idea even how long it takes to make a programme. And how does TV compare to radio.
8. Young J: Which of the two is more expensive? Radio or TV.
9. Film Dir: Those three questions would take me three days to answer. A few minutes is just not enough.
10. Charlie: We'd be grateful for any information you can give us.
11. Film Dir: How long it takes to make a TV programme depends on the type of programme. For example, we are shooting a fifteen minute drama here but it has taken us four days so far.

14. Charlie: Which is the more powerful medium; TV or radio?
15. Film Dir: Each medium has its own strengths but you'll find out more about all that as you study. Myself, I love television as I love working with moving pictures. TV engages both the eye and the ear and does not leave so much up to the imagination. It is easier to work with images to provoke the desired emotions. I just love it.
16. Young J: How does the cost of starting up a radio station compare with a TV station?
17. Film Dir: **(laughs)** My dear friend, you can't compare them. Everything is far more expensive in TV. Equipment, production, not forgetting the actual TV sets themselves. I mean, how many people in your village own their own TV sets. See what I mean? Now I have to get back and please stop staring at me with your mouths open like that. Good luck !

END SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

The youth centre late afternoon, the atmosphere is calm outside.

SFX music playing loud.

18. Young J: **(Shouting on the top of his voice)** Hey guys, get serious. How can you dance instead of getting on with all the paper work?

SFX music stops

19. Sister P: **(Breathless)** What did you say, Young J?

20. Young J: Why are you dancing instead of starting on the funding proposal paper work?

21. Charlie: **(Breathless)** We have been waiting for you and Ezra to get here. Where is he? I thought it would make more sense for us to wait so that he can guide us.

22. Sister P: And I have missed dancing.

23. Young J: I talked to Ezra on phone and he told me he's on his way. By the way guys, have you heard the breaking news this afternoon?

24. Charlie: You'll make a really good journalist, Young J, if you always have stories to tell. So, what is it this time? Have the Nigerian motorcyclists found a different way to dodge the traffic police?

25. Young J: No, this is serious and scary, especially for those of us who are thinking of starting a radio station.
26. Sister P: Tell us what's happened.
27. Young J: Did any of you get a copy of the Focus newspaper today?
28. Sister P: What happened? Did their offices go up in flames?
29. Young J: The offices did not go up in flames, but the journalists are really feeling the heat. They were arrested and the offices were closed up. Their license has been suspended pending further investigations.
30. Charlie: What happened, Young J?
31. Young J: They are accused of publishing classified information which posed a threat to the country's security and of collaboration with anti-government forces.
32. Sister P: Excuse me, Young J, I just want to get things right. Are the journalists being accused of writing fabricated stories?

33. Young J: Well, the thing is, all the information that the paper published, seems to be correct but what the Focus newspaper is being accused of, is publishing information that is supposed to be secret and confidential.
39. Sister P: That's nonsense. If that is the case, the government should issue a guide line or a recommendation of what is and is not allowed to be reported. And that is censorship yet they keep shouting about freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Tell me, Young J, you mean that if we start up our radio station there are some stories that you will not feel comfortable about passing on to the community, even when you have hard evidence?
42. Young J: These guys published a detailed report about security issues, and listed facts about military hardware acquired by the government etc. and they concealed their source of information...
43. Charlie: Then where is the problem? The public needs to know what is happening in the country and with the government. It spends the taxpayers' money. If you think the government has done something wrong, then journalists have the duty to publish.

44. Young J: The government's argument is that the information written by Focus newspaper might be used by the enemies to undermine the security strategies of the government and therefore journalists must be held responsible.

SFX Music playing again abruptly.

45. Charlie: No, Sister P, switch off the music. We have to discuss this at length.

SFX Music stops.

46. Sister P: I want to play music because I am sure we won't agree about this. Let's continue shaking our bones dancing while we wait for Ezra to come.

SFX Mobile phone rings.

47. Young J: Speak of the devil, it's Ezra. (Speaking on the phone) Hello, are you in town?

48. Ezra: **(phone voice)** Yes, I'm in town. Do you mind coming to meet me here at the restaurant close to Mr. T's studio? Do you know the place?

49. Young J: Yes. We'll be there in a few minutes

END SCENE

SCENE 3

A busy restaurant - people and music are heard in the background.

SFX bottles and glasses.

50. Ezra: Hey, guys, I am over here.

SFX pulling chairs and sitting

I was hungry. I needed something to eat. And I knew that, apart from tap water, I wouldn't get anything at the youth centre. So, tell me how far you have got with the radio station project.

54. Sister P: We are exploring possibilities of finding funds to buy all the necessary equipment.

55. Ezra: I can tell you, fund raising could be the hardest thing but at the same time the easiest thing, too.

56. Young J: That is where we need your advice, brother.

57. Sister P: How do we start? Trying to find 20,000 Euros is no joke.

58. Ezra: What you need to do is write a good proposal with clear objectives, and you might even find that there are some people in the community who would be willing to contribute. There are also several organizations you can apply to, which support such initiatives. But first, let's have something to eat and drink before we talk any more about your radio project.
59. Sister P: No problem. Charlie - what about asking Ezra about what we were discussing earlier at the youth centre?
60. Ezra: What's that?
61. Charlie: Ezra. What do you think about the case when the government tries to withhold information it doesn't want the public to know about? Or when a newspaper decides not to publish certain sensitive information?
62. Ezra: In journalistic terms we call it government censorship or self censorship.
63. Sister P: What do you think about it Ezra?
64. Ezra: Well, this issue cuts both ways. The government can use it to deny its citizens' rights to information that they need to know - and this is bad.

64. Sister P: **(laughing and jumping in her chair)**. You see, I told you, this censorship thing is about suppressing freedom of speech and the press.
65. Ezra: On the other hand, depending on the reasons, censorship may be necessary. When the press censor something this is called self censorship. However, it is rarely practiced by some journalists even when it might have been advisable.
66. Young J: Why censor things if I have facts?
67. Ezra: For example: When the personal rights of ordinary citizens are violated by publishing details of their private life.

Freedom of the Press is one of the benchmarks of our national heritage and needs to be preserved. However, with this freedom comes responsibility and journalists have to be aware of that.

73. Sister P: So why do journalists sometimes neglect this responsibility?
74. Ezra: That is the one of the problems with media today. They are obsessed with being the first to publish breaking news, often without considering the possible consequences.
75. Charlie: That is what I thought too.

76. Ezra: I can give you typical examples. You can watch your local news any day of the week and be told information about ongoing criminal investigations, which could later be prejudicial to the accused receiving a fair trial. While the justice system is built on the assumption that an individual is innocent until proven guilty, this is often not the case with the press.
77. Sister P: People, people, can we PLEEAASE have something to chew now? I am dying of hunger while guys go on and on for hours about freedom of the press. **(shouts)** Waiter!

END OF EPISODE

OUTRO/NARRATOR

That's where we end this episode of Learning by Ear's series on "Media & Information". We hope you enjoyed the programme – make sure to tune in next time when Young J and his crew go hunting for financial support. If you want to get in touch with the Learning by Ear team, visit our website for your feedback options at:

d w world dot d e slash l b e.

We'd love to hear from you !!

Bye for now!