

Research on the Narrative Feature of the Short Video

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Abstract: The short video is a digital narrative system created by human beings to clearly express meaning, and belongs to a new type of audiovisual art in the era of mobile intelligence. Its narrative features are very obvious. It promotes the gradual presentation of narrative features with the help of the diversified arrangement of narrative themes such as original plots, cute animals and pet animals, movie commentary, the differentiated use of narrative perspectives such as internal perspective, external perspective, and omniscient perspective, and the popular arrangement of narrative content such as daily life complaints, records of modern solitary life, and the presentation of rural cuisine.

Keywords: The Short Video; Narrative Feature; Narrative Theme; Narrative Perspective;

Narrative Content

The short video is a digital narrative system created by human beings to express clear meaning, which is usually a new type of audiovisual art with a shooting duration of less than 10 minutes and a mobile intelligent terminal as the primary communication channel. As of December 2022, there were 1.012 billion short video users in China, accounting for 94.8% of the total number of netizens. The short video has become the most important daily component of digital citizenship in modern society, and is the main medium for people's leisure and entertainment, social communication and information interaction, and is deeply loved by the audience. Creators can use the diversification of narrative themes, the differentiation of narrative perspectives, and the popularization of narrative plots to create high-quality content with clear logic. With the help of text analysis, this paper summarizes the narrative characteristics of the short video from the aspects of narrative theme, narrative perspective, and narrative content.

1. Diversification of narrative themes

The short video is an important carrier for video makers to narrate in the digital age, with a strong subjective color. With the continuous development of social class and media fragmentation, the fragmented information consumption Xi behind different groups in the digital age has been cultivated. As a key step in the production of the short video content and the expression of the theme, the narrative theme of the short video will become more refined and diversified with the changes in the needs of different audiences.

The first is the original plot. This type of the short video is good at using reversal in terms of narrative, and strives to create the best immersive experience for users. Its fast-paced narrative style deeply captures the curiosity of the viewer, allowing each user to get the fastest perceptual experience in the shortest time. For example, "Chen Xiang at Half Past Six" takes the shooting of funny reversal plots as the main content, and frequently uses reversal modes in the narrative, which was thought to be a tragic story but finally reversed into a comedy that makes people laugh. While improving fans' participation in the plot, it will also take care of the different needs of various audience groups in the narrative theme, making the video content very personalized and increasing the stickiness and favorability of fans.

The second is cute pets. Most of the protagonists of this type of the short video are pets, and the selection of the narrative style of the work and the planning and production of the content are highly demanding. In high-quality works, the narrative content not only includes the cute Q Meng appearance of pets, but also has an IP personality that the audience and bloggers give it a life to. The narrative perspective usually narrates the story from the perspective of the owner or pet in the first person, giving the audience a sense of immersion, which leads to spiritual satisfaction and solace through pet videos. For example, Douyin pet Internet celebrity "Wang Puff" Cheese Cat daily exquisite daily vlog record, in her video, the owner will dress her up in beautiful clothes and puff like a princess, make her delicious cat food and other anthropomorphic narrative techniques like playing home to bring visual pleasure to the audience, vivid and personalized sound effects and humorous dubbing also bring the audience a perfect auditory experience.

The third is movie commentary. The short video is deeply loved by the public for their unique video film abbreviation and efficient reading principles, which can guide the audience to better understand the film through direct narration and all-perspective narration. When the blogger "Small Piece Says Big Movie" was commenting on the last scene of the movie "Fatal ID", the heroine dug up a number plate on the screen, and then a boy appeared in front of her with a weapon in his hand, and the blogger's commentary suddenly sounded: "It turns out that all this was done by a little boy, and the murderer's body is not only 10 personalities, but also the eleventh personality of the little boy." This kind of spoiler arrangement of decryption and direct narration allows the audience to understand the outline of the movie simply and directly, saving time for searching and watching the movie.

2. Differentiation of narrative perspectives

Narrative perspective refers to the angle and position of the narrator to observe the story, which corresponds to the relationship between the narrator and the story. The narrative perspective is closely related to the content, characteristics, style, overall concept, and character setting of short video works, mainly including insider perspective, outside perspective and zero perspective.

The insider perspective, also known as first-person narration, is in which a narrator narrates “myself” and expresses the “I am present” attitude through “I tell”. Through selfies and close-up shooting angles, bloggers can achieve equal and cordial interaction between the two parties, and shorten the social and psychological distance between each other. The typical feature is that the laughter of the filmmaker “I” is very infectious, and the interesting interaction between the photographer and the photographed person has won the love of netizens, which perfectly reflects the high participation of the audience under the internal perspective narrative.

