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On the Postprint of “Speaking News” and “Broadcasting News”

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Abstract

Both “talking news” and “broadcasting news” represent specific manifestations of news anchor presentation forms. Therefore, whether employing “broadcasting news” or “talking news,” a communicator who possesses sufficient “mastery” to adaptively guide the program according to its positioning and presentation form across hosting styles including broadcasting, talking, commenting, and interviewing, thereby cultivating humanized and personalized characteristics accepted and recognized by the broad audience, qualifies as a successful communicator. The harmonious and unified application of these different forms in a complementary manner constitutes a successful communication methodology.

Full Text

Preamble

A Preliminary Discussion of “Talking News” and “Broadcasting News”

Abstract: Both “talking news” and “broadcasting news” represent specific manifestations of news presentation styles. Whether “broadcasting” or “talking,” a broadcaster who possesses sufficient professional mastery, adapts their presentation form and style—be it broadcasting, talking, commenting, or interviewing—to the program’s positioning and expressive format, and develops personalized, humanized characteristics that resonate with audiences, constitutes a successful communicator. Harmoniously integrating these different forms into a unified approach creates an effective communication method.

Keywords: 灌输式 (indoctrination-style); broadcasting style; professional mastery; complementary

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1. The Evolution of Broadcasting Styles in China' s Television News Development

Television news constitutes a vital component of mass communication and one of many media forms. Characterized by authenticity, vivid imagery, and rich audio-visual integration, it provides audiences with timely, accurate, and detailed information, serving as a crucial channel for information acquisition in the modern era. As information disseminators, television news broadcasters hold pivotal positions across media organizations and program types, as news programs form the foundation of any media outlet. In the broadcasting process, news presenters not only deliver information but also interpret images, with their content reflecting both institutional perspectives and personal viewpoints on news events, thereby exerting certain agenda-setting functions. In various media and news programs, broadcasters serve as “image ambassadors” representing the subjective will of their outlets, making their style a primary factor determining a program' s success. A beloved television news broadcaster can enhance the accuracy, timeliness, and effectiveness of information dissemination while guiding viewers to think deeply behind the information, stimulating their curiosity and strengthening both the visual appeal and adhesive quality of television news.

As times evolve, different historical periods produce corresponding communication concepts, models, and methods. How, then, have broadcasting styles transformed in China' s television news development? This requires examining China' s news reform trajectory. Following the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee in 1978, China embarked on news reform, experiencing three major conceptual updates. The first innovation (1978-1982) reinstated journalism' s fundamental principles, restoring the “newspaper-like” nature of news. The second phase (1983-1992) introduced the information function to news media, recognizing that news media should not only propagate mainstream ideology but also provide information, disseminate cultural knowledge, and offer public entertainment. The third stage, beginning in 1992, repositioned journalism as possessing dual attributes: news dissemination represents an ideology-laden product belonging to the superstructure, while also serving as an essential spiritual product in social development—an information industry within the tertiary sector.

These three stages brought ideological liberation, program format changes, and broadcasting style transformations. In the first stage, news broadcasters still followed the proclamatory style from pre- and post-liberation radio broadcasting, characterized by high-spirited, uplifting, and high-pitched delivery—a method

now largely abandoned. The second stage continues with the “broadcasting” style, where presenters read from scripts in a standardized, measured manner with clear articulation—this is “broadcasting news.” The third stage, evolving alongside journalism, communication studies, and television culture, has produced a popular, civilian, and colloquial broadcasting style we call “talking news.” An early representative program was Phoenix TV’s 1998 morning news program *Phoenix Morning Express*, where host Chen Luyu attracted widespread industry and audience attention with her new “talking news” approach. Her 亲切 (qīnqiè) and natural narrative style was accepted and beloved by audiences, offering a refreshing perspective that received critical acclaim.

