

A Brief Discussion on the Application Techniques of Television Synchronous Sound: Postprint

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Abstract

Television programming relies on two fundamental modalities—visual imagery and audio—to transmit information. Viewers receive and process information through visual and auditory perception, which are mutually dependent and complementary; neither can be dispensed with. Compared with media such as radio and newspapers, television's greatest advantage resides in its visual dimension. However, a journalistic work cannot achieve its intended objectives through imagery and narration alone. Therefore, a quality news production must comprehensively employ multiple means—including visuals, sound, and music—to achieve strong persuasive power, emotional resonance, and impact, thereby rendering news events more vivid and compelling and journalistic subjects more fully realized. At present, many journalists in the industry, in pursuit of convenience, neglect the integration of audio-visual elements, relying exclusively on visual footage while disregarding the capture of synchronous audio. Consider, for instance, a spectacular concert: if a television broadcast presents only visuals and florid commentary from reporters, without the beautiful melodies and passionate live sounds, the program's quality would be significantly compromised. Hence, the effective utilization of synchronous audio is paramount to enhancing the quality of television news programming.

Full Text

Abstract

Television programs rely on two fundamental channels to convey information: visual images and sound. Audiences perceive information through both sight and hearing, with these two modalities working in concert and reinforcing one another—neither can be dispensed with. While television's greatest advantage over media such as radio and newspapers lies in its visual imagery, a news piece cannot achieve its intended impact through visuals and voice-over narration

alone. A quality news work must fully leverage multiple elements including imagery, sound, and music to achieve strong guiding power, emotional resonance, and influence, making news events more vivid and moving while rendering news figures more substantial. Currently, many journalists in the industry, seeking convenience, neglect the integration of sound and image, relying solely on visuals while overlooking the recording of synchronous sound. Consider a spectacular concert presented on television with only visuals and a reporter's eloquent commentary, but without the beautiful melodies and passionate live sounds—such program quality would be severely compromised. Therefore, the effective use of synchronous sound is crucial for improving television news program quality.

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Introduction

To analyze and elaborate on the use of synchronous sound in television, it is necessary to first briefly explain its connotation and extension. The concept of synchronous sound has multiple interpretations in the industry. Television news program planners, reporters, and editors generally refer to synchronous sound as the footage shot by camera journalists at news scenes, used in post-production television programs, that includes original background sound, relevant figures' statements, and on-camera reporter commentary. From this definition, synchronous sound typically encompasses three aspects: footage with original background sound, statements from relevant figures, and on-camera reporter commentary—and only when used in television news programs does it constitute true synchronous sound.

1. The Role of Synchronous Sound in Television News

1.1 Enhancing Authenticity and Media Credibility

Effective use of synchronous sound can strengthen the authenticity of news events and enhance media credibility. In this regard, it finds frequent application in breaking news coverage. Breaking news reports generally require timely information delivery to audiences, yet television footage may not be immediately available. In such cases, television stations typically employ telephone connections with reporters on the scene or telephone interviews with relevant figures, though the most effective approach often involves comprehensive application of multiple methods. For instance, in the report *Baoshan, Yunnan: 5.1 Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Changning County*, the sudden nature of the event meant no footage was initially available as journalists were still en route

to the disaster area. Compounding this, communication was delayed and transportation difficult in the epicenter area of Wencang Village, requiring footage to be initially edited in Datianba Town before transmission. Consequently, CCTV News Channel's *Domestic Focus* program decided to use a live connection, with anchor Xiao Yan connecting via telephone with Changning County Television reporter Zhou Yingbiao, who had arrived first at the epicenter. Through the reporter's synchronous commentary, the breaking event was presented completely to national audiences. Such television reporting is not only simple, timely, and easy to execute but also accurate and authoritative.

For effectiveness reporting and character profiles, background material is generally required. The conventional approach uses before-and-after or past-present comparisons to present developmental changes. However, firsthand visual materials from when the news event occurred are often missing. When such background is necessary to convey the news theme, the common practice is to record synchronous statements from news subjects, allowing relevant figures' narratives to present past events. For example, in the news piece *Zhang Youguo: 37 Years of Civilization in Deep Mountains to Honor His Party Oath*, which aired on Yunnan Satellite TV on June 28, 2016, to demonstrate how Zhang Youguo's party membership was influenced by Communist Party member Zhou Guocai, the author used this synchronous statement from Zhang: "At that time, the orphan Zhang Mingfa in our village developed osteomyelitis. Zhou Guocai organized party members and masses to raise medical funds, delivered meals, and cured his illness, continuing to help him until he established his own family. This incident deeply moved me and gave me profound understanding of the Party." This accurate application of synchronous sound vividly presented a news fact from decades past, demonstrating the immense power of synchronous sound.

1.2 Creating Immersive Atmosphere

Synchronous sound can create a strong on-site atmosphere, making audiences feel personally present. In the report *Major Debris Flow Disaster in Changning County: Mobile Phone Records Terrifying Moments*, the entire piece consisted of only a lead sentence introducing the event's time, location, and the videographer's name. The remainder used entirely on-site visuals and sounds—the terrifying spectacle of the debris flow cascading down the mountain with irresistible force, destroying trees, floodwaters rolling boulders, and timber smashing river dikes, all accompanied by the thunderous roar of the scene. This authentically presented the heart-stopping scene of the mountain torrent and debris flow, giving viewers an immersive, firsthand experience. Had traditional visuals-plus-commentary methods been employed, even the most brilliant reporter could not have rendered it so thoroughly and vividly. Similar applications of synchronous sound are common in arts and entertainment programming and are increasingly used in legal system programs aired by television stations at all levels.

In the article *Yunlan Cooperative: Leading Villagers to Prosperity Through Sweet Crisp Pea Cultivation*, the author included this synchronous statement

from cooperative member Wu Pingxing: “The variety I’m planting this year is called Dameiren. This variety has high yield. I’m cultivating about four mu, with average yield of 5,000 to 6,000 kilograms per mu. I’ve already earned over 30,000 yuan.” This synchronous statement immediately dispelled audience doubts about whether pea cultivation could lead to prosperity. For viewers, statements from named, identifiable ordinary people represent the most authoritative, persuasive, and credible source. No matter how meticulously a reporter crafts commentary, audiences always harbor doubts, considering it merely one person’s perspective. Only when figures personally involved in the news event speak for themselves does the news fact become irrefutable and unquestionable. This makes it easy to understand why the Party Central Committee requires news media and practitioners at all levels to “go to the grassroots, transform work styles, and improve writing styles” to create news works that carry the fragrance of earth.

2. Techniques for Using Synchronous Sound

2.1 Always Record Synchronous Sound, Whether Used or Not

The connotation of synchronous sound is broad. Many reporters mistakenly believe that only statements from interviewees captured with a microphone constitute synchronous sound, often neglecting environmental background sounds and on-site audio. In reality, all elements related to a news event—including reporter commentary, subject statements, environmental background sounds, and on-site audio—fall within the category of synchronous sound. Therefore, camera journalists must always record on-site audio during filming. This practice serves two purposes: First, it protects journalists by proving their presence at the news scene and verifying that reported facts are authentic and credible rather than fabricated or hearsay, providing evidence for future verification. Currently, news editors commonly use background sounds to verify news facts during review processes. Mainstream media generally avoid using footage without background sound. Second, recording synchronous sound provides flexibility for later scriptwriting and editing, ensuring material is available when needed.

2.2 Selective Use: Employ When Useful, Discard When Not

Some television media currently treat synchronous sound usage as a mandatory metric—a routine criterion for adding points when grading reporters’ work. This approach is misguided. For instance, in some solemn television news programs, reporters might use conference synchronous sound that includes participants’ coughing or the scraping of chairs and tables, which actually distracts audiences and reduces program quality. Although synchronous sound is widely applied and immensely valuable in television news, it should not be applied uniformly in all situations. Instead, it must be carefully selected based on news facts. During application, editors must deliberate carefully: use it when appropriate and discard it when not. It should neither be forced into use nor uniformly

rejected, requiring reporters to exercise flexible judgment based on specific news events and thematic expression.

2.3 Concise Selection and Timely Integration

The selection of synchronous sound must be concise, and its integration must be well-timed and transition naturally with context. Some reporters, seeking convenience, use lengthy segments of subject statements—a practice to be avoided. Long stretches of synchronous sound create a sense of drag, causing audiences to lose interest and diminishing program appeal. Generally, only the most expressive, illustrative, and vivid segments should be used. Timing is also crucial: synchronous sound should be introduced according to program progression at appropriate moments, preceded by suitable commentary serving as transition. This allows audiences to naturally perceive the synchronous sound's arrival and conclusion, rather than having it appear abruptly or disappear suddenly.

2.4 Mastering Interview Techniques as the Foundation for Quality Synchronous Sound

Synchronous sound should select the most expressive, illustrative, and vivid segments, but if journalists fail to capture such material, there is nothing to select. This raises the issue of interview techniques, which are closely related to a journalist's professional competence, experience, and practical skills. Generally, several points require attention: First, thorough planning and preparation are essential. High-quality television programs depend on adequate preparation. This stage involves determining program themes, gathering background materials, and identifying interview subjects. Special attention must be paid to selecting interviewees who have high relevance to the news event, possess the greatest authority, and can best illustrate the issue. Second, reporters must master questioning techniques. Before recording synchronous sound, interviewers should carefully design questions based on program themes, ensuring strong directionality so subjects can respond accurately as needed. Before formal recording, both parties should communicate and familiarize themselves to help subjects relax, dispel concerns, and lower their guard, thereby achieving optimal results. Third, scene selection during interviews is critical. Interview settings should generally align with interview content and relate to the news event. During actual recording, attention must be paid to aesthetic composition and full-shot filming.

3. Conclusion

In summary, synchronous sound finds extensive application in television programming and is arguably indispensable. In practical application, three principles must be observed: “synchronous sound must match visuals,” “synchronous sound must align with program themes,” and “sound effects must harmonize with visual rhythm.”

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.