
Original Research Article**Podcasting as a subversive tool in international narrative building breaking stereotypes and shaping new discourses***Xiu Lin**Teachers College, Columbia University 525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027, USA*

Abstract: This article explores the role of podcasts as a subversive tool in the construction of the International Narrative. It analyzes the current situation and dilemmas of the International Narrative, and expounds on the unique advantages of podcasts, such as their distinctive communication characteristics, the freedom in content creation and expression, as well as strong audience interactivity. The article also lists practical cases of podcasts breaking stereotypes, as well as the ways and impacts of podcasts in shaping a New Discourse Framework.

Keywords: Podcast; International narrative; Stereotype; New discourse framework

1. Introduction

Traditional International Narratives are dominated by Western media and follow a Monolithic Discourse model. Through media such as television and newspapers, they shape the audience's perception. However, this has led to the prevalence of stereotypes, hindering understanding between countries and disrupting the cultural landscape and international relations.

This study focuses on the role of podcasts in the construction of the International Narrative, attempting to explore how they change the one-way mode of international communication and break stereotypes. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do the communication characteristics, freedom in content creation, and audience interactivity of podcasts affect the construction of the International Narrative?

RQ2: Through which specific themes and contents do podcasts in different countries and regions break stereotypes and reshape the International Narrative?

RQ3: What challenges and opportunities do podcasts face in constructing diversified International Narratives, and what is their future development trend?

This study analyzes the advantages and applications of podcasts, providing new ideas for international communication.

The Current Situation and Dilemmas of the International Narrative Construction

1.1. The dominant model and characteristics of traditional international narratives

For a long time, traditional International Narratives have been controlled by a few Western media, and their communication model is characterized by distinct one-wayness and centralization^[1]. Relying on their substantial resource advantages and global communication networks, Western mainstream media subtly integrate their values and ideologies into narrative contents such as news reports and cultural products and disseminate them widely to other parts of the world^[2]. Under this model, narratives often possess authority and guidance, to a certain extent shaping the cognitive framework of the global audience towards different countries and regions.

1.2. Stereotypes and drawbacks of the existing narrative system

In the current International Narrative system, stereotypes are widespread. In the depiction of Eastern countries, they are often overly simplified as mysterious and conservative images, completely ignoring the tremendous achievements these countries have made in the process of modernization and the diverse changes in society. Such stereotypes not only seriously distort the true images of countries but also greatly impede the mutual understanding and communication between different countries and cultures.

The drawbacks are also reflected in restricting the voice opportunities of emerging countries and niche cultures on the international stage, resulting in an imbalance in the global cultural landscape^[3]. In the discussion of international affairs, the narratives under stereotypes make it difficult for the legitimate demands of some countries to be treated fairly, having a negative impact on the fairness and harmonious development of international relations.

2. The unique advantages of podcasts as a subversive tool

2.1. The communication characteristics of podcasts

Podcasts have unique communication characteristics. According to Discourse Theory, traditional media are within the established discourse power structure, with a few large institutions controlling the communication discourse power and occupying a dominant position in International Narratives^[4]. However, podcasts have broken this power structure.

They break through the time and space limitations of traditional media. The audience can listen to programs anytime and anywhere through network devices. Whether on the way to work, during work breaks, or in leisure time, as long as there is an internet connection, they can access rich podcast content.

Moreover, the communication of podcasts is decentralized. Different from traditional media, podcast creators come from all walks of life and are scattered around the world. They produce programs based on their personal interests and professional knowledge and directly deliver the content to the audience, reducing intermediate links and making information dissemination more direct and efficient.

2.2. The freedom of content creation and expression

From the perspective of Soft Power Theory, podcasts show a high degree of freedom in content creation and expression, which is of great significance for the shaping of national images and cultural output.

Creators do not need to follow the strict news norms and censorship systems of traditional media and can choose themes and express their views more freely. They can delve into topics that are ignored or avoided by traditional media and present the content in a more personalized and diverse way.

This freedom makes podcast content closer to life and reality, able to bring new perspectives and ideas to the audience and stimulate the audience's in - depth thinking about different cultures and international affairs.

2.3. Strong audience interactivity and participation

According to the theory of Participatory Culture, the audience interactivity and participation of podcasts far exceed those of traditional media.

During the process of listening to the program, the audience can interact with the creators through various channels such as comments, emails, and social media. They can ask questions about the program content, share their views, and even participate in program production. For example, some podcasts will adjust the program themes and formats according to the audience's feedback and invite the audience to provide story materials or

participate in interviews.

This interaction not only enhances the audience's sense of participation and loyalty but also makes the podcast content more in line with the audience's needs.

3. Practical cases of podcasts breaking stereotypes

3.1. The performance of podcasts in different countries and regions

Globally, many podcasts are actively engaged in the practice of breaking stereotypes.

