The Communication Path for Effectively Telling Chinese Stories in the Context of Cross-Cultural Communication through Short Videos

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Abstract: In the era of new media, short videos play an increasingly important role in cross-cultural communication due to their convenience, immediacy, and personalization. How to effectively tell Chinese stories in the context of cross-cultural communication has become an important issue faced by Chinese media. As a new and emerging medium of cultural communication, short videos possess the characteristics of being visual, vivid, and highly entertaining, making them irreplaceable in cross-cultural communication. The dissemination of Chinese stories on short video platforms serves as an important means to tell Chinese stories and showcase the image of China.

1. Introduction

In the era of new media, short videos play an increasingly important role in cross-cultural communication due to their convenience, immediacy, and personalization. How to effectively tell Chinese stories in the context of cross-cultural communication has become an important issue faced by Chinese media. As a new and emerging medium of cultural communication, short videos possess the characteristics of being visual, vivid, and highly entertaining, making them irreplaceable in cross-cultural communication. The dissemination of Chinese stories on short video platforms serves as an important means to tell Chinese stories and showcase the image of China.

"Stories are an important component of history and the way people understand it."[1] As the most significant means of information dissemination today, short videos align with the characteristics of human communication through their brevity, conciseness, and speed. In international contexts, "telling Chinese stories well" has become an important aspect of China's external communication efforts. Short videos, as a new cultural form, have gained increasing popularity internationally due to their attributes of being concise, lively, and convenient. They not only provide new ideas and methods for telling Chinese stories but also offer a new platform for effectively conveying them.

2. The Current State of Chinese Storytelling on Short Video Platforms

With the rapid development of internet technology, short video platforms have emerged rapidly in China. Douyin, a popular short video platform, was launched in September 2017, and by April 2020, it had surpassed 600 million followers. Concurrently, the concept of "Chinese stories" has gained widespread attention. With the rapid development of information technology, international

society's understanding of China has deepened, and the influence of Chinese stories on the international stage has been steadily increasing. In terms of content, the presentation of Chinese stories in video format exhibits multidimensional and multilayered characteristics. Videos incorporate various elements such as text, images, music, and dance, with an average duration of around 2 minutes, and an average video length of about 10 seconds. In terms of target audience, the primary users are young individuals aged between 18 and 45 years old. Short video platforms have become important channels for the international dissemination of Chinese stories[2]. Therefore, exploring effective communication pathways for Chinese stories in the international arena holds significant significance.

3. The Importance of Cross-Cultural Communication

Intercultural communication refers to the exchange between different cultures, where other cultures are made known as the target of communication through mass media and interpersonal communication. It involves not only the differences between different cultures but also the relationships between cultures and the resulting interactions, understanding, and mutual respect. With the advancement of globalization, intercultural communication has become an important form of interaction and cooperation between nations. Since the reform and opening-up policy, China has achieved significant accomplishments in economic development, comprehensive national strength, and international influence[3]. However, there still exists a considerable gap in China's discourse power in the international community. This is mainly manifested in two aspects: Firstly, due to historical reasons, there are significant ideological and value differences between China and Western developed countries, which have affected China's international image. Secondly, the domestic cultural market lacks openness and tolerance towards foreign enterprises and products, creating challenges for China's external communication efforts. Facing the complex and challenging international situation and the arduous task of domestic reform and development, in order to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the Chinese Dream, it is necessary to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of excellent Chinese traditional culture, and enhance national confidence and pride. To tell Chinese stories well and enhance the country's image and international influence, it is crucial to conduct in-depth research on the laws of international communication. The concept of "Responsible Development" was proposed at the United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit held at the United Nations headquarters in New York, USA, from January 12th to 14th, 2019. This concept advocates that countries pursue economic development while considering sustainable development in social, environmental, and resource aspects.

4. Key Points for Telling Chinese Stories Effectively through Short Videos

4.1. Building a Multidimensional Communication Matrix

With the changing communication landscape, the channels through which audiences obtain information have become more diverse. The previous cross-cultural communication methods, mainly relying on mainstream media, can no longer meet the needs of the audience. In the era of new media, audience interests exhibit fragmented characteristics. Only through multi-channel and multi-type information supply can personalized audience demands be met. First and foremost, it is essential to fully utilize official accounts for cross-cultural communication. Official accounts have extensive influence and appeal overseas. The video content they produce can pique international audiences' interest in and identification with Chinese culture. Expanding the reach of communication through overseas social platforms is an important approach to tell Chinese stories

and disseminate the Chinese voice. Short videos, as a significant medium for cross-cultural communication, possess characteristics such as a large user base, fast dissemination speed, and high engagement. When conducting cross-cultural communication through overseas social platforms, it is important to leverage the power of platform users.