As China’s national official media outlet, CCTV represents the most authoritative, largest-scale, and highest-rated media institution. Beyond *Xinwen Lianbo* (News Broadcast), CCTV’s news channel features numerous news programs such as *News 30 Minutes*, *Live News*, and *Evening News*. These programs have long endeavored to experiment with new broadcasting styles, actively promoting exploration of news communication formats. Serving as experimental platforms, these CCTV news programs create opportunities for young broadcasters to showcase new presentation styles. After studying modern communication theories in higher education institutions, these young broadcasters have embarked on new explorations of their broadcasting styles, demonstrating colloquial characteristics distinct from traditional *Xinwen Lianbo* styles and diversifying news presentation approaches. Building upon traditional broadcasting theories and techniques, they have formed their own artistic pursuits through repeated reflection and experimentation, resulting in three transformations: shifting from rigid, one-way indoctrination to two-way interactive communication; moving from didactic lecturing to rational education combined with emotional engagement; and transitioning from broadcaster-centered to audience-centered approaches. This has fostered a calm, unadorned style that resonates more closely with audiences and everyday life, guiding viewers to actively participate in programs. This transformation fully embodies modern media characteristics, as broadcasters delve deeply into news events, using content to lead audiences toward deeper engagement and resonance. In this process, broadcasters integrate their own emotions, ideals, and aesthetic pursuits, speaking conversationally as if chatting with family and friends. Their verbal expressions have become remarkably close to everyday speech, eliminating the need for the emotionally elevated, high-pitched tones of the past. These broadcasters possess popular vision and consciousness, positioning themselves as equals to their audiences and adopting a 平视 (píngshì) perspective that narrows the distance between them, transforming news broadcasting from indoctrination to shared exploration and experience of news.

2. The Relationship and Characteristics of “Talking News” and “Broadcasting News”

2.1 The Relationship Between “Talking” and “Broadcasting”

Television news language differs from both reading aloud and daily conversation in its expressive mode. As a processed and refined colloquial language designed for broadcast, it must accommodate audience listening habits and avoid obscurity. Consequently, broadcasting language should be colloquial, employing more simple and short sentences while minimizing conjunctions, personal pronouns, and monosyllabic words to prevent ambiguity. This approach facilitates easier delivery and audience comprehension. Thus, emphasizing the “talking news” style enhances affinity and audience acceptance. The distinction between “broadcasting news” and “talking news” extends beyond stylistic form to content delivery. “Broadcasting news” directly transmits content to audiences, whereas “talking news” incorporates communicative exchange during dissemination, better facilitating in-depth content exploration. The choice of approach depends on the news program’s broadcast format.

The key to news reform lies in the transformation of gatekeeping values—truly adopting a society-based and audience-need-based orientation. “Talking” represents a natural mode of human exchange for conveying emotions and attitudes, belonging to the colloquial realm. In contrast, “broadcasting” is not an everyday language communication mode; no trace of “broadcasting” exists in daily life—it is a product of mass communication. The distinction between “talking” and “broadcasting” reflects different language communication modes. In news communication, whether we “talk” or “broadcast” depends on media style requirements, news program formats, and the broadcaster’s chosen approach after personal analysis of news events. Both “talking news” and “broadcasting news” are forms and methods adopted in human interaction, sharing the same root.

2.2 Characteristics of “Broadcasting News”

Professor Zhang Song summarized the distinctive Chinese “broadcasting news” style as: “clear articulation, silent breathing, emotional restraint without immersion, non-falling endings, stable intonation, measured propriety, brisk rhythm, and smooth flow.” He argued that the broadcasting voice should align with manuscript style, determined by written language characteristics.

From both information dissemination and audience acquisition perspectives, the basic audience requirements for communicators are “accuracy, clarity, and speed” —precisely what the “broadcasting” language style effectively delivers. “Broadcasting news” represents a tradition and the backbone of news broadcasting professionalism. This “broadcasting” style is determined by news writing style, requiring concise, dignified, and clear-cut manuscripts. “Broadcasting” takes facts as its origin point, with “letting facts speak for themselves in a fresh and moving way” constituting the main characteristic of television news broadcasting.

2.3 How to View “Talking News”

First, “talking news” aims to narrow the distance between broadcaster and audience. The broadcaster serves as an “intermediary” bridging communication and audience. Excellent broadcasters facilitate smoother, deeper audience comprehension of news information through effective exchange and interaction, thereby achieving effective dissemination. Any news program seeking audience affection must make viewers feel immersed and participatory. Therefore, before “talking” the news, broadcasters must thoroughly understand the background and process of news events, mastering the initiative and measure of “talking” to control the program. To achieve audience interaction requires moving beyond the indoctrination-style “I broadcast, you listen” approach—explorations such as connecting audience hotlines and live participation exemplify this direction.

