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On How to Improve Editing Quality in News Production (Post-print)

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Abstract

This paper begins with an overview of news editing, identifies and summarizes existing problems in current news editing practices, and briefly introduces the application of editing techniques in news production, aiming to enhance editing quality and thereby promote the further development of the news industry.

Full Text

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Film editing involves the selection, combination, and connection of video and audio materials to create a coherent production [1]. In news production, editing is the most critical component; in a sense, it constitutes the compilation and organization of news programs. Effective editing can enhance program fluency

and highlight core themes, meaning that editing work directly determines the final quality of news production. Therefore, news production must emphasize editing methodologies and techniques to improve program quality.

Television news formats and genres are relatively monotonous, resulting in traditional editing methods and techniques. Some television stations have not innovated their existing approaches in practice, leading to outdated content and structure that fails to attract younger audiences. This is particularly problematic for people's livelihood news, where antiquated techniques cannot effectively convey program effects, causing audience misunderstanding, loss of interest, and declining ratings. Furthermore, highlighting the main theme is the primary task of editing; insufficient editing consciousness results in unclear program meanings and inadequate coherence among news materials, severely impacting station development. With the widespread development of information and computer technologies, emerging media have profoundly influenced television media. The internet contains billions of news items, offering audiences more choices. Consequently, the influence and reach of traditional television media have gradually diminished, especially for news programs. Self-media, news portals, and video websites are all attracting former news audiences [3]. At this juncture, news editing becomes even more critical. If news editors cannot update their skills in a timely manner, they will further lose their audience. Therefore, television stations must prioritize news editing to enhance the appeal of television news programs.

3. Application of Editing Techniques in News Production

News editing involves decomposing and reassembling video and audio materials from news interviews based on actual circumstances to create a complete news work. As the most crucial component of news production, advanced editing techniques can highlight news themes and improve production quality. Television news serves as the mouthpiece of the Party and the state, bearing the significant mission of guiding public opinion. News editors must possess correct editing consciousness [2]. On one hand, news production interprets Party and state policies, guidelines, laws, and regulations for the masses; on the other hand, it reflects people's practical needs to relevant state departments. This bridge-and-bond relationship represents the most important function of news production. Therefore, television production editors must maintain clear minds, recognize their responsibilities, and deliver truthful news programs to the public.

3.1 Combining News Style with Editing

Editing is the primary task in determining news style. Editors should establish the news style based on actual circumstances and types of news, forming fundamental editing styles and concepts through thorough understanding of news materials. This editing style should permeate the entire news program from beginning to end to ensure completeness and better reflect news themes [4]. For instance, in political news programs, political nature constitutes the main

style, and editing should emphasize overall authority; people's livelihood news programs need to reflect actual life, characterized by everyday life features; entertainment news programs should focus on novelty, utilizing audience curiosity in editing to stimulate continued viewing.

3.2 Emphasizing Quality of Beginning and Ending Editing

In any news program, the beginning is the most important segment and the audience's first impression. A compelling opening can maximize ratings. Therefore, editors should prioritize the quality of news openings, capturing audience attention with the first shot to enhance program appeal. The opening should extract the most information-rich portion from all materials—the so-called “news point” [5]—to create a lasting first impression. Additionally, the ending is also crucial; editors should avoid anticlimactic conclusions by summarizing the entire content, reiterating key segments, elevating the news theme, and deepening audience impact. Simultaneously, shot length requires strict control: overly long shots create monotony and fail to sustain viewing interest, while excessively short shots increase jumpiness and confuse audiences. Thus, during editing, careful selection of shot lengths is essential to maintain appropriate pacing and rhythm, thereby enhancing visual effects.

3.3 Rational Application of Subtitles and Simultaneous Sound

Subtitles are essential elements in television news production. They can supplement deficiencies in visual and audio content while conveying information not apparent in the footage. Subtitle applications generally include the following categories. First, **caption subtitles**: news programs inevitably feature interviews or performances where speech clarity cannot be guaranteed, and regional dialects or opera variations may hinder comprehension. Subtitles help audiences understand content, hence the term “caption subtitles.” Second, **corrective subtitles**: during editing, footage may contain minor, inconspicuous flaws that can be concealed or adjusted using subtitles [6]. For example, unbalanced frame composition can be corrected by adding subtitles to lighter areas; dark footage can be brightened with light-colored subtitles. Corrective subtitles optimize and refine news footage for better visual coordination. Third, **explanatory subtitles**: these clarify and elaborate on visual information, explaining details not immediately understandable to help audiences better comprehend news content.

Simultaneous sound refers to authentic on-site audio recorded during filming. Its application is common in news programs, as it can transform monotonous visuals. Moreover, simultaneous sound is more authentic, objective, and compelling than post-production narration by anchors or reporters. During editing, simultaneous sound should be prioritized whenever possible to enrich conveyed information and enhance news programs.

3.4 Adhering to Shot Composition Principles

Television news shot composition is crucial for ensuring coherence. During shot assembly, editors should emphasize program rhythm and flexibly employ various composition techniques according to the news's main style to enhance program appeal. Typically, shot composition includes two methods.

First, the dissolve technique. Dissolve involves superimposing two shots to create smooth transitions [7]. Typically, the previous shot gradually fades out while the next fades in, hence the term “fade-in/fade-out”—shot A fades out to reveal shot B. In news editing, dissolves are employed when direct shot connections prove jarring. Common applications include: (1) temporal dissolves, indicating time passage; (2) spatial dissolves, preventing abruptness when locations change; (3) scenic dissolves, creating a visually rich impression of complexity and variety; and (4) imaginative dissolves, distinguishing dream sequences, fantasies, or memories to enhance program impact. Additionally, freeze-frame treatment can be applied at transition points. This technique often appears at paragraph breaks, where the final frame of the previous shot is frozen, creating a pause that imprints the image in viewers' minds before the next shot appears, clearly demarcating segments and facilitating acceptance of transitions.

Second, the static-dynamic composition technique. This principle dictates that static shots should be connected with static shots, and dynamic shots with dynamic shots. This approach ensures program fluidity and coordination, preventing visual dislocation and shock. It also serves as an important method to avoid “jumping the axis,” achieving a softening effect at edit points.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, news editing is highly comprehensive and integral, significantly impacting overall news effectiveness. Therefore, news editing must be prioritized, with continuous innovation and improvement of existing techniques to fulfill its proper functions and create more quality news programs for the public.

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

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