

Original Research Article

Cultural Empathy Embodied in Short Video Communication in Intercultural Context*Jiaqi Wang¹, Guo Junyu²**1 Communication University of Zhejiang, Hangzhou Zhejiang, China**2 Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo, Japan*

Abstract: In the digital age, short videos have become a dominant medium, seamlessly integrating technology and culture to facilitate communication across diverse cultural backgrounds. The article explores the role of short video communication in fostering cultural empathy within intercultural contexts. In the same time, the paper discusses how short videos, with their visual and auditory appeal, can evoke emotions and foster empathy, which is crucial for cross-cultural understanding. The diversity of content creators and subjects in short video platforms allows for a rich exchange of cultural symbols, bridging cultural differences and promoting mutual understanding. The article also highlights the importance of storytelling in short videos, emphasizing its ability to create immersive experiences that resonate emotionally with audiences across different cultures. The use of short videos in cross-cultural communication is seen as a means to overcome cultural barriers, enabling a more inclusive and empathetic global dialogue. The conclusion suggests that while there are challenges in balancing technology and culture, short videos hold significant potential in promoting cultural exchange and empathy in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Short videos; Technology; Cultural; Empathy

1. Introduction

In the era of new media, the development of technology provides a lot of convenience for the innovation and dissemination of culture. Short video is the most widely used in every field. The emergence of the dominant media provides a new possibility for the integrated situation of technology and culture. In other words, "Communication is a important cultural pattern. Culture cannot inherited and continued without communication. Short videos realize the communication function of technology "with cultural people", such as new media and mobile. The Internet has been reconstructing the current communication situation and short videos can well present the cultural tension in such a cultural environment. In mobile social networks, short videos meet the demand for more intuitive and accessible communication, efficiently aggregating multiple symbolic meanings. These videos are embedded with cultural symbols, allowing various symbols to flow between different cultures, enabling mutual exchange and understanding through symbolic activities that transcend cultural meta-languages.

The concept of empathy, originally from psychology, refers to an individual's ability to accurately understand and respond to the emotions of others in specific situations. People develop empathy based on shared experiences and emotional connections. Driven by this empathy, individuals may engage in altruistic and prosocial behaviors. From the perspective of external cultural communication, empathy reflects a kind of inter-subjectivity, which is an important factor for people from different cultural backgrounds to establish a good communication relationship with each other, and is also an effective means to reduce the phenomenon of "cultural discount". With the development of Internet technology, people have moved from the era of reading text to the era of reading pictures. As a medium that synthesizes both visual and auditory information, short videos have

unique advantages in evoking emotion and fostering empathy.

2. Short video empathy communication characteristics and experience.

2.1. Subject: The Diversity and Concealment of Social Power

The development of social media platforms has led to a decentralization of discourse rights in external communication and expanded the scope of cross-cultural communication subjects. From a main perspective: The main body of cross-cultural communication can be divided into national forces and social forces. The former shapes national image through official diplomacy and public diplomacy and lays the fundamental policy and tone for external communication, while the latter mainly consists of media companies, cultural organizations, social institutions and individuals, which are relatively complex and diversified.

Among these social forces, there are Chinese internet celebrities who have gained international fame and expatriates living abroad. Their life experiences and careers are also very different. The diversity of communication subjects determines the diversity of communication content. The most prominent fields include traditional culture, food, conversation, film and television, education and lifestyle etc. The communication in these fields shows the characteristics of vertical segmentation of multiple fields to meet the curiosity and viewing needs of the focus group.

“There are three ways to empower new media: self-empowerment, group empowerment and organizational empowerment. It’s all about self-empowerment.” Self-empowerment means that individuals have greater freedom of expression in the era of new media and can establish their communication status. The idea that “Everyone is the director of life” has become the characteristics of the main group of short video creation, which will definitely promote the dissemination of the “sense of place” image based on “individual experiences”.