4.2. Establishing a Two-Way Interactive Communication Mechanism

Establishing a two-way interactive communication mechanism can enable Chinese stories to gain more recognition and support in the process of cross-cultural communication. Currently, the overseas dissemination of Chinese short videos relies mainly on overseas media and institutions, which to some extent results in one-way communication of Chinese short videos and affects the effectiveness of Chinese storytelling overseas. Therefore, strengthening the collection and analysis of feedback from overseas users is helpful in understanding their understanding and needs regarding Chinese stories, thereby adjusting content production strategies.

4.3. Building a Collaborative Communication Model with Multiple Participants

Short video platforms provide a new path for telling Chinese stories, but relying solely on the platforms themselves is far from sufficient to achieve greater international dissemination of Chinese stories. From the platform alone, we cannot fully understand the true psychological needs of overseas audiences or identify the potential audience for Chinese stories. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the interaction between the platform and overseas audiences, allowing Chinese stories to resonate with overseas users and achieve multi-party collaborative communication. Only by incorporating users from different backgrounds, languages, and cultural contexts into an open and inclusive cultural exchange environment can Chinese stories be effectively conveyed. In this process, platforms should facilitate various forms of integration and interaction between individuals, groups, and the platform itself, stimulating users' enthusiasm and initiative to participate in dissemination activities. Additionally, it is important to emphasize the involvement of third-party communication agencies in platform content production, operation, and promotion activities, guiding users to actively engage in the dissemination of Chinese stories.

(1) The role transformation of users in content production. The dissemination of Chinese stories on short video platforms requires platform guidance in content creation to encourage user participation in storytelling.

(2) Collaborative communication involving multiple stakeholders. Short video platforms provide new means for telling Chinese stories, but this communication method still faces some challenges, such as varying content quality, low user engagement, and suboptimal dissemination effects.

(3) Enhancing media literacy through multi-party collaboration. In addition to platform efforts to guide users, there should also be a focus on enhancing users' own media literacy.

4.4. Building a Common and Coexistent Cross-Cultural Discourse

In the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese stories, it is crucial to build a shared and symbiotic cross-cultural discourse, with a focus on how to tell Chinese stories within a shared and symbiotic linguistic environment. According to the "spiral of silence" theory, audience opinions are easily influenced by factors such as authority, opinion leaders, and mass media. When in a disadvantaged position, there is a greater tendency to accept or comply with authoritative discourse. In cross-cultural communication, authoritative discourse often dominates due to differences in audience perception of the same subject. However, authoritative discourse is not the only form of communication. Content on short video platforms includes not only authoritative discourse and

mass media but also content provided by various professional institutions. Therefore, telling Chinese stories effectively requires targeted design and communication strategies for different audience groups. In terms of building a shared and symbiotic cross-cultural discourse, content can be enhanced by constructing authoritative discourse, mass media, and other forms to increase the influence and discourse power of Chinese stories internationally. Additionally, inviting overseas opinion leaders to participate in short video content creation and establishing user communities can achieve a "content + social" dissemination effect[4].

5. Exploring the Communication Path of Telling Chinese Stories Effectively in the Context of Cross-Cultural Communication through Short Videos

5.1. Emphasizing Cultural Integration and Audience-Centric Communication Philosophy

In the context of cross-cultural communication, telling Chinese stories effectively through short videos requires adhering to an audience-centered communication philosophy. It involves emphasizing the production of original content and utilizing integrated media communication methods for cross-cultural dissemination, while promoting the exchange and integration of diverse cultures. In cross-cultural communication, China's external communication needs to be audience-centered, respecting the cultural customs, aesthetic preferences, and ways of life of different countries and ethnicities, to foster inclusive and diverse cultural integration. The audience-centered communication philosophy primarily focuses on the following two points: First, an audience-centered communication philosophy emphasizes starting from the audience's actual needs, addressing the topics they are most concerned about and interested in. It involves understanding the audience's cultural background, behavioral patterns, and values, and engaging in communication and dialogue with an attitude of equality. Second, an audience-centered communication philosophy highlights the importance of selecting topics that align with the cultural psychology of different countries and ethnicities when conducting cross-cultural communication. Only by being audience-centered, respecting the fact that cultural differences exist, can targeted communication be achieved in cross-cultural dissemination, ultimately achieving the goal of cross-cultural communication.

