

# An Exploration of Audiobook Broadcasting Technique Strategies- Take *The Life: The Sea* as an Example

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**Abstract:** In the era of fragmented reading prevalent, with the accelerated pace of life, audio books can better meet people's reading needs, audio books broadcast is developing rapidly. Accordingly, this study summarises the current development of audio book broadcasting and investigates the evaluation system of audio book broadcasting. This latter study takes *The Life: The Sea* as its parent text, and through the research methods of literature study, case study, and comprehensive analysis. This paper discusses the strategies of audio book broadcasting skills with regard to the two major languages of audiobook broadcasting - character language and narrative language. Character language in audio book broadcasting should be able to highlight the external image of the character, express the inner temperament of the character and pay attention to the naturalness of the character's voice. Narrative language needs to be able to create immersive screen space, clarify the logic and pacing of the script, and portray the details and white space of the story.

**Keywords:** Audio books, broadcasting techniques, characterological language, narrative language

## 1. Introduction

At a time when fast reading and fragmented reading are prevalent, a greater appreciation of the value of literary reading requires breaking through the stereotypical nature of the written word and generating a more layered reading landscape. The fascination of reading literature in different landscapes and the ability of auditory reading to take place in concomitant scenarios such as commuting, sports, and labour make auditory reading a new way of reading. In the era of fragmentation, audiobooks produced by audiobooks broadcast to meet people's auditory reading needs. The audio book broadcast emphasises the properties of sound as a medium and reshapes the question of the relationship between sound and literary communication. This study will focus on audio book broadcasting as a unique form of literary communication, using *The Life: The Sea* as a parent text to explore the skill strategies of audio book broadcasting.

## 2. Status of development of audio book broadcasting

Audiobook broadcast is through the broadcast or network platform dissemination, the use of language, music, sound and other artistic means. A work of art that reproduces the ideology of a literary work in purely acoustic form, using the literary work as a vehicle. Since 1933, when Shanghai Radio launched the radio drama *Memories of Terror*, Chinese radio drama was born; after the 1960s, the popularity of television made the development of audio book broadcasting difficult. With the emergence of the Internet, audio books and broadcasts have gained new ground, and two-dimensional radio dramas adapted from web novels have gradually emerged and been accepted by two-dimensional fans. Audiobook broadcast works of change and development is showing that audiobooks in the process of integrating into the market, according to the aesthetic needs of the audience groups to make the corresponding innovation and breakthroughs, the production of more and more sophisticated at the same time the audience groups also further expand. From the original serialisation of novels on the radio to today's radio dramas in the world of Internet audio, the broadcasting of audio books has taken on a richer form. At this stage, the momentum of the audio book broadcast industry development overall trend is good. According to the *China Internet Audio Industry Research Report 2023* issued by Iresearch. In 2022, the market size of China's online audio platform will be 11.58 billion yuan, with the total market maintaining steady and fast growth, and the proportion of "audiobooks & radio dramas" in

the user's listening content will be the largest. Secondly, there are three main modes of audio book broadcast production: User-Generated Content, Professionally-Generated Content, Professional-User-Generated Content. At present, the audio broadcast platform promotes the integration of Use-Generated Content and Professionally-Generated Content, and Professional-User-Generated Content-based PGC Professionally-Generated Content. The Professional-User-Generated Content model, which is based on Professional-Generated Content, is getting into the right track. Combine user creation with professional creation to enhance the professional production capability and user aggregation capability of the audio broadcast platform. As a result, audio broadcast creators range from hot grassroots stars to professional audio broadcast artists like Mr Wang Mingjun. And with the development of Two-Dimensional culture and the fan economy, a large number of commercial and professional dubbing companies have appeared on the audiobook broadcasting platform. Professional voice actor idols such as Jie Da and Tian Xiang have gained great popularity on broadcast platforms and are loved by a wide range of users. In terms of audio book content, there are not only audio works adapted from classic masterpieces and popular novels, but also a large number of audio works adapted from online literary intellectual property with strong fan-following ability. Currently, relying on specialized production operations and the influence of the original writers and performers, audiobooks have achieved greater listening efficiency.