2.2. Content: Cultural Proximity and Cultural Difference Symbiosis

Culture is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In the context of cross-cultural communication, short video not only reflect cultural proximity but also has a unique eastern color, and the differences and consensus coexist in China. Due to variations in social systems, national policies, living customs and language thinking, there will inevitably be obstacles such as stereotypes and cultural gaps in the spread of Chinese culture in the western cultural background, and the audiences tend to accept elements similar to their own cultures.

The cultural environments of nation-states is bound to be different due to their different historical processes and ideologies. The symbolic meaning of different national cultures depends on their unique living customs, psychological set-point and way of thinking. Cross-cultural communication provides a new way of thinking for the meaning communication of different cultures: IT can “start from the other”, make a contextual understanding of other cultures, reveal the hidden conflicts between cultures, and establish movement in the connection of cultures

The interaction mechanism of states, etc. In the practice of cross-cultural communication, symbolic narrative is based on the common explanatory terms to grasp the common meaning, and then tends to construct homogenous symbols in the symbolic interaction with other cultures to present them in the communication

Cultural proximity, as a “stepping stone”, establishes a connection with the audience, on which the cultural difference is based, and transmits the unique and unique Chinese culture to the audience. Looking at the top 10 Chinese channels on the YouTube platform, more than half of the creators are based on Chinese food. Food without borders, in order to “feed” as connection through the Chinese and foreign, weaken the international

spread of resistance and cultural barriers, at the same time, Chinese cuisine in thousands of years history in the Chinese culture, complete harmony such as throttle, customs, music, etc., a western audience in understanding of Chinese cuisine at the same time, also subtly accepted related to Chinese culture.

2.3. Form: From Cross-cultural Communication to International Communication.

Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication and interaction between individuals, groups, nations, countries, regions and other units under different cultural backgrounds. It can be divided into interpersonal communication and international communication in terms of transmission and transmission scale. In the broad sense, cross-cultural communication includes international communication. However, the emphasis and extension of cross-cultural communication and international communication are different. Cross-cultural communication attaches importance to culture, while international communication focuses on the country. Although there are overlaps in the extension of culture and country, they are quite different.

2.4. The Identification and Maintenance of the Emotional Dimension of Traditional Culture by Short Video.

Emotion is the reaction caused by the completion of certain cognitive information processing. Emotion reaction includes like or dislike evaluation, pleasant or unpleasant experience, etc. Plum and pure short video with vivid images and objectively to tell their life stories, without any emotional colour, but it can arouse the audience from different countries in the process of spreading the intense emotional resonance and love of Chinese culture, in the final analysis is that her video is based on the daily life of ordinary people's point of view about life in the countryside the story, This is the kind of story that most evokes similar emotional experiences among ordinary people living in different countries and regions.

Short video adopts "contextualized narration", which is the natural result of media practice. "Contextualized narrative" refers to the use of dramatic expression techniques to construct "plot" in the story space of short videos. In this fictional relationship, two points should be well grasped: one is the relationship between people and things in the real environment; The second is the "mimicry environment" reshaped by media technology, that is, the "story" presented by short video.

Some scholars believe that one of the reasons for cultural discount is the difference of different cultural cognitive reference frames. In the three options of deep value psychology, basic social attitude and specific social opinions, the more advanced, the more overlapping points of different cultures, and the more backward, the greater the difference. Therefore, pursuing the consistency of deep value goals and basic attitudes can better avoid cultural conflicts, and creating a space of agreement based on emotional resonance is the most appropriate way.

As one scholar noted, "The 'cohesiveness' of common emotion provides a potential emotional dynamic and a link for human groups to construct a community that transcends political and cultural boundaries." The nostalgia and longing for simplicity expressed in Li Ziqi's short videos tap into a collective memory shared by many people living in a fast-paced world.

3. Brief Analysis of Short Video Empathy Communication Strategy.

The arrival of globalization and the Internet have broken the traditional communication order, and one-way propaganda has been difficult to be effective. However, the exclusivity of culture makes different cultures maintain their own functions to resist the intrusion of foreign cultures. Therefore, "cross-cultural communication

is not only a one-way global integration of cultural movement, it actually contains the confrontation and interaction of globalization and regionalism, homogeneity and heterogeneity of two cultural forces.” In fact, different cultures have different positions in the world cultural system, which implies the existence of cultural hegemony.

