



Recording with the portable recorder

(from RAWIK Radio Aus- und Weiterbildung im Interkulturellen Kontext)

Many show elements are pre-produced. For this purpose, we need recordings (original sound, noises, music or self-developed text elements) which we work on with audio editing software to prepare an appealing item. Pre-produced items are then incorporated into the live show.

Naturally, it is also possible to pre-produce the whole show.

For a good recording, it is essential to know the microphone and recorder well and to be able to operate them faultlessly. The right recording volume must be tried out well ahead and must be constantly checked during the recording. If the recording volume is too low, noise arises when the recording is brought to the right volume, which usually means that the recording cannot be broadcast. If the recording volume is too high, the recording sounds distorted – it is "overdriven".

The optimal recording level is between minus three and zero decibels. Anything over zero is distorted and thus unusable. However, when recording, we should not just rely on our eyes: if the volume level is correct, that still says nothing about the sound quality or possible disturbing noises. We only notice these if we wear headphones when recording. By the way, every room sounds different too. Headphones make us more aware of this as well.

An interview is only a good radio interview if the sound quality is right. Attention must be paid to this when recording. Not even the best computer program can turn a poor recording into a good one!

Checklist for good recordings

Before the interview:

- Check the gear: is everything there? (Microphone, cables, batteries / power adapter, headphones, enough room on the sound carrier / memory card).
- Practice using it once again (connecting microphone and headphones, handling the microphone, changing batteries).
- Make a test recording and listen to it: do the microphone and headphones work?
- Check the sound quality: how does the microphone sound? What is the optimal distance from the interviewee? Is much background noise picked up?
- Every microphone is different!
- Pay attention to background noise and disturbing sounds, e.g. humming computers or buzzing neon lights. Position yourself with your back to disturbing noises.

During the interview:

- It is essential to wear headphones.
- It is essential to use a microphone wind shield. This is a sheath made of fabric or

- synthetic material, which dampens sibilant sounds or pop sounds (p, t, k, sh) and wind noise.
- Always bring the microphone as close as possible to the sound source. During the interview, it should be one hand's width away from the mouth of the person talking.
- Never hand over the microphone: in this way, cable noises can be avoided and the interviewer retains control of the situation.
- When moving the microphone between interviewer and interviewee, make sure that both voices are at about the same volume; otherwise adjust the distance between microphone and mouth.
- Do not make any unnecessary background noise (such as an approving "yes" or "uhhuh").
- Hold the microphone in front of the interviewee's mouth until they have finished their answer.