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Barriers to Journalism Competency Development: An Applied Linguistics Perspective on Language, Literacy and Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT This study explored the factors that hinder the development of journalism competencies among aspiring writers using an applied linguistics perspective. A qualitative design was employed, involving 12 professional journalists from print and broadcast media as key informants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using the Grounded Theory Method. Findings revealed five major hindering factors of self-doubt, inadequate training, unfit mentorship, discouragement, and difficulty in time management. These factors limited confidence, skill development, and sustained engagement in journalism practice. Participants addressed these challenges through supportive academic environments, participation in training programs, and strategic time management. The findings highlight the need for structured pedagogy, mentorship, and literacy-focused interventions to strengthen journalism competencies and better prepare aspiring writers for professional practice.