The outside perspective refers to the narrator standing outside the character and setting the narrative focus within the story world, like a camera, able to capture various scenes. In the external perspective narration, the narrator presents the characters’ actions, appearances and objective environment from the outside, without telling the characters’ motives, goals, thoughts and emotions, and the narrator mostly uses the third-person perspective to objectively record the progress of the story. The blogger “Sister Peach in Shuzhong”, a blogger who expresses rural cuisine, widely uses external perspective narrative in his videos, and the photographer participates in the process of Sister Peach’s story as an invisible bystander, allowing different audiences to watch and watch the event from an objective standpoint, stimulating users to watch and express their desires at the same time, prompting them to participate in the discussion of evaluating events and characters, which greatly improves the discussion degree of the work.

The zero perspective belongs to the omniscient and omnipotent God’s perspective, which has great expansiveness and is suitable for the short video works with many characters and complex plots. For example, the farmland video shot by Li Ziqi also borrows the omniscient perspective placed outside of anyone, and collects the small vegetable garden with melons and fruits, and the plain fields and fields outside the courtyard that bloom in spring and autumn in winter, giving the video a beautiful utopian independent space perspective color, bringing the audience a picturesque feeling of decompression and a soothing and peaceful slow-paced life, so that the audience can find the deep thoughts of their hometown in the real lens, and then identify with the video content and establish a spiritual connection. Li Ziqi uses a small lens to see the big world, capturing various details of life, vividly showing the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, narrowing the distance with the audience with the help of folk culture, and making the media bond closer.

3. The life of the narrative content

The main users of the short video media are the general public, while narrative content refers to the narration of characters’ actions and their results. Therefore, the short video mainly attracts audiences through the daily life arrangement of narrative content such as complaining about daily life, recording of modern solitary life, and the presentation of life skills.

The first is the complaining of social life. Internet hot words such as “keyboard man” and “barrage culture” in the network society are widely used by netizens, and people evaluate public figures, social hotspots, and public events through network channels such as Weibo and barrage videos. Papi sauce, a blogger with tens of millions of fans who has become popular all over the Internet with a funny and nonsensical way of complaining, will gain insight into the needs of the public in each video, select a group or a social phenomenon and other popular narrative themes, and convey the public’s voice through video media through unique complaining expressions, so as to arouse the emotional resonance of the audience, and at the same time meet the needs of users for entertainment and emotional venting, it has ushered in more topic exposure and influence for itself.

The second is a record of living alone. With the popularity of the single economy and “empty nest youth”, more and more young people living alone in society are participating in the content creation of short videos, using short videos to record their daily life alone, and using the corresponding clips and soundtracks to release pressure and convey the aesthetic value of shared life to the audience. For example, Xiaohongshu’s popular “Xia Shiyi”, “Baili”, “Yanzi” and other vlog bloggers who live alone, the commonality of their videos is that the selection of narrative content will start from popular labels such as daily life at home, making food, self-discipline, and Xi. By presenting the “reachable” life state of ordinary people, the author skillfully connects his emotions with the audience, stimulates the audience’s resonance, and conveys the power of warmth to the audience with the familiar picture of the most ordinary fireworks in the world.

The third is the dissemination of life skills. With the help of the two-stage narrative structure of “life situation + skill mastery”, with the presentation or simulation of daily life scenes as the lead, and the vivid way of audio-visual combination to solve the problems caused by the former as the main line, the short video presents the “down-to-earth” narrative content, and provides convenience for people’s daily learning Xi. For example, in the video of “What should I do if my child is stuck in the throat by a foreign body? Teach you the Heimlich maneuver, it can save your life at a critical moment”, introduces the principle of the Heimlich maneuver, and presents the practical actions to the audience in a video form, arousing people’s attention to health knowledge in life, making it gain the favor of different age groups, attracting a large number of fan traffic groups, and exaggerating the spread and influence of the video.

Conclusion

The narrative characteristics of the short video itself have laid the foundation for its rapid development of the content department, and the author selects the above representative narrative themes, perspectives and contents for analysis based on personal interests and academic ability. This does not mean that the short video does not have other narrative themes, and the popular narrative content will also involve all aspects of life, clothing, food, housing and transportation, and these richer content can be further deepened and improved in the future.

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