Although today's audio book broadcast market is booming, but there is a mixture of good and bad, the problem of crude production, audio book broadcast evaluation system is imminent. Zeng Zhihua, a professor at Communication University of China, and Lu Bin, an associate professor at Communication University of Zhejiang, have proposed in their paper *Research on the Construction of Evaluation System for Audio Book Broadcasting in China* that the evaluation indexes for audio book broadcasting should be divided into two levels. Level 1 indicators are divided into four dimensions: value dimension, normative dimension, aesthetic dimension and impact dimension, which are subdivided into level 2 indicators under the level 1 indicators. The value dimension is subdivided into the ideological, intellectual, and artistic aspects of the work; the normative dimension is subdivided into the sound and voice of the work, the flow and emotion, and the correct pre-microphone state; The aesthetic dimension is subdivided into the work's semantics and emotion, style and grace; the impact dimension judges the work's hits, listenership, and broadcast reputation.<sup>[1]</sup> Through the establishment of audio book broadcast evaluation indexes, the evaluation of audio book broadcast works can be more comprehensive, guiding the audio book broadcast towards a more standardised and professional direction.

This study takes *The Life: The Sea*, a broadcast led by dubbing artists Wang Mingjun and Yan Jixuan, as its object of study. The novel unfolds in the first person from a child's point of view. There is a mysterious man in the village, whom the village people call "Captain", but behind his back they call him "Eunuch". Some say he was a captain of the Communist Party, the place where the man was blown up by the enemy, others say he was a Kuomintang agent, and still others say he was actually a traitorous lackey of the Japs. Captain's life story is always talked about in the village, and I am also curious about Captain's story. In the intertwining of stories told by the Captain, stories related to him by others, and stories about him told by others, I sketch the life of the Captain as he travelled and struggled through the ages. The title of the book "The Life: The Sea" is taken from the Minnan dialect, which means that life is as unpredictable as the sea, with ups and downs, but one must always live well. Mai Jia paraphrases the term, "Since everyone can't run away and escape, they might as well fall in love with life." The story of *The Life: The Sea* actually stems from a small incident in Mai Jia's childhood. That year, Mai Jia was still only 11 years old. One afternoon, when he was working with his classmates in the production team, he saw from a distance an old man who was picking manure and who looked very down and out. An older classmate told Mai Jia, "Don't look at that man's life now, but he actually went to war. And, he was wounded in the most important place for a man to be while fighting." This man has been living inside Mai Jia's mind, and years later, Mai Jia finally wrote him into a novel.<sup>[2]</sup> Mai Jia extends the novel's setting from the Anti-Japanese War to the new era of reform and opening up, running through the youth and middle age of the Captain until his death, telling the story of the Captain's tumultuous and tragic life. The novel has a large number of associated characters, more dialogue, a large time span, and a strong sense of drama, so it uses a broadcast method with multiple people in different roles. Based on the novel, it was established that the tone of the broadcast of *The Life: The Sea* should be one of deeper sadness as Captain's life story unfolds.

### 3. The character of the language broadcast skills strategy

Character-based language serves to portray characters, explain the plot, and advance the storyline. The key to character-based language broadcast is to understand the characters in the play and to be able

to make a unique sound design that fits the character. Broadcast by mobilising the voice of the internal skills and external skills to shape the character's voice image, including the voice of the internal skills (contextual reproduction, object sense, internal language) and external skills (stress, stop, tone, rhythm).<sup>[3]</sup> In addition to this, sound shaping involves the use of variations in pitch, intensity, timbre and volume to achieve different sound effects.

### **3.1. Highlighting the outward appearance of a character**

Characterisation in audiobooks occupies an important position in the novels, being an important object of depiction in the work and the main embodiment of the theme. When the characters in the broadcast in the mind of the broadcast more three-dimensional objective existence, the broadcast will be able to better grasp the characters, broadcast shape. The first thing to do is to determine the gender, age, and range of voice; the second thing to do is to make a detailed portrayal of the character's voice, to distill the direct descriptions of the character's voice, language, and intonation in the novel, or to speculate on the character's voice from the details of the character's temperament, social relations, appearance, habits, and literacy level.

The main characters in *The Life: The Sea* are Grandfather, Captain, Father, Little Blind and Old Long. Although there is a variety of personality traits, each person has a main characteristic, and the broadcaster should be good at discovering the main characteristics of the character and using appropriate adjectives to describe them. Then according to their own brain stored in the image of the character to correspond to the character visualisation of the imagination, broadcast to shape the character will be more at ease, the heart has the Lord. Grandfather is the first character to appear in *The Life: The Sea*, he is a dignified and experienced old man who loves to talk a lot, so his voice image is muffled and hoarse with some lecturing. The voice of Grandfather is dubbed by national actor Yan Yansheng, who makes his voice lower in pitch, weaker in intensity, and more muddy in tone to fit the voice of Grandfather; Father is a middle-aged man, usually quiet but hot-tempered, who is a close friend of the Colonel, a brotherly friend. Famous voice actor Peng Yao plays Father, and he makes his voice lower in pitch, stronger in intensity, and more eloquent in tone; Old Long and Grandfather are about the same age, but their personalities are very different. Grandfather is a man who loves to talk a lot of sense, while Old Long is an old rascal who indulges in smoking, drinking and sex. The sound image of Old Long is more obvious, and the sound artist Zhou Yan has made a great distinction between his voice and that of Grandfather, with his voice sounding like a smile but not a smile, and like a drunk but not a drunk. Captain is a man of integrity and wisdom, who has practised medicine and fought in the battlefield, but also has an unspeakable past. Famous voice actor Zhao Mingzhou plays the role of Captain, portraying his voice in a resonant yet melancholic manner; Little Blind is a junior high school student who has been a bad boy since he was a child, and who once criticised and tortured the Colonel, eventually driving him mad. Blind audiobook star Li Rongzhen plays Little Blind, whose voice image has a higher pitch, stronger tone and a more childlike timbre.

### **3.2. Expression of a character's inner temperament**

The inner temperament of the character is deeper compared to the outer image of the character, and it is necessary to express the character's voice, behaviour, and emotions through details, thus reflecting the inner temperament of the character. In *The Life: The Sea* audiobook, the broadcaster gets close to the character, enters into the character and ultimately performs the character, experiencing the character's sweetness and sourness, and internalising the character's experience. When Little Blind forces the Captain to pull down his trousers to see his tattoo, the Captain, in a fit of rage, cuts out Little Blind's tongue and picks out Little Blind's tendons. The Captain runs to his father's house, not knowing what to do. The narrator says, "He seemed as if he would not cry and as if he did not dare to cry, refused to cry, and cried a lot", which describes the Colonel's panicked appearance from a child's point of view, and the Colonel is a man who has been to war before and has never cried, so he is said to be "unable to cry". And just nearly killed a child, but also a criminal offence, afraid of alarming the villagers things exposed, so the Captain "dare not cry", but also want to calm their own moods, to restore calm and rationality and "refused to cry". Through this line of narration, the image of the Captain becomes more tangible and profound, and the listener is able to experience the inner temperament of the Captain, which is tough and self-respecting, through this line of narration. The actor's breath in the broadcast is relatively smooth, and his voice is more real than imaginary, with a lighter tone and a slightly faster speed of speech, showing how "I", as a small child, was puzzled and confused when I saw the emotional breakdown of the usually calm and steady Colonel.

### **3.3. Focus on the naturalness of the character's voice**

Auditory reading is different from visual reading, which is immediate and fleeting. Therefore, when adapting novels into audiobooks, it is necessary to grasp the audience's auditory laws, convert complex and obscure texts into simple language without ambiguity and easy to accept, so as to reduce the cost of auditory comprehension and acceptance of the audience; and convert written language into spoken language. For example, the third person "he", "she" and "it" in the play are replaced by their respective titles, so that the audience is clear about the object of the action.

Broadcasters often add non-verbal expression sounds to their broadcasts to enhance the naturalness of the character's voice. non-verbal expression sounds include crying, laughing, coughing, and various breaths, among others.<sup>[4]</sup> The audio book *The Life: The Sea* uses many non-verbal expression sounds to enhance the characters' emotions. For example, Old Long's laugh appears fifteen times in the audiobook, and each time it has a different meaning: when Grandfather scolds Old Long for saying dirty words in front of the children, "Old Long hee hee laughs", showing Old Long's weakness and embarrassment; when Grandfather scolds Old Long for saying dirty words in front of the children, "Old Long hee hee laughs", showing Old Long's weakness and embarrassment; and when Grandfather scolds Old Long for saying dirty words in front of the children, Old Long laughs. Old Long is embarrassed and weak; When the cross-footed man said that Little Blind, who had his tongue cut out, could speak with his feet, "Old Long laughed as if he had been pulled out of his armpit and couldn't stand it", showing that he thought the story was false and absurd; "Old Long sneered at him in a gloomy manner", showing his contempt for the Colonel's behaviour after his concubine was slept with by the Colonel. Old Long sneered at him in a weird way", showing his contempt for the Colonel's behaviour after his concubine was slept with by the Colonel. These non-verbal expression sounds are essential to the broadcast of an audio book. The broadcasters experience the meaning of these non-verbal expression sounds according to the context and use the method of scene reproduction to perform them.

## **4. Skill Strategies for Narrative Language Broadcasting**

In a broadcast, except for the characters' own lines, all other words belong to the narrative language, that is, the narrator. Narrative language can play a role in describing the setting, explain the plot, and render the atmosphere, and it is an integral part of the novel more than anything else. Narrative language can also account for spatial settings, characterization and background knowledge.

### **4.1. Create an immersive screen space**

Meticulous tracing, combining the narrative language with his own understanding of it, creating a second generation, and delivering the world depicted in the book to the audience through the audible language. The only way to bring the listener into the world of the novel is to present it clearly and completely. The broadcasters have to present the scene with distance and layer through the changes of reality, height, light and darkness of the sound. In addition, the broadcasters have to grasp the movement of the camera, recognize the grouping method of the picture, and present the movement of the camera with broadcast skills. With the inner image of the text in mind, it is possible to broadcast a sense of the picture, which in turn assists the audience in imagining the space of the picture.<sup>[5]</sup> The first episode of *The Life: The Sea* opens with a seven-minute voice-over that takes us from the hills outside the village to the main stage of the novel, the village of Shuangjia. It also introduces the centre of the village, the ancestral hall, and uses not only spatial but also temporal descriptions, from Shuangjia Village in summer to Shuangjia Village in winter, and the narrator, together with a pleasant soundtrack and sound effects such as the river and birdsong, shapes an old-fashioned Jiangnan mountain village with green hills and green tiles, densely-packed houses and people, and a simple and unadorned atmosphere.

### **4.2. Define the logic and rhythm of the script**

In fictional broadcasting, rhythm is the skeleton, the ebb and flow of emotion is the core of the art, and changes in tempo propel shifts in mood.<sup>[4]</sup> There are six types of rhythms, which are low, light, soothing, tense, staccato, and high-pitched. After "I" first witnessed the Captain save the life of Jesus, the image of the Captain in "my" mind changed from a eunuch to a great hero, and the pace of the narration here is of the soothing type. "That night was the first time I saw the Captain's eyes, and sure enough they were bright, brighter than the white moonlight, not at all like broken ghosts, but like a hero

" Intonation much elevated, voice much lighter, breath unimpeded, voice clear and light, flow of speech stretching. The voice-over describing the Captain's battle scene is a tense rhythm: "In the last battle, the ghosts broke a new road from the side of the position and attacked upwards, at this time, the ghosts still had a tank, behind the tank, the heads of the people were overwhelmed." The intonation is more raised and lowered, the voice is multiple and less light, the tone is strong and short, and the flow of speech is faster.

#### **4.3. Describing the details of the story and the white space**

The anagrams, voice-overs, and soundtracks restore the plot of the novel, adding a great deal of detail to scenes not mentioned in the text and filling the space.<sup>[6]</sup> From the time my father calls me to go out to buy cigarettes, there is a voiceover of cows and sheep in the background, and when "I" pass by the Captain's house, the background voiceover changes to a cacophony of birdsong and streams, hinting at the change of scene. "I" have gone out, and the background music quietly switches to the sound of footsteps walking and watering in the vegetable patch when talking about the Captain's father watering the vegetables. At the end of each episode of an audio work, there is often white space, bit for the listener to leave a wide range of imagination, leaving suspense, prompting the audience to listen to unravelling the suspense.

### **5. Conclusions**

The study explores the direction of audio book broadcasting in terms of the technical aspects of the "broadcast creation method". Divide broadcasting skills into two areas: character-based language and narrative language. This paper puts forward the requirements for the language of two kinds of audio broadcast: character language should highlight the external image of the character, express the inner temperament of the character, and pay attention to the naturalness of the character's voice; and narrative language should create a sense of immersion in the picture space, make clear the logic and rhythm of the script, and depict the details of the story and the white space. In view of these requirements, audiobook performers should continuously strengthen their professional ability, draw on the experience of the great masters of the art of broadcasting, and gradually form a more perfect evaluation system for audiobook broadcasting, so as to promote the continuous improvement of audiobook broadcasting ability.

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