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Improving the Quality of Television News Interviews Through Appropriate Application of Interviewing Techniques: Postprint

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Abstract

Excellent television news interviews are built upon the rational application of techniques. This paper discusses television news interview techniques, first analyzing common problems journalists currently face in the interview process, and then exploring how to employ interview techniques to improve interview quality.

Full Text

Abstract

Excellent television news interviews are built upon the proper application of techniques. This paper discusses techniques for television news interviews by first analyzing common problems journalists face during the interview process, and then examining how to use interview techniques to improve interview quality.

Keywords: television news; interview techniques; journalists; quality

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1.2 The Concept of Interview Techniques

Interviewing is a crucial component of news reporting, and its quality significantly impacts the overall quality of news coverage. Improving interview quality requires the proper application of interview techniques, such as the appropriate

use of lens language, skillful question design, and elevating the appropriate status of interviewees.

2. Common Problems in Television News Interviews

2.1 Insufficient Pre-Interview Preparation

Before an interview begins, journalists must complete thorough preparatory work, including researching the interviewee's personal background and their relationship to the relevant events to enhance understanding of the interview subject. Additionally, journalists need to thoroughly study the background and general course of the news event, and collect and evaluate potential rumors [?]. However, many journalists currently fail to prepare adequately in these areas, resulting in interviews that lack a clear 主线 (main thread). This not only hinders the interviewee's ability to respond effectively but also makes it difficult to ensure the validity of the news during post-production, creating significant disadvantages for the entire process. Furthermore, interviews require precisely prepared and appropriate questions, yet some journalists frequently conduct improper interviews by asking leading questions that steer the interviewee's responses, causing the interview to deviate from its main topic. Such approaches can easily provoke interviewee resentment, which not only fails to enhance interview depth but may also cause others to shun the television station, severely impacting its social reputation.

2.2 Lack of Interview Depth

Some journalists fail to achieve genuine depth in their interviews due to inadequate preparation and insufficient analysis of the individuals and events involved. Others make no effort to improve their interviewing approach, relying solely on basic event elements—time, place, person, cause, process, and result. While this method can rapidly ensure information transmission and allow audiences to accurately understand what happened, its overly rigid format makes it difficult for viewers to develop sufficient interest in the event. Currently, to increase viewership and ratings, television stations follow the “content is king” principle and conduct interviews on hot topics. Although the events themselves may attract attention, interviews lacking depth fail to generate adequate interest in the interview segment, placing television stations at a competitive disadvantage. The lack of interview depth is directly related to journalists' competence; many journalists lack the ability to conduct profound analysis of events, making it difficult for them to grasp key issues.

3. Methods for Using Interview Techniques to Improve Television News Interview Quality

3.1 Thorough Preparation Before the Interview

Preparatory work profoundly impacts the entire interview process; failure to identify key issues and lack of interview depth both stem from inadequate preparation. When preparing for an interview, journalists must simultaneously understand both the event and the interviewee. They must thoroughly analyze the main thread of the event, basic elements such as time, place, and persons involved, and familiarize themselves with the background to determine what questions to ask during the interview. Simultaneously, journalists need to understand the interviewee's work and life experiences and personality, and use appropriate questioning methods to ensure they can build rapport and establish goodwill during the interview, thereby contributing to its success.

3.2 Establishing Appropriate Primary-Secondary Relationships

In terms of interview format, journalists must pay attention to primary-secondary relationships. Before the interview begins, they should pre-design the interview methods and techniques to be employed, and select questions and modes based on the occasion and the content and nature of the event. This not only increases efficiency for later collaboration and video editing but also ensures interview quality. Throughout the interview process, journalists must continuously visualize the interview process, preparing from the very prerequisites to ensure each segment connects smoothly and every detail is properly managed. Additionally, interviews may encounter unexpected situations, such as an interviewee refusing to continue. On one hand, questions and interview methods must be reasonably designed to ensure interviewee acceptance; on the other hand, journalists must prepare contingency plans based on the nature of the event and potential circumstances to ensure the interview proceeds smoothly.

3.3 Using Questioning Techniques to Enhance Interview Depth

The use of interview methods and questioning techniques determines the quality of a television news interview. When journalists skillfully apply relevant techniques, they can not only ensure interview fluency but also conduct more in-depth questioning. Journalists may adopt a Q&A interview format, but must conduct thorough analysis of the material beforehand and summarize potential issues to incorporate into their questions. During the interview, for reluctant interviewees, journalists can employ persuasive interviewing techniques, maintaining control of their own emotions and conversing patiently to ensure a calm interview process that guides interviewees to provide desired information. Some interviewees are particularly challenging—they may wish to convey information externally while remaining guarded against journalists, deliberately avoiding certain questions and resulting in low information yield [?]. In such cases, jour-

nalists can use conversational interviewing to build trust, demonstrating their sincerity and using conversation to reduce tension, thereby establishing trust.

3.4 Capturing Interview Details

Beyond the event itself, interviews can be enriched through attention to other details. Journalists can capture the interviewee's surrounding environment to convey additional information to the audience, and employ lens language to better showcase the interviewee's mental outlook, enhancing audience understanding. For example, by using close-ups of the interviewee's clothing or daily necessities, viewers can gain clear insights into the interviewee's family situation and other aspects, improving their viewing experience.

3.5 Controlling the Interview Atmosphere

A good interview atmosphere is one of the key factors for successful interviews. Therefore, journalists and other staff must pay attention to the interview environment, with reporters and camera operators particularly responsible for ensuring a harmonious atmosphere. As the interviewer, the journalist plays a role in controlling the situation; both the content of questions and language organization skills significantly influence the atmosphere. Generally, journalists should use relaxed and pleasant language during interviews to ensure a natural atmosphere and smooth process, thereby enhancing the vitality of the interview work.

3.6 Improving Interview Effectiveness Through Multi-Person Collaboration

Television news interviews rarely achieve good results when relying on a single person. As work content becomes more specialized and each team member's expertise improves, successful programs require collective coordination by the entire production team. To maintain the seriousness of television news, events must be reported from comprehensive and multiple perspectives. Moreover, for objectivity and fairness, news conclusions cannot be determined by a single team member; multi-person discussions are necessary to analyze the full story and achieve comprehensive coverage. During collaborative work, all journalists must cooperate with each other and avoid the negative impacts of working in isolation. In the news production process, team members should share information and resources to maximize collective strength.

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