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Development Strategies for Audio Language Programs in Tibet Under Media Convergence: Post-print

Authors: Gonpo Dondrup

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Abstract

This study provides a brief examination of the constituent elements of vocal language and the connotations of converged media, and expounds upon the development requirements for vocal language programs in Tibet's radio and television under the context of media convergence from two dimensions: impact and new demands. The current status of vocal language programs in Tibet's radio and television manifests as considerable constraints on dissemination scope, traditional dissemination orientation and style that fails to advance with the times, and content that lacks innovation while maintaining long-term "stability." To resolve these problems, this article proposes strategies including exploring new modes of competition and cooperation, and cultivating a vocal language program team with distinctive Tibetan regional characteristics, aiming to furnish valuable reference for media professionals in the Tibet region.

Full Text

Development Strategies for Audio-Language Programs in Tibet Under Media Convergence

Author: Gongbudunzhu (Lhasa Radio and Television Station, Lhasa, Tibet 850000)

Abstract: This paper briefly examines the constituent elements of audio-language and the connotation of converged media, elaborating on the development needs for Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs within the context of media convergence from two perspectives: impact and new requirements. The current state of Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs is characterized by: significant limitations in dissemination scope, traditional orientation and style that have failed to evolve with the times, and content that lacks innovation and remains "static" over the long term.

To address these issues, the article proposes strategies including exploring new models of competition and cooperation, and building an audio-language program team with distinctive Tibetan local characteristics, aiming to provide reference for media professionals in the Tibet region.

Keywords: Converged media; Tibetan radio and television; Audio-language programs; Tibetan local characteristics

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Audio-language refers to all sound forms on television screens capable of expressing meaning, including human voice, music, and sound effects [?]. The three essential elements of audio-language are: content (“what to say”), purpose (“why say it”), and method (“how to say it”). To improve the quality of audio-language dissemination and enhance the objectivity of television programs, efforts should focus on the following: language must be concise, popularized, accessible, and highly flexible. Against the backdrop of media convergence, Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs must advance with the times, identify new directions for healthy development, and comprehensively elevate program quality.

1.1 Constituent Elements of Television Audio-Language

The main constituent elements of television audio-language can be broadly divided into three categories.

1.1.1 Human Voice Language

Human voice language encompasses all sounds produced by various characters on screen when expressing thoughts and emotions, including speech, laughter, sighs, and other vocalizations [?]. Human voice language can express logical thinking and accomplish the transmission of diverse information. During vocalization, it can produce myriad variations in pitch, timbre, intensity, and rhythm based on the subjects involved and emotional experiences. Simultaneously, through linguistic expression, it can shape character images with distinct emotions, personalities, and temperaments. Common forms of human voice language in television art include character dialogue, monologue, voice-over, inner voice, and narration.

1.1.2 Music Language

As the name suggests, music language refers to television content centered on music, primarily consisting of music specially composed for television art

works [?]. For instance, in solemn and tragic television scenes accompanied by Beethoven's *Symphony of Fate*, audiences perceive a strong and dignified atmosphere. Similarly, the TV drama *Nirvana in Fire* tells the story of protagonist Mei Changsu, who chooses to “burn himself out” to redress the grievances of the Chiyan case and cultivate a wise ruler for the Daliang Kingdom. Its theme song, *Crimson Blood Everlasting*, features a melody imbued with mournful yet unyielding, determined, weathered, and regretless tragic colors, serving as an alternative inner monologue for Mei Changsu. Overall, music language in television works can be categorized as background, dramatic, lyrical, descriptive, or expository.

1.1.3 Sound Effects Language

In television programs, when characters, animals, or natural scenes undergo certain changes, the originally quiet state may be instantly disrupted, producing brief sounds that constitute sound effects language. This scenario represents only one aspect of sound effects language. In television art works, all audio-language beyond human voice and music language belongs to sound effects language, including action, natural, background, mechanical, and special types.

1.2 Analysis of Converged Media Characteristics

Converged media, as the name implies, is a new media form resulting from the integration of multiple traditional media types, representing a “concentrated form” of diverse media [?]. Newspapers, radio, television, computers, and mobile phones can be viewed both as information dissemination carriers of different eras and as forms presented after media convergence. Before the advent of radio, information transmission relied solely on bamboo slips, paper, and cloth as carriers, with written records for people to read and obtain information. For a considerable period, newspapers served as the primary means for people to access information. After breakthroughs in radio technology, radio transmitters and broadcast communications became mainstream. Subsequently, television and computers emerged as new carriers. With further leaps in internet and communication technologies, smartphones have entered every household, enabling people to access information of interest anytime and anywhere in areas covered by wireless network signals. Overall, the characteristic of media convergence is that traditional information dissemination forms are gradually “fading away,” while new media are built upon new lifestyles and have become mainstream media in society.

