

# Audible Language Arts Creators' Development Paths in Oral History

**Zhang Lanxin**

Yangtze Normal University, Fuling, China  
Zlxzlx0701@163.com

**Abstract:** *The process of creating an oral history is narrated by the mouth, listened to by the ear, and finally recorded. Although the threshold of oral history is not high, the process of creating oral history can make better use of the art of audible language and can record a piece of richer and more comprehensive humanistic information. The art of the spoken word is mainly used in two ways in the field of oral history: on the one hand, it is used by the interviewer when communicating with the subject, and on the other hand, it is used in the re-creation and presentation of the oral content. The growth path of creators of audio language arts in oral history is also diversified, which can be cultivated by selecting outstanding talents with language quality in the discipline of oral history, selecting qualified interviewers from the existing professionals with various disciplinary backgrounds, and cultivating talents with oral history preferences from the broadcasting and hosting arts majors.*

**Keywords:** *oral history; audible language; broadcasting and hosting art*

## 1. Introduction

From "oral narration" to "oral history", it can be said that the oldest way to tell history is oral history, and the specific interpretation of "oral history" here is the interviewer to the interviewee through oral interviews to record those things that happened in the past. Audible language art can be understood as language art that can be vocalized, then the application of audible language art in oral history can be divided into two aspects: the audible language art when communicating with the research subjects (interviewees) in oral interviews and the audible language art when the "oral content" is created and presented again.

If each record of oral history is compared to a star, then the scope and direction of oral history research can be seen as a vast and infinite universe. So too, the study of oral history is not specific to a particular discipline or a particular period of history; the scope and direction of documentary research is very broad. Therefore, it is worthwhile to analyze the growth path of the creators of oral history of Audible Language Arts in the process of oral history research in different directions and different disciplines, so that those who have experienced the history can describe the past more vividly, comprehensively, and completely in oral language.

## 2. Implications for the Study of Audible Language Arts in Oral History

Oral history as a discipline was born in the United States in the 1930s, and in the process of development, it has been continuously improved to become a modern historical collection method with unique significance and has been widely utilized in sociology, ethnography, catastrophe, journalism, and other social disciplines, as well as in the field of nature and to promote interdisciplinary research.<sup>[1]</sup> China began to treat oral history as an important direction of academic research in the 1980s, and to this day, academic research related to oral history is not only limited to written records but even presented through audio and video recording with the development of technology. For example, Chen Mo of the China Film Archive Research Institute, who edited the 30 volumes of "Oral History of Chinese Films", had previously completed oral interviews with more than 100 Chinese filmmakers and their relatives; director Yan Dong summarized the video and image materials into an oral history documentary "A Hundred Years of Xiaoping" through the oral interviews of 105 people who had real contact with Deng Xiaoping in the history; In the discipline of broadcasting, for example, Prof. Zeng Zhihua from the Communication University of China hosted the "Oral History of Chinese Broadcasting Artists" project. As of October 2021, nearly forty broadcasters have been interviewed, with a cumulative length of 4,255 minutes of

video (audio) interviews, and 942,997 words of oral history interviews have been compiled.<sup>[2]</sup>

Oral history plays an important role not only in the recording of "great men" or the transmission and development of disciplines but also for "ordinary" individuals in the context of their times. The process of oral history is the process of the interviewer's exploration and documentation of the individual memories of those who were physically present in history. The process of oral history is the process of the interviewer's exploration and documentation of the individual memories of those who were physically present in history. Different individuals have different times, regions, social classes, lifestyles, and many other differences, but these individual memories become what we often call public memories after a certain amount of integration according to a specific theme and direction, and these valuable and wide-ranging public memories can not only become humanistic data but also fill in the blanks of the individual records under the background of the traditional historical macroscopic narratives in a more realistic way.

Paul Thompson once mentioned in his book "Voices of the Past - Oral History" that "they don't need to learn their history, they just need to write it out", so the threshold of oral history is low and easy to operate, in other words, everyone can try oral history.<sup>[3]</sup> If the study of oral history is the method, then the artistic use of audible language is the tool that enables the method to be used more fully and efficiently. Therefore, when the creators of the art of audio language can use the art of audio language to guide and communicate so that these historical in-person witnesses can be willing to speak in a comfortable communication context, speak happily, and speak more valuable content, I believe that the recording of individual memories in oral history will also be more rich, thorough and objective.