5.2. Utilizing Integrated Media Communication for Cross-Cultural Communication

To effectively tell Chinese stories through short videos, it is necessary to break away from the traditional media's singular channels and one-way communication methods. It is important to fully utilize emerging media technologies and engage in cross-cultural communication from multiple perspectives to enhance audience receptiveness and acceptance of Chinese stories. Under the framework of integrated media communication, telling Chinese stories through short videos should be combined with the development of integrated media. This involves leveraging both new media channels and traditional media for cross-cultural communication, fostering the exchange and integration of diverse cultures while effectively telling Chinese stories. For example, on Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok), there is a video titled "dou comes with gifts". In the video, a foreign fan watches Chinese cuisine and comments "dou comes with gifts". After this comment was reposted on the official Douyin account, a user responded with the answer: "Foreigners can also cook Chinese food." Although this response was a joking remark, it indirectly reflects the recognition and appreciation of Chinese culinary culture by foreigners.

5.3. Balancing Narrative Approaches

In cross-cultural communication, it is important to consider the cultural backgrounds of different countries and ethnicities and strike a balanced approach to narrative styles[5]. The narrative styles in short videos mainly include storytelling, personalization, visualization, and dramatization. In terms of storytelling, it aims to evoke emotional resonance among the audience through the portrayal of typical characters and the depiction of typical events in a sentimental manner. Regarding personalization, it involves interpreting personal experiences and cultural backgrounds to uncover the stories behind individuals. In terms of visualization, it combines the description of objective reality with subjective experiences to achieve immersive communication. When employing narrative styles in short videos, the following points should be considered: First, in terms of narrative style, it is important to strike a balance between tradition and modernity, Eastern and Western cultures, objectivity and subjectivity, and other factors. Second, in terms of narrative structure, a balance should be maintained between reality and fiction, objectivity and subjectivity, and detailed description and thematic expression. Third, in terms of narrative pacing, attention should be given to maintaining a balanced flow throughout the narrative, including a well-executed introduction, development, turning point, and resolution.

5.4. Balancing Communication Entities

In the process of effectively telling Chinese stories through short videos, besides the content itself, it is also crucial to maintain a balance in the communicators or disseminators. On one hand, it is important to handle the relationship between international audiences and domestic audiences when narrating Chinese stories, and to grasp the appropriate storytelling approach. For example, when portraying Chinese culture, it is essential to present the unique charm of Chinese culture in a clear and accessible manner, avoiding the use of overly technical or obscure terminology that may create comprehension difficulties for foreign audiences due to language barriers. Domestic audiences can quickly grasp information such as the time, location, and relevant characters of the events depicted in the short videos, and share them through social media platforms. However, foreign audiences may require more time to understand and perceive the stories. For instance, when telling stories about Chinese culinary culture, it is important to integrate the process of food preparation with Chinese culture, uncovering the cultural connotations behind Chinese culinary traditions. Incorporating elements of Chinese traditional customs and folklore can enhance the storytelling of culinary culture.

5.5. Balancing Narrative Subjects

In the process of effectively telling Chinese stories through short videos, the narrative content may vary due to different narrative targets, requiring the selection of appropriate narrative strategies based on these targets. Generally speaking, narrative targets can be divided into two main categories: the audience and the communicators. Regarding the audience of short videos that tell Chinese stories, attention should be given to "closeness" and "understanding" when it comes to the content. "Closeness" refers to narrowing the gap between the audience of the short video and the Chinese stories, expressing the stories in a way that is close to real-life, meets audience needs, resonates with public emotions, and aligns with the pulse of the times. "Understanding" means selecting suitable narrative approaches based on the characteristics of the short video's audience and the differences between narrative targets, in order to accommodate the cultural backgrounds and emotional needs of different audiences. In terms of balancing narrative targets, it is important to avoid neglecting ordinary Chinese people and foreign audiences, as well as neglecting the elite

group and the general public.

6. Conclusion

In the era of new media, telling Chinese stories effectively requires the creation of a multidimensional and multidimensional cross-cultural communication matrix, enhancing interaction between discourse subjects, and increasing user engagement within platforms. It is important to focus on user feedback, actively engage in user participation, and encourage user-generated content. Establishing a collaborative communication model with multiple participants can mobilize various resources and forces to contribute to the cross-cultural communication of Chinese stories. Furthermore, in the process of effectively telling Chinese stories, it is important to emphasize the construction of a shared and symbiotic cross-cultural discourse. This allows audiences from different countries and regions to express their own stories and understanding through discourse, while also finding common ground and fostering mutual understanding.

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