

On the Re-creation Post-print of Television News Visual Editing

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Abstract

Video editing is a crucial task in television news that integrates both artistry and technicality. Editors must conduct secondary creation through raw news footage to enable television news to be presented to audiences in a direct and effective manner. The quality of re-creation in television news video editing directly impacts the quality and communicative value of the work. Therefore, this paper offers new perspectives on editorial practice by examining three key aspects of re-creation: precise footage selection, meticulous editing, and diversified composition, thereby positively contributing to enhancing the quality and influence of the work.

Full Text

On the Re-creation of TV News Picture Editing

Abstract: Picture editing is a crucial task in television news that integrates both artistry and technical skill. Editors must engage in secondary creation of raw news footage to enable television news to be presented to audiences directly and effectively. The quality of re-creation in TV news picture editing directly impacts the quality and communicative value of the work. Therefore, this paper offers new perspectives on editorial practice by examining three key aspects of re-creation: precise selection of footage, refined editing, and diverse combination, thereby providing positive impetus for enhancing the quality and influence of news works.

Keywords: picture editing; re-creation; precise selection; refined editing; diverse combination

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Picture editing is the post-production work of television news reporting. It is a complex process that involves the precise selection, refined editing, and diverse combination of raw footage according to the news theme to form a complete television news report. This process represents secondary creation of visual materials and is also “a process of beautifying or uglifying source information” [1], which is closely related to the editor’s purpose. Different types of television news require different approaches and techniques for re-creation in picture editing. Therefore, only by following the laws of journalism and transforming the raw news footage and audio materials captured by reporters into complete news reports that integrate artistry and technical skill can editors enable audiences to share news information and audiovisual experiences more intuitively and authentically. The unity of sound and picture is built upon the editor’s profound understanding of news events. Through perfect matching of sound and picture, editors create a multi-dimensional sense of spatial and temporal depth, making the already authentic and vivid news footage more dynamic and meaningful, and elevating the audience’s audiovisual experience to a rational level.

1. Precise Selection as the Foundation of Re-creation in Picture Editing

The selection of footage is the foundation of re-creation in TV news picture editing and the most crucial aspect of shaping the final work. Among numerous and complicated raw materials, editors must possess news sensitivity and conduct adequate research and preparation on the theme and angle of the entire news event to precisely select footage with prominent subjects, unified sound and picture, and high quality, thereby achieving optimal news communication effect.

1.1 The Main Subject Must Be Prominent

The news footage presented in a typical TV news story is very brief. Research shows that a short TV news story generally contains no more than seven shots. Therefore, to convey substantial information within such limited footage, editors must closely adhere to the news theme, highlight the main subject, select footage precisely, and maintain clarity so that audiences can understand immediately. If the main subject of the footage fails to correspond with the news theme, or if the relationship between the subject and its surrounding elements lacks clear hierarchy, the footage’s expressive power will be insufficient, the composition unreasonable, and the visual impact weak. Since picture is the audio-visual structure of television news—a complex structural state—editors should make greater use of long takes and close-up shots that effectively demonstrate the spatial and temporal integrity of the main subject, and avoid arbitrarily cutting these shots, which would damage the information content of the footage.

1.2 Sound and Picture Must Be Unified

“Picture and sound are the two major expressive means of television news. They each have their own laws and tasks, yet complement each other to reveal the content of television programs and express the main ideas” [2]. Therefore, in the process of footage selection, editors must deeply comprehend the internal dialectical unity between these two essential elements. They should focus on selecting footage precisely based on sound elements such as live sound, reporter narration, and commentary, and address issues of sound-picture synchronization and counterpoint from the perspectives of camera angle, shot size, and rhythm to achieve unity of sound and picture and attain the best communication effect.

1.3 Footage Quality Must Be High

Due to factors such as reporters’ shooting angles and methods, as well as weather and environmental conditions, the quality of news footage inevitably varies. Editors must make selective judgments based on thematic needs and objective factors to avoid using footage with insufficient clarity, incorrect exposure, or uneven camera movement. Simultaneously, editors should apply an aesthetic perspective to discover high-quality footage suitable for secondary creation from the material pool, fully utilizing auxiliary elements such as composition, lighting, and color to add the finishing touch to the work. Additionally, during editing, editors must protect the data quality of high-quality footage by ensuring consistency between material formats and operating methods to enable direct material sharing. They should avoid transcoding whenever possible to reduce decompression and recompression, and preferably complete production in one pass to prevent image quality degradation from multiple data processing cycles.

2. Refined Editing as the Core of Re-creation in Picture Editing

TV news picture editing is a complex systematic project encompassing selection, editing, combination, special effects, and voice-over. To produce excellent TV news works, refined editing constitutes the core content of re-creation in picture editing. Only by correctly selecting editing points, properly switching shot sizes, and appropriately controlling rhythm can editors enhance their creative capacity for television visual language, ensure smoother picture transitions, create greater visual perspective, and provide audiences with aesthetically pleasing visual artistic enjoyment.