### **3. Audible Language Arts in Oral History Applications**

#### **3.1. Communication in dialog with research subjects**

Oral history research is naturally interdisciplinary, so the interviewing and communication skills of journalism are naturally indispensable in oral history interviews. Oral history interviews are professional or at least semi-professional interviews, which are not unlike everyday conversations in life, and require specific themes, plans, interview objectives, specific interview outlines, professional sensitivity in the interviewing profession, and other such qualities and techniques.<sup>[4]</sup> Of course, here the emphasis on the dialogue and communication with the research subject refers to the main oral history interviews and oral history interviews before the use of the arts of the art of the audible language involved in the interview. The oral history interview process can also be divided into pre-interview, interviews, and interviews during the three processes.

The use of audio language arts in pre-interviews focuses on how to get oral history subjects to "want to talk". For example, in the oral history documentary "22", director Guo Ke's interview process with the surviving comfort women at the time was not just a digging for relevant information and questioning at the bottom of the matter, but a way of standing in a true and objective position to slowly wait and listen to the stories of these old people. Even one of the interviewees said bluntly that "I did not tell the truth to those reporters who came to interview me in the past, and every time they asked these questions, they did so in front of my daughter-in-law and granddaughter, so how could I say it". A grain of sand is sometimes heavier than a mountain when it is carried on the body of an individual who has personally experienced and felt history, which is why Bertrand Bertrand, an Italian oralist, has argued that "the really important thing in remembrance is not the passive collection of facts, but the active process of creating their meaning."<sup>[5]</sup> We cannot deny that for oral history interviews, the acquisition of effective information is of course very important, but oral history is not only about recreating history but also about the humanistic care of the interviewees.

The use of the art of the spoken word is not only about making the respondent "want to speak", but also about making the group "speak well" through the guidance of the art of the spoken word. In the context of how to make interviewees feel that their value is valued and that their privacy is not violated in the oral interview process, it is necessary to use the art of audible language appropriately and reasonably. For example, before conducting oral interviews, it is necessary to collect and organize information on relevant topics as well as the personalities, preferences, and even avoidance of topics or taboo habits of the interviewees to do sufficient research, and in the process of oral history, interviews should be based on the character of different interviewees to formulate the corresponding interview program. For the shy and inarticulate interviewees, what should be done before the oral interview is to narrow the psychological distance between them; for the interviewees who have a strong desire to express themselves in words, the interviewer should do more to let such people be guided back to the direction

of the original theme of the oral history silently without being offended.

### ***3.2. When "oral content" is created and presented again***

The means of dissemination of oral history content are rich and diverse, as American oralist Donald Richie, for example, has listed books, videotapes, films, museums and multimedia exhibitions, audio tours, radio programs, and many other ways in which oral history works are disseminated. The scope of the re-creation and presentation of "oral content" in the audible language arts referred to here is naturally that which is created and disseminated through sound or audio-visual language, such as sound recordings, documentaries, and radio programs. The re-creation and processing of audible language art are more advantageous than textual art in the presentation of the original oral history, because the interviewees' audible language output is usually a spoken expression, but the text often has to go through the process of written presentation, which is prone to misinterpretation of the original intention of the interviewees and is subject to controversy. Therefore, the creators of audible language art in the "oral content" again in the creation of audible language art, as long as ensure objectivity and impartiality of the position of such a basic condition, can be tedious and lengthy audible language oral interviews relatively direct in the creation of audible language art processing and thematic ideas cohesion.

The re-creation of "oral content" is important in terms of the artistic processing of the spoken language, but also in terms of the angle of presentation in the re-creation. The creators of audio-visual arts have the right to decide the final direction and form of expression of their works. The final value-enhancing direction of the content of the work can be chosen either horizontally to broaden the breadth of knowledge, or vertically to stretch life and enhance the depth of cognition. Whatever perspective the oral history ultimately presents, it is understandable as long as the content of its oral interviews supports the themes presented in its oral content. Having clarified the actual field of application of audio-visual arts in oral history, the growth path of the creators of audio-visual arts in oral history is also more traceable.