Since its launch in 2020, the podcast has released more than 100 episodes, with a cumulative playback volume exceeding 5 million times, attracting listeners from more than 30 countries and regions around the world. In the program, the host goes deep into the studios of traditional craftsmen, records the process of them integrating modern design concepts into traditional crafts such as paper - cutting and embroidery, and invites young cultural entrepreneurs to share their innovative practices^[5]. An American listener commented, "I used to think that Chinese traditional culture was very ancient and difficult to access. After listening to this podcast, I found that it is full of vitality, and young people are making it more interesting."

In India, the podcast "The Rise of Her Power" focuses on the development of Indian women. Since its launch in 2018, it has quickly attracted international attention, with the reading volume of its social media topics exceeding 20 million times, attracting a large number of audiences in Europe and America who are concerned about the issue of gender equality^[6].

In Europe and the United States, the podcast "Diverse Dreamers" is committed to telling the stories of immigrant groups. Since its launch in 2019, its average monthly download volume has remained stable at around 100,000 times, and its listeners are spread across major countries in Europe and America. The podcast introduces the struggles of immigrants from different countries in the local area^[7].

3.2. Analysis of Specific themes and contents

Take the widely influential podcast "Global Gastronomic Moments" as an example. Since its launch in 2017, it currently has more than 3 million subscribers worldwide, with a monthly playback volume of over 800,000 times^[8].

When introducing French cuisine, the program not only showcases the exquisite plating and cooking techniques of French cuisine but also details the weekend family dinner scenes of ordinary French families. The host follows a French family, records the whole process from ingredient procurement to cooking and the family sitting around the table for dinner and communication. After the program was broadcast, it received a large number of listener feedbacks.

Another example is the podcast "Workplace Without Borders". Since its launch in 2018, it has attracted the attention of 2 million workplace professionals worldwide, with an average monthly interaction volume of 50,000 times. When telling about the workplace cultures of different countries, the podcast focuses on the enterprises of a certain Asian country. Through long - term tracking records of cross - cultural team cooperation within the enterprises, it shows how team members overcome difficulties such as language and management style differences in project promotion.

4. The ways and impacts of podcasts in shaping a new discourse framework

4.1. The formation mechanism of the new discourse framework

Podcasts form a New Discourse Framework through the participation of multiple subjects, cross - cultural communication, and unique narrative methods.

The participation of multiple subjects is reflected in the fact that podcast creators come from different countries, different cultural backgrounds, and different professional fields. They each bring unique views and experiences, jointly constructing a rich and diverse discourse space. In terms of cross-cultural communication, podcasts promote the dialogue and integration between different cultures. Creators and audiences learn from and inspire each other during the communication process, forming new cultural cognitions and ways of expression.

4.2. The Impact on the international communication pattern

Podcasts have had a profound impact on the international communication pattern.

Firstly, they have broken the monopoly position of traditional media in international communication, making the international communication subjects more diversified. This helps to change the communication pattern dominated by a few Western media for a long time and promotes the equal communication.

Secondly, podcasts have promoted the transformation of the communication mode from one - way communication to two - way interactive communication. The audience is no longer a passive recipient of information. This interactivity enhances the communication effect and makes the information more in line with the audience's needs.

In addition, the New Discourse Framework shaped by podcasts enriches the content and perspectives of international communication, helping to construct a more comprehensive, objective.

5. Challenges and countermeasures

5.1. The obstacles faced by the development of podcasts

Although podcasts have great potential, they also face many challenges in the development process.

In terms of technology, the imperfect network infrastructure limits the dissemination of podcasts in some regions. Especially in remote areas or developing countries, the slow and unstable network speed makes it difficult for listeners to listen to programs smoothly.

The issue of copyright is also an important factor that plagues the development of podcasts. In the process of podcast production, if the use of music, text, and other materials is not well managed in terms of copyright, it is easy to cause infringement disputes.

In addition, the profit model of podcasts is still not perfect. Most podcast creators find it difficult to obtain a stable income through their creations, which to a certain extent affects the enthusiasm of creators and the sustainability of creation.

5.2. Countermeasures and future prospects

Regarding technical issues, the government and relevant enterprises need to increase investment in the construction of network infrastructure, improve the network coverage and quality, and ensure that the global audience can conveniently listen to podcasts.

In terms of content quality supervision, an industry self - regulatory mechanism should be established. By formulating content creation norms, setting up awards to encourage the creation of high - quality content, and other means, creators should be guided to improve the content quality.

For copyright issues, it is necessary to improve copyright laws and regulations, clarify the copyright rules for the use of materials in podcast creation, and strengthen the construction of copyright management platforms to provide convenient copyright acquisition channels for creators.

Looking to the future, podcasts are expected to play an even more important role in the construction of the International Narrative, breaking stereotypes, and shaping a more just and reasonable New Discourse Framework.

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