2. Development Needs for Tibetan Radio and Television Audio-Language Programs Under Media Convergence

Before the emergence of computers and smartphones, television audio-language had a relatively narrow “scope of activity,” limited to various television programs. Consequently, for a considerable period, television was the only media form in

society capable of simultaneously transmitting audio, video, and information. For radio and television stations, hosts, actors, and reporters who “appeared on camera” were required to possess professional qualities and good external images. Regarding audio-language, news anchors had to articulate clearly, maintain full and resonant voices, and employ proper cadence. Moreover, facial expressions and demeanor had to be natural and poised, with strict regulations governing gestures and movements—no superfluous actions were permitted. For instance, news channel hosts had to sit upright facing the camera, place both hands on the desk before them, and maintain this posture for extended periods unless necessary, thereby conveying a sense of rigor and solemnity to the audience. If a host appeared sloppy, spoke unclearly, or used ambiguous language, it would substantially diminish the image of the television station and even relevant government departments in the audience’s mind, resulting in lost credibility. In summary, seriousness, formality, and relatively strict limitations characterized television as a mainstream media.

Computers becoming a mainstream medium signified that internet technology had made significant progress. Compared with television, the internet environment offered greater flexibility, providing on-screen personnel with more room for expression. For example, some hosts who sat upright and maintained solemn expressions in television programs would appear unrestrained in online programs. In the era when smartphones became ubiquitous, “live streaming” emerged as the most cutting-edge and popular format. Consequently, large numbers of radio and television audiences shifted to other media domains. The impacts on audio-language programs were twofold: First, the entry barrier for dissemination subjects was lowered. As mentioned above, while online self-media flourished, internet platforms “opened the door wide” to all social strata, enabling virtually anyone to engage in live streaming or online video creation in their preferred formats. When radio-produced audio programs were no longer the audience’s “only choice,” television audio-language dissemination subjects faced unprecedented market competition pressure. Second, the influence of converged communication fields. As previously noted, in the past, television program hosts, reporters, and on-screen actors worked exclusively within their professional domains, often without significant changes for decades. However, in the media convergence era, except for a very few programs with official nature (such as television news and major themed galas), the self-role cognition, situational discourse, patterns, and audience perception of audio-language programs in most communication contexts have undergone major transformations. To some extent, even television programs like CCTV’s *Xinwen Lianbo* have been subtly influenced by the internet. For example, CCTV has launched highly interactive new programs such as *Anchors Talk News*. This demonstrates that under media convergence, television audio-language dissemination subjects are inevitably affected in all aspects and must therefore advance with the times.

3.1 Current Status Analysis of Tibetan Radio and Television Audio-Language Programs

Before exploring future development directions for Tibetan radio and television audio-language, a comprehensive review of the current situation is necessary. According to available data, the status of Tibetan radio and television audio-language is as follows: First, there are significant limitations in dissemination scope. Influenced by regional particularities and historical factors, the development of radio and television in the Tibet Autonomous Region has been arduous. For instance, the media convergence landscape did not emerge only in recent years; its signs appeared when PCs entered ordinary households. However, until the end of 2017, radio and television institutions at all levels in Tibet began exploring media convergence dissemination methods. Program production in news, cultural and artistic programs, special columns, and variety shows remains confined to traditional media dissemination methods, making it difficult to achieve the communication concepts of the converged media era and hindering efforts to tell good Tibetan stories and disseminate Tibetan voices effectively. For example, Lhasa Radio and Television Station's programs such as *Zero Distance on the Plateau* and *Cultural Lhasa* employ relatively monotonous production methods with limited content, failing to effectively integrate Tibet's beautiful landscapes, folk culture, and recent development achievements. Second, the dissemination orientation and style remain traditional and have not evolved with the times. For instance, audio-language programs in Tibet still follow past models in creation, with insufficient connection to the internet. Specifically, programs retain strong "one-way information dissemination" attributes, neglecting "interactive connections" with audiences. Hosts, producers, and journalists rarely engage in online discussions with fan groups via Weibo or WeChat public accounts about daily life dynamics or recent program production content, making it impossible to promptly receive audience feedback. Overall, programs at Tibetan radio and television institutions concentrate primarily on news information and cultural, social, and educational programs, with extremely few variety shows beyond traditional song, dance, and theater formats, severely lacking new types of variety programs such as celebrity reality shows or talent competitions that can generate popularity.

3.2 Exploring New Models of Competition and Cooperation

To address these issues, Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs should actively explore new competition and cooperation models under media convergence, emphasizing both "going out" and "bringing in." A scholar once conducted a questionnaire survey among program directors, producers, and hosts at Tibet Radio and Television Station. The results indicated that nearly 65% believed that Tibet Satellite TV's program content production and staff capabilities were relatively insufficient and required further learning; only 30% believed their current capabilities were basically adequate for their work. However, among this 30% of respondents, most were involved in producing programs