## **4. Paths of Growth for Creators of Audible Language Arts in Oral History**

### ***4.1. Selection of linguistic quality excellence training in the discipline of oral history***

Oral history itself is a new method and path extended through the lens of historiography, which, as a tool for historical research, was initially intended only to find and collect and organize the other side of history to make up for the inadequacies of the original historical records, and in the process to provide more details and close-ups for the binding of historical records. In contrast to the concepts and principles of traditional historical research through a more macro-collective lens, oral history fills in or adds to the untold or forgotten histories of the past in the discipline of history from the perspective of a more microcosmic, individualized, and democratic individual. The discipline of oral history has gone through many scientific and rigorous discussions in the process of transforming from pure oral memory into a specialized field of oral history. For example, in the distinction between oral history research and historiography, oral history is more about the integration of individual memory information from a micro perspective. Still, historiography is more about the study of the collective memory of human groups from a macro perspective. Research in the discipline of oral history has also clearly pointed out that the individual memories expressed by the interviewees in the audible language sometimes do not represent the absolute truth, and even the phenomenon of "Rashomon" of oral history has appeared, such as the emergence of imaginative mixing, memory damage, perspective bias, emotional impact, positional limitations, social psychology, cultural values, public opinion, and many other risks. There are many risks, such as the risk of imaginative distortion, memory bias, emotional influence, positional limitations, social psychology, cultural values, public opinion, hindsight, etc.<sup>[6]</sup>

From this, we can see that if we can select talents with excellent linguistic quality in the discipline of oral history and train them in the art of vocal expression, then interviewers with background knowledge of the discipline of oral history and the ability to express themselves in the art of audible expression will be more able to grasp the flexibility of switching between the perspectives of individual and collective memories in the process of oral history interviews and summarize the development of the macroscopic vein of the historical era.

#### ***4.2. Qualified interviewers were selected from a pool of available professionals from various disciplinary backgrounds***

While oral history itself, through the channeled history of audible language, allows modern people to speak to the past across the distance of time, the discipline of oral history is naturally characterized by strong interdisciplinary expertise. Because the oral history record itself is not the piecemeal input of a completely aimless running diary, often the interviewer will also have an initial direction for the oral history record before beginning a segment. For example, even for the same group of respondents being interviewed by people from different disciplinary professional backgrounds. If a person in the field of literature chooses to record oral history, his presentation is often more exquisite and deep; if a person in the field of medicine chooses to record oral history, then the presentation must be more able to dig out the breadth and depth of the medical-related historical materials; that is to say, in the research of oral history in different disciplinary fields of specialization, it will present a different focus and style of oral history recording. In other words, oral history research in different disciplinary specialties will present different focuses and styles of oral history recording. Especially in the construction of oral histories of some professional disciplines, oral history creators with professional backgrounds are better able to grasp the focus of the oral history materials of the relevant disciplines and to achieve the "depth and depth" of the output of the oral interviews.

And any emerging discipline is pioneered by those who are interested and capable of exploring new areas. Zhong Shaohua, a Chinese oralist, even once said, "When the person who utilizes oral history materials applies them to the examination or description of history, it belongs to oral history; when he applies them to the description of interpersonal groups in society, it belongs to oral sociology; when he applies them to the description of clan relations within the ethnical family, it belongs to oral anthropology or oral ethnology; when he applies them to the description of human beliefs and emotions, it is oral religion; when it is applied to literary works, it is oral literature; when it is applied to current news, it is oral journalism; when it is applied to the courtroom, it is oral evidence, and so on."<sup>[7]</sup> It can be deduced from this that the selection of oral history interviewers in the existing various disciplines to select people who can communicate with the subject and can flexibly utilize the art of audible language to conduct oral history interviews is not only conducive to the expansion of oral history but also conducive to the interdisciplinary field of exchanges and broadening.