2.1 Correctly Selecting Editing Points

Editing points, as the term suggests, are the junctions where shots transition, primarily divided into emotional editing points, action editing points, and content editing points. Correctly selecting editing points is a crucial step in picture editing work and a prerequisite for ensuring news picture quality. Its essence

lies in determining the connection points between different pictures to make the visuals more fluid. Smooth picture editing involves techniques where the transition between editing points is not a simple “cut” but includes 1-2 frames of connection, which can be achieved through 2-frame dissolves or fades. This means that when carefully observing footage, editors will find several frames where the picture is relatively static—this static position is the optimal editing point for cutting. After proper connection through optimal editing points, the main actions in the news footage, plot transitions, and the program’s theme and style will be presented naturally.

2.2 Correctly Switching Shot Sizes

Shot size editing carries significant meaning in news picture editing. Correctly switching shot sizes is a basic requirement for picture editing work. There are various shot sizes, mainly including extreme long shot, long shot, medium shot, close-up, and extreme close-up. Different shot sizes convey different information to audiences, with each having its specific meaning and unique spatial-temporal structure. Their differences primarily manifest in the varying visual effects formed by different perspectives. Different shot sizes often imply different news angles, spatial-temporal transitions, and changes in visual rhythm. Generally, extreme long shots contain more content and have longer duration, while extreme close-ups contain less content and have the shortest duration, with long shots, medium shots, and close-ups falling between these extremes. During editing, editors must select appropriate shot sizes according to the news theme.

2.3 Correctly Grasping Rhythm

Picture editing rhythm is generated through the rational arrangement of relationships between the whole and segments, segments and individual shots, and through scientific transformations of time and space in selecting long versus short shots. Any TV news report contains multiple pictures that connect with each other in spatial-temporal representation and transformation, highlight the theme, and form a rhythm that satisfies audience psychological needs from different angles and levels. In practice, editors must first grasp the movement changes of different subjects within the footage, thoroughly understand the internal relationships between subjects, and connect different subject movements, color changes, and compositions to control picture rhythm holistically. Second, editors must control camera movement and transitions between shots by properly using fade-in, fade-out, flash, soft cut, hard cut, etc. For instance, flash white can provide audiences with more imaginative space when highlighting the main subject of a picture.

3. Diverse Combination as the Key to Re-creation in Picture Editing

Picture combination is the process of assembling and arranging edited footage to form a complete television work. This process involves “the application of basic elements of visual communication according to laws, thereby enabling visual communication to develop and change according to patterns” [3]. Therefore, diverse combination is the key to re-creation in picture editing. Such diverse combination not only conforms to the laws of objective development, basic laws of television picture assembly, and audiences’ aesthetic laws and habits, but also fully embodies the artistry of television news and breakthroughs in editorial concepts, serving as an important means to improve TV news works.

3.1 Logical Combination

From the perspective of picture relationships, editors should follow the objective laws of development during picture assembly. These laws contain various logical relationships inherent in the development of things themselves and their connections with other things, including the logical relationships of television news event plot development, movement changes of picture subjects, internal logical relationships between characters and events, and spatial-temporal transitions in event development. Therefore, logical combination must present the development process of things and the movement trajectory of news subjects to the television screen in an orderly manner through pictures. Editors must not violate logical relationships during combination but should orderly assemble various pictures according to potential causal relationships, conflict relationships, etc., to maintain spatial-temporal coherence in television news.

3.2 Dynamic-Static Combination

From the technical level of pictures, editors should follow the basic laws of television picture assembly for picture combination. These combination laws require visual continuity, such as “dynamic to dynamic,” “static to static,” and “dynamic-static combination.” This combination principle requires the subsequent picture to be a continuation of the previous one—if the previous picture is a static shot, the next picture should also present a static state; if consecutive pictures are all moving shots, editors should use the end frame of the previous shot to start the next shot or make transitions, thereby maintaining picture fluidity. Therefore, dynamic-static combination must strictly follow movement trajectories and speeds during assembly, maintaining synchronization of the subject’s movement and static states, as well as consistency between moving shots and fixed camera positions in spatial-temporal states.

3.3 Matching Combination

From the artistic expression of pictures, editors should combine pictures according to audiences’ aesthetic laws and habits. This combination primarily

manifests as natural continuity of picture subjects, spatial-temporal changes, and event progress, with clear pictures and complete events integrating the pictures into a whole. Matching combination mainly includes shot size matching, color tone matching, lighting matching, angle matching, and direction matching, requiring picture assembly to maximize audience aesthetic satisfaction. According to audience thinking habits, editors should appropriately employ artistic and special effects techniques, utilizing symbolic and metaphorical expressions to provide audiences with excellent visual experiences. Therefore, when applying matching combination, editors should maintain the advantages of picture subjects, highlight news themes, de-emphasize backgrounds, and strive for concise and clear modeling performance and structural arrangement to reduce visual and audio background interference, enabling audiences to receive all information content at once during viewing.

4. Conclusion

In summary, TV news picture editing is a highly practical re-creation activity. Editors must master various production techniques proficiently and integrate their own journalistic thinking. By striving to overcome challenges in footage selection, editing, and combination, they can perfectly integrate various elements of television news to create thoughtful, warm, and profound TV news works that satisfy audience demands across all aspects of television news.

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

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