with strong orientation and traditional content selection, such as the Chinese channel' s *Learn Tibetan with Me*, the Tibetan channel' s *Learn Chinese with Me*, Lhasa Radio and Television Station' s *Zero Distance on the Plateau*, and *Travel Together* and *Discover Lhasa*. The arrival of the media convergence era means that objective factors from the traditional era are no longer problematic. For example, although Tibet' s average altitude is high, China' s mobile communication operators have successfully built wireless signal base stations at altitudes approaching 6,000 meters. Consequently, media convergence has transformed the status quo of difficult information dissemination in Tibet from both temporal and spatial dimensions. Under this influence, Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs will inevitably align with those in mainland China, with relevant competition transcending media boundaries and extending to other industries. Since this situation is unavoidable, Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs must “take the initiative,” and practitioners should promptly accumulate new capabilities in vision, awareness, habits, and skills to achieve comprehensive reforms in program content selection, production forms, and transmission methods. For instance, the Potala Palace is a world cultural heritage site, and common promotional programs about it assume the nature of “science education films or documentaries,” appearing overly serious and failing to attract young people [?]. A new program production format could be explored—featuring an outgoing, affable host or reporter as the main character, filming a travel documentary of the process of touring the Potala Palace and its surrounding environment. Programs produced through this method have universal applicability across broadcast platforms, perfectly suitable for television programs, portal video websites, and online live streaming platforms. A multi-pronged approach can enable more people to see a different Tibet.

3.3 Leveraging Internet Platforms to Excavate New Content Resources and Achieve Program Creation Reform, Highlighting Tibetan Charm

The “travel documentary” described above is characterized by the penetration of many internet-related elements [?]. For example, regarding program production (taking documentaries as an example), under television' s dominance as the mainstream medium, documentaries conveyed a sense of antiquity, classical seriousness, and life reflection. The purpose of endowing documentaries with this style was to serve as cultural carriers that could contribute to cultural inheritance. However, this style hardly attracts young people, whose limited life experience makes them prefer stimulating and positive content [?]. Once documentaries assume a didactic tone, they lose appeal. Based on this, Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs need to leverage internet platforms to collect preferences of young audiences, achieve comprehensive reforms in program creation, and present Tibetan traditional culture in entirely new forms, allowing audiences to experience the authentic charm of Tibetan culture.

3.4 Building an Audio-Language Program Team with Distinctive Tibetan Local Characteristics

A relevant survey report also revealed that approximately 50% of practitioners at Tibet Satellite TV believe that the current management system is insufficiently humanized, with no complete training system established for professional development, leaving many media workers lacking opportunities for improvement. Based on this, for Tibetan radio and television audio-language programs to identify the correct development direction under media convergence, they must build an audio-language program team with distinctive Tibetan local characteristics. Specifically, facing issues such as insufficient numbers of announcers and hosts, numerous interview assignments, and high program production pressure, there is a need to introduce more high-quality talent. However, due to geographical factors (the Tibet Autonomous Region is located in southwestern China, and cities like Lhasa cannot compare with major metropolitan areas like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen in terms of development level, nor with other economically developed provincial capitals or second-tier cities. Additionally, Tibet's high average altitude may cause altitude sickness for some high-quality media talents from inland areas), the feasibility of directly importing talent from inland regions is not high [?]. Based on this, Tibet should focus on tapping local potential and adjust policies accordingly. For example, local governments could encourage people of all ethnic groups in the region with college-age students to apply for media-related majors, with priority recommendation for employment at local radio and television stations or internet live streaming companies after graduation. Through continuous accumulation, a highly localized audio-language program team with distinctive characteristics can ultimately be built.

Tibet is an inseparable part of the motherland with a long cultural history, including world-renowned folk arts, magnificent natural landscapes, and rich cultural tourism resources. However, for a long time, Tibet's interaction with other regions has been insufficient, and the content of audio-language dissemination has been relatively limited, with public understanding of Tibet often confined to "textbook content." Under the background of converged media, journalists and media workers in Tibet should advance with the times, explore the feasibility of using internet platforms to intensify audio-language dissemination and expand communication directions, enabling more people to experience Tibet's unique charm. Media convergence represents the trend of the times and the need for social development in the new era. In today's information revolution, those who can follow the trend and lead the all-media era can seize strategic initiative. In promoting media convergence development, we must unequivocally uphold the correct political direction, public opinion orientation, and value orientation. Only through continuous innovation and development in concepts, content, forms, methods, and means can we achieve significant improvements in the quality and level of positive propaganda. To better enhance our ability to work hard, observe, think, and write effectively, and earnestly

fulfill the mission of news and public opinion work, we must take General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches as our fundamental guide, firmly grasp the laws of news communication and emerging media development, follow the trend of the times, strengthen internet thinking, insist on advanced technology as support and content production as the foundation, vigorously promote the complementary advantages and integrated development of traditional and emerging media, and achieve effective communication that resonates with audiences, thereby strengthening the communication power, guidance, influence, and credibility of mainstream media and forming a concentric circle online and offline, providing powerful spiritual strength and public opinion support for Tibet's long-term stability and high-quality development.

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Author Biography: Gongbudunzhu (1973-), male, from Lhasa, Tibet, holds senior professional title; research direction: radio and television.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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