3.1. Building a Platform for Multicultural Integration

Cultural partition exists objectively and is difficult to change. Any neighboring or similar nations and regions will choose to be close to each other due to psychological proximity. The collusion and alliance of cultural circles will only further prove and consolidate the legitimacy of “Matthew Effect”. Fortunately, the development of the Internet has opened a light for marginalized cultures to have a voice, and they can at least be seen and understood.

Short video has the advantage of more concrete expression than oral presentation, text, pictures and other presentation methods, which means that the signifier of the symbol has a deterministic existence and can be expressed in a more open space and time. Creative short videos are located in excellent traditional culture, so they can be drawn from rich cultural resources to get rid of the monotony and boredom. Creativity is not good or bad, and the free play of initiative and differentiated production strategies provide opportunities for the appearance of diverse cultures.

3.2. Create an “immersive” Story Experience

In the changing international environment and facing the incommensurable cultural estrangement, storytelling is a compromise and intelligent way, which has both real individual life experience and narrative logic based on a specific theme, which has the dual effect of emotional and rational guidance. Most of the outstanding works selected by the “Tell China Stories” International Creative Communication Competition, held since 2017, tell grand social changes and profound cultural connotations through small and micro perspectives.

The international practice of narrative paradigm has made great space for cultural dialogue. It attaches importance to cultural individuality and emphasizes the commonality based on differences, that is, “harmony without uniformity”. This is not only the ultimate appeal of telling a good story, but also an important way to tell a good story. To “tell” a good story, we should also tell a “good” story. To control the text, we should not only pay attention to the truth and credibility of the content, but also strive to achieve emotional resonance, and explore the exploitable factors in terms of identity substitution and identification.

At the same time, the diversity of story forms and various distribution channels are also important indicators to accurately spread stories to the “last kilometer”, which is an effective way to achieve cross-cultural empathy communication.

4. Conclusion

In the era of new media, short videos have emerged as a powerful tool for cross-cultural communication, blending technology and culture in unprecedented ways. The diversity of short video creators, ranging from individuals to media companies, has expanded the scope of cross-cultural communication, allowing for the dissemination of varied cultural content, including Chinese traditions. It also emphasizes the importance of storytelling in creating immersive and relatable content that resonates with global audiences. As a form of international communication, short videos offer a unique platform for integrating and expressing cultural

diversity, thereby playing a crucial role in the ongoing dialogue between civilizations.

In other words, short videos constantly enrich Chinese cultural symbols through three-dimensional and flexible multi-modal narration. Chinese culture is expanding beyond traditional symbols such as “panda” and “the Great Wall” to new symbols such as “high-speed train”, “square dance”, “emojis” and “common prosperity”.

The use of short videos to explore traditional culture and eliminate the spatial and temporal distance in history has a strong appeal to young people as the main audience of new media. Excellent traditional culture in the digital environment of short video got much more display.

To talk about cultural interaction in the context of “cross-cultural communication” requires a strong imagination, which requires us to think calmly and transform imaginative ideas into empathic and acceptable communicative rationality. Of course, in this process, there is still a long way to go to control the tension between technology and culture, make good use of the cumulative effect of creative short videos, and seek the greatest common divisor. How to tell the story well in short video platform,; How to ensure the continuous creative extension of short video should also be treated carefully.

In conclusion, short videos offer a dynamic platform for disseminating Chinese culture across different cultural contexts, bridging the gap between technology and culture to create new opportunities for intercultural communication. However, the relationship between technology and culture remains complex, requiring ongoing exploration to balance this tension and maximize the potential of short videos in telling cultural stories. I aim to refine storytelling techniques within short videos and investigate their long-term impact on cross-cultural understanding and empathy, while also focusing on how to sustain creative momentum in this evolving medium.

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