

## *Original Paper*

# Research on the External Communication of Chinese Culture Empowered by Short Videos in Rural China -- Take the Short Video Content of YouTube Platform as an Example

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### ***Abstract***

*Using YouTube as the platform and rural short videos as the entry point, this study investigates how Chinese rural short videos empower the external dissemination of Chinese culture on the YouTube platform. By using comparative analysis and content analysis research methods to select samples and construct categories, the aim is to compare rural and non rural themed Chinese short videos, as well as the similarities and differences in text structure and symbol types between Chinese rural short videos and foreign rural short videos, to analyze the empowerment of rural elements combined with different themes, and to summarize the dissemination content characteristics of Chinese rural short videos that have successfully gained popularity on the YouTube platform.*

### ***Keywords***

*rural short videos, External dissemination, YouTube*

## **1. Research Background and Significance**

In recent years, there has been an increasing popularity of rural short videos on domestic and foreign new media platforms. These rural short videos are set against the backdrop of distinctive rural scenery, rural cuisine, rural life, etc., and have accumulated a large audience on new media platforms, with an increasing popularity. Rural internet red bloggers monetize through precipitation of traffic, thereby driving the development of rural characteristic industries and rural economy. Moreover, rural short videos present the appearance and charm of rural areas, conveying cultural traditions and traditions, and shaping a new rural image in the current era, thus becoming an important carrier for telling China's

rural stories well in international communication.

With the popularization of 5G and the rapid development of new media, technological progress continues to support international cultural dissemination. YouTube is one of the largest new media platforms in the world. In the era of networking, mobile short videos are prevalent, and short videos have gradually become an important component of external communication. Against the background of cultural confidence construction and rural revitalization strategy, this paper analyzes how Chinese rural short videos, which have become popular on YouTube in recent years, empower the external dissemination of Chinese culture. According to the instructions in the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to strengthen cultural confidence, it is necessary to make good use of the short video window of rural areas and the short video platform of YouTube to tell Chinese rural stories to the public, which helps to enhance cultural output and showcase China's image.

## **2. Literature Review**

The research on the external dissemination of Chinese culture through rural short videos in China is currently mainly focused on the domestic scope. After reviewing and retrieving various data and sorting out the literature, it is found that the domestic research on the external communication of Chinese rural short videos to Chinese culture, especially on YouTube, is not perfect. Among them, the research on short videos mainly focuses on the communication on domestic new media platforms such as Tiktok and Kwai, taking the Research on the Status Quo and Strategies of Short Video Enabling Cultural Communication as an example; The research on the external cultural dissemination of short videos mainly focuses on the dissemination characteristics and experiences of a few self media influencers, taking "Cross cultural Communication of Chinese influencers on YouTube" as an example; The research on rural short videos mainly focuses on exploring the connotation of traditional culture, cultivating and rebuilding rural cultural confidence in China, taking "The Significance of Cultivating Rural Cultural Confidence in the Popularity of" Three Rural "Short Videos" as an example; However, there is still a lack of research on the dissemination strategies of China's rural cultural stance abroad. In summary, in the current era, there is a lack of systematic and in-depth analysis on how to strengthen the external dissemination and empower cultural output of rural short videos that carry Chinese culture. Keeping up with the development of the times and studying the laws of cultural dissemination from a small perspective is still an important proposition and development trend.

## **3. Research Methods and Objects**

### *3.1 Research Methods*

Case study method: Taking a rural short video self media blogger who has made a hit on YouTube as a case study, this study specifically examines the content and methods of using rural elements in their published works, as well as the impact of different short video content on the likes, comments, and attention generated by viewers and fans, providing individual case support for this study.

Content analysis method: After determining the objects, sample selection and category construction are carried out, and research samples are selected using data service platforms and simple random sampling method. Then, the content of short videos is studied and analyzed.

Comparative analysis method: Compare and analyze the text structure and symbol types of Chinese rural short videos, foreign rural short videos, and Chinese non rural themed short videos, and summarize the dissemination content characteristics of the research samples.

### 3.2 Sample Selection

As of March 20, 2023, among the top 50 non Chinese followers (excluding fans from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan) on the YouTube platform, relevant bloggers with Chinese rural short video content as the main focus were selected as the research subjects. They have a total of 1004 videos, and the main study sample a randomly selected 30 short videos from them. To compare and analyze Chinese rural short videos, foreign rural short videos, and Chinese non rural themed short videos, the top 3 accounts with non rural themed video content were selected for comparison and reference. Their videos totaled 1178, and 30 of their short videos were randomly selected as sample B; Finally, from the top 100 foreign blogger accounts with YouTube followers, select the top 3 with 1233 short videos. Similarly, select 30 short videos as sample C to study a total of 90 short videos. Finally, analyze the characteristics of Chinese rural short videos attracting foreign fans in cross-cultural communication using the YouTube platform as an example.

**Table 1. Research Subjects**

		Domestic short video self media blogger	Ranking by non Chinese fan base	Subscription	Number of videos
China	Non rural	Office Ono	2	12m	385
		Teacher Li Yongle	4	1.99m	477
		Naomi 'SexyCyberorg' Wu	6	1.61m	316
		Li Ziqi	1	17.2m	128
		Dianxi Little Brother	3	9.54m	288
		Shyo Video Yam Video	5	1.67m	588
foreign country	country	Foreign short video self media blogger	Ranking by fan count	Subscription	Number of videos
		Arainy	20	2.58m	614
		DOORA	82	0.23m	297
		Sunil D'Mello	95	0.13m	322

### 3.3 Category Construction

Conduct a specific analysis on the content creation and dissemination of short videos, and classify and encode them based on the specific short video content of the YouTube platform. The specific categories constructed are shown in Table 2.

The main symbol types are the forms in which video expresses information and meaning. The categories include: (1) non linguistic symbols; (2) Chinese language symbols; (3) Non Chinese language symbols.

Text structure features refer to the presentation and architecture of meaning within video text, which can be divided into: (1) readable text; (2) Writable text.

The main cultural bias is the cultural category of video content bias. The main categories are: (1) local culture; (2) Western culture; (3) Global culture.

The main narrative type refers to the organization of relevant elements in the discourse of a video in a certain order to form a coherent sequence. The specific categories are: (1) scenario based narrative; (2) Storytelling narrative; (3) Multi subject narrative; (4) Single subject narrative.

**Table 2. Category Construction**

Class	Coding
Content Theme Type	1=Rural cuisine; 2=rural scenery; 3=Rural labor scenes; 4=Life of Chinese urban white-collar workers; 5=Modern technology
Main symbol types	1=Non verbal symbols; 2=Chinese language symbols; 3=Non Chinese language symbols
Text structure features	1=lisible text; 2=Writability Text
Main cultural biases	1=local culture; 2=western culture; 3=global culture
Main narrative types	1=Scenarioized Narrative; 2=Storytelling Narration; 3=Multiple subjects narrative; 4=Single subject narrative

## 4. Analysis of the Characteristics of Short Video Communication Content in Rural China

**Table 3. Research Samples**

Blogger	Representative video	short subject matter of text	subject	Symbol type	Text structure	cultural bias	Narrative Types	Playback count
Li Ziqi	A pot of wine between melons, a lifetime of watermelon and grapes?	Rural cuisine, rural scenery, and rural labor scenes	Rural	Non verbal symbols, Chinese language symbols	Writability Text	Local culture	Scenarioized Narrative, single subject narrative	72.44m

Dianxi Little Brother	Have you tried these ways to eat hairy tofu?	Rural cuisine, rural scenery, and rural labor scenes	Non verbal symbols, Chinese language symbols	Writability Text	Local culture	Scenarioized Narrative, single subject narrative	5.17m
Shyo Video Yam Video	Fish needs to be eaten like this to enjoy it. One person eats one and still wants to eat it	Rural cuisine	Non verbal symbols	Writability Text	Local culture	Scenarioized Narrative, single subject narrative	3.26m
Office Ono	E87 How To Make Molecular Gastronomy in Ms Yeah's office   Ms Yeah	Life of Chinese urban white-collar workers	Non verbal symbols, Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Single subject narrative	4.48m
Teacher Li Yongle	How can we get rid of poverty? What is the difference between the poor and the rich?	Modern technology	Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Single subject narrative	5.54m
Naomi "SexyCy berorg" Wu	Creative 3D CP-01, 3-in-1 printer with 3D printing nozzle, CNC engraving head, laser cutting head, tested one by one	Modern technology	Non Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Single subject narrative	8.15m
Arainy	Thai translation: Guangdong shellfish sauce Guangdong shellfish sauce Guangdong shellfish sauce Guangdong shellfish sauce	Rural cuisine	Non Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Multiple subjects narrative	7.2m
DOORA	Installing a Wood Burner in a Rural Cabin - Iranian Rural Lifestyle (2022)	Rural cuisine, rural labor scene	Non Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Multiple subjects narrative	0.62m

Sunil D'Mello	Doctors make fun of his head	Rural cuisine, rural labor scene	Non Chinese language symbols	lisible text	Global Culture	Multiple subjects narrative	1.94m
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#### *4.1 Using Nonverbal Symbols as Carriers to Express Main Information, Reducing Language Barriers in Cross-cultural Communication*

After analyzing the sample research, it was found that 20 videos did not have conversations, while 6 videos had a small amount of conversations, but the average conversation time was less than 8 seconds. From this, it can be seen that these rural short videos are mainly composed of nonverbal symbols, with a relatively small amount of Chinese language symbols mixed to assist in expressing information. Non linguistic symbols play a significant role in cross-cultural communication, as they are largely determined by specific cultural ways of thinking. Cultures in various countries and regions have issues with language communication, which is incommensurable. The original meaning conveyed by linguistic symbols is easily changed during the communication process, rather than linguistic symbols, such as auditory Visual and other symbols can express a wider range of meanings and have smaller limitations, which can to some extent promote the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication.

Compared to non rural themed Chinese short video bloggers and foreign rural bloggers, Chinese rural bloggers pay more attention to presenting rural life and collect and edit some common and representative environmental sounds, such as “the sound of stepping into the snow”, “the crackling of the stove”, “the sound of thunderstorms”, and other natural environmental sounds. These sounds are also called white noise, which can bring people a sense of peace, tranquility, and physical and mental pleasure, For people who are often in a state of anxiety in modern life, it has the power to alleviate and heal.

Moreover, nonverbal symbols can bring daily rural life and scenes closer to reality through visual and auditory information, conveying a rustic taste that resonates with viewers. For example, in the video of the blogger “yam”, he cooks with his hands and eats up all the food in a big gulp, attracting foreign netizens’ love for his “authentic cooking and dietary style” and commenting on it in his video. In Li Ziqi’s video, her interaction with her mother-in-law, body language, movements, and expressions are all presented in a traditional Chinese family life relationship using nonverbal symbols to a certain extent. Therefore, there are often comments that resonate with the “simple emotions” presented in her videos.

#### *4.2 Simple Decoding through Scenario Based and Single Subject Narrative*

The sample short videos mainly use rural scenery and food as the main elements of a scenario based narrative in terms of narrative types. For example, the storyline in the videos of Li Ziqi and Dianxi Xiaoge usually starts with collecting ingredients, then processing them, and finally completing the production of a unique dish. Moreover, the subject in the video is often the same. Although there have been several episodes in which characters such as family members appear, overall, Chinese rural short

videos mainly focus on a single subject's narrative, with clear themes and vivid visuals, making it easy for overseas audiences to decode.

#### *4.3 Writability Text Creates More Meaningful Space, and the Audience Gains Pleasure from Secondary Creation*

The short videos of Chinese rural areas in the sample exhibit a characteristic of being mainly written text, especially the short videos of "Li Ziqi" and "Dianxi Xiaoge". Writable text, also known as "unfinished text," has a large amount of blank meaning space for the audience to find and fill. In the era of rapid development of the Internet and new media, the characteristics of audience centeredness and everyone's participation enable the role of writable text to be fully demonstrated. Short videos, as a text form with multiple language, visual, and auditory modes, can provide viewers with more creative space. The rural scenery, special customs, delicious food, and soothing music added in the later stages of Chinese rural short videos allow the audience to generate rich associations. The audience can freely "recreate" and feel pleasure in the process of meaning generation. Therefore, if the writability is stronger, the intertextuality, popularity, and audience stickiness of the text will also be correspondingly enhanced. As the famous American mass culture theorist John Fiske pointed out, "Some texts are chosen by the public, while others are discarded. As popular texts, they should be 'producer' texts.

Through comparative analysis of the samples, it was found that the writable text of rural short videos in China has a straightforwardness feature. Compared with the other two types of samples, the content and methods of text processing for rural short videos in China are simpler and more straightforward. For example, a large number of foreign netizens refer to the environmental background in the short video "Li Ziqi" as "Eden" and "Mexican Village". The endowing of these meanings makes Chinese rural short videos a text that can have multiple meanings.

#### *4.4 The Theme of Anti modernity Content Resonates Widely*

In addition, in terms of content themes, Chinese rural short videos have stronger cross-cultural communication power due to their strong anti modernity characteristics. Modernity is a machine driven industry that not only brings about economic development, but also compresses time, globalizes space, and alienates people. Watching the comments of foreign fans in the short video of Chinese rural areas, it is not difficult to see the cultural symptoms of modern anxiety among people, which is a common phenomenon. For example, one comment states: "Fate should not be held in the hands of capitalism, as it will only lead to price increases".

The anti modernity content style displayed in Chinese rural short videos is based on the background of rural areas and traditional rural life, in order to present a rural state. For example, in each issue of Dianxi Xiaoge, a unique cuisine is the theme and result oriented, with rural scenery as the visual aesthetic object, and rural labor life as the narrative line. Another example is that "Li Ziqi" started making soy sauce by planting a soybean, She used this "slow life" feeling to confront the capitalist logic of "time is money" in modern society. This anti modernity short video can temporarily calm people's anxiety about modernity and experience the pleasure of relaxation. For example, a comment

from a foreign netizen: “In this fast-paced era, she is my stress reliever.” “Today, your video inspired me to organize my own house. I have been depressed for 5 years...”.

#### *4.5 Based on Local Culture, Achieving Coexistence with “Others”*

In cross-cultural communication, whether it is the “me” looking down on the “other” or the “me” looking up, it is actually a logic of binary opposition, and the effect that such communication can achieve is not ideal. Taking Chinese rural short videos as a case study, in the process of effective cross-cultural communication, the two subjects should have a symbiotic relationship and maintain