Second, while “talking news” appears to change vocal delivery, speech patterns, and even facial expressions and body language to create audience affinity, the deeper transformation involves the broadcaster’s preliminary research and subsequent reanalysis and reinterpretation of news events. These preparatory efforts aim to guide audience participation and resonance. Therefore, “talking news” must 特别注意 (tèbié zhùyì) avoid falling into the trap of “talking for talking’s sake” formalism and vulgarization. The most crucial aspects are preliminary information gathering, subsequent information analysis, and language processing, with ultimate goals being:

- (1) From the perspective of helping audiences understand facts, broaden horizons, and spark interest, deeply explore and analyze from multiple angles based on news “authenticity and objectivity” to provide new insights.
- (2) Reorganize statements in ways that align with personal understanding and audience acceptance, using refined yet vivid colloquial language and unique personal style to “narrate” news content, giving news programs their distinctive imprint.

Schramm’s mass communication process model, first proposed in 1954, states in *Introduction to Communication Studies* that communication involves “a person using their entire body to transmit messages” and employing all their strength to interpret received information. Consequently, successful news broadcasters must assess the situation, integrate media subjective requirements and positions based on news programs’ ideological orientation, and organically combine them with their professional capabilities to form unique broadcasting methods, connecting styles, commentary styles, interview styles, and language expression styles, thereby establishing their own brand programs and image. This “talking news” approach expresses personal style and charisma.

2.4 Issues to Note in “Talking News”

Currently, some news presenters attempting to transform from relatively rigid “broadcasting news” to “talking news” have fallen into pitfalls of one-sided for-

mal pursuit: “casualization,” “personalization,” and “non-journalistic” tendencies. For instance, some deliberately emphasize excessively fast speech rates. Speech pace should be determined by program characteristics: short-message, comprehensive, information-dense programs like CCTV’s *Evening News* appropriately accelerate rhythm to reflect conciseness and clarity, whereas narrative news commentary and feature programs requiring in-depth excavation allow relatively free pacing and more casual tone, such as CCTV’s *News 1+1*. Proper rhythm control enhances clarity, logical rigor, thematic prominence, emotional richness, accurate expression, and overall impact.

However, exaggerating the personalization of “talking news”—even employing vulgar colloquialisms and local slang as audience-rapport techniques—contradicts the inherent characteristics of news programs and neglects the crucial depth excavation and grasp of news value.

3. “Talking News” and “Broadcasting News” as Complementary, Harmonious, and Unified Approaches

“Talking” and “broadcasting” both represent expressive capabilities, merely emphasizing different aspects. In today’s multimedia era, radio and television communication requires integrated “talking-broadcasting” hybrid competencies. “Talking” in broadcasting programs involves objectively and accurately describing current events using unique language styles, based on respecting facts, clarifying media positions on events, and conducting thorough preliminary investigation and analysis. This creates clear-thinking, logically rigorous interview reports with timely, appropriate commentary, completing programs that are thoroughly analyzed, thought-provoking, popular, and splendid.

Emphasizing the “talking” form prioritizes content, strengthening the authoritative nature of news and the essential requirements of information dissemination, guiding audiences toward objective judgment and independent interpretation of information. “Talking news” differs from everyday “talking”—it adheres to both fundamental journalism elements and the unique creative laws of broadcasting as a professional art form. This represents a high-level artistic “talking,” a skillful integration of broadcasting artistic language and everyday language.

China’s radio and television news industry serves as the mouthpiece of the Party and government, bearing the heavy responsibility of maintaining Party seriousness and authority. The “broadcasting news” communication style remains appropriate for disseminating Party and government policies, exemplified by CCTV’s *Xinwen Lianbo*. As the most authoritative medium for national policy and public opinion guidance, the traditional “broadcasting news” format continues. Therefore, as news units under socialism, broadcasters must consider China’s social system characteristics—blindly imitating Western television news presentation styles is inadvisable. Instead, they should seek presentation methods between “talking” and “broadcasting” that suit national conditions while

remaining popular and acceptable to audiences.

Due to traditional concepts, significant differences still exist between news broadcasters and news hosts in program presentation style. Such rigid demarcation somewhat restricts broadcaster development. Long-term scripted reading makes broadcaster expressions “stiff” and language overly “formal.” Therefore, we believe news broadcaster presentation style should constitute an open space—whether professionally trained broadcasters or experienced reporters, all who possess the “mastery” to control programs can explore presentation forms suitable for their media and programs based on personal characteristics. In language processing, they should skillfully employ broadcasting, talking, commenting, interviewing, and discussing according to content, forming humanized, personalized hosting styles rather than limiting themselves to either “talking news” or “broadcasting news.”

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

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