#### ***4.3. Cultivating Talent with Oral History Preferences from Broadcasting and Hosting Arts Programs***

Broadcasting and hosting arts majors, as a profession specializing in the study of audible language arts, can likewise provide a steady stream of creative talents in audible language arts for oral history. For example, there are many similarities between the field of oral history and journalism in the use of audible language arts. For example, in oral history interviews and news interviews, the roles of the characters are similar, and both can be positioned through the active "interviewer" and passive "interviewee" to carry out social roles; and both oral history interviews and news interviews are similar in the means of obtaining information through a complete and comprehensive process of collecting and organizing information in the early stage and faithfully recording in the later stage; and for oral history interviewers and news interviewers in the professional ethics of the interviewer. The means of obtaining information are similar in that they require a complete and comprehensive process of collecting and organizing information in the early stage, face-to-face interviews in the middle stage, and faithful recording in the later stage; and the requirements for oral history interviewers and news interviewers in terms of professional ethics and morality are also highly similar, both of them need to respect the personal choices of the interviewees, and to protect the interviewees from infringement of their privacy and interests.<sup>[8]</sup> So in terms of the oral history interview and news interview production process, there is potential for those in the broadcasting and hosting arts program, especially those who come from a journalistic background, to develop a career in the discipline of oral history.

On the other hand, the broadcasting and hosting arts program has the same natural advantage in the artistic expression of the audible language. In the broadcasting and hosting art discipline talent art selection examination, in addition to focusing on the language expression process focusing on the balance of emotion and language as well as the use of audible language skills, at the same time will be broadcasting and hosting art students to put forward the ability to communicate ability, empathy, logical thinking ability, and other ability requirements. Therefore, talents with oral history preferences can be selected from broadcasting and hosting arts majors for training. Not only can we achieve a certain balance between the depth and breadth of the content of oral history interviews, but we can also take care of the heart of the oral interviewee to bring them a warm and emotional interview feeling.

## 5. Conclusions

While the process of oral history creation stems from the traditional process of recording by word of mouth is itself a method and tool for oral history research. However, better use of the art of the spoken word in the creation of oral histories can result in a richer and more comprehensive record of the human condition, which means that the tool can be used more satisfactorily." To do a good job, we must first sharpen our tools," so existing oral history creators should pay more attention and attention to the field of oral history in the audible language in the dialogue and communication with the object of study and in the oral content of the re-creation of the presentation of these two aspects. Therefore, the road to the development of oral history for creators of audible language arts is bright, and the channels of growth are diversified, but at the same time, this road to growth is also faced with challenges in many aspects, and only through continuous exploration and experimentation can we find the final answer to oral history in practice.

## References

- [1] Yang Xiangyin.(2011).*Basic theories of oral history and contemporary American oral history*. Ding Yizhuang & Wang Run(Ed.), *Reading in History: Oral History*(pp.50). Peking University Press.
- [2] Zeng Zhihua.(2022).*Values in flux: Ruminations on the cultural memory of oral histories of performing artists*. *Research on Host Communication in China*(01),6-9.
- [3] Thompson,P.(2000).*The voice the past: Oral history*. Liaoning: Oxford University Press.
- [4] Chen Mo.(2015).*Oral history research: A multidisciplinary rerspective*. Beijing:People's Publishing House.
- [5] Song Yuting & Liu Yongning.(2018).*The narrative perspective of Guo Ke's documentary in the perspective of film and television anthropology: Evolution and significance from Thirty-Two to Twenty-Two*. *Movie Literature* (23),115-117.
- [6] Chen Mo.(2011).*The riddle of historiography: Authenticity,oral history and teller*. *Contemporary Cinema*(03),96-103.
- [7] Zhong Shaohua.(2004).*Calling for Chinese oral history to take off*. Wang Junyi & Ding Dong(Ed.), *Oral History* (2nd series, pp. 268-289). China Social Sciences Press.
- [8] Jiang Lei. (2011). *Similarities and differences between oral history interviews and news Interviews*. *Shanghai Journalism Review* (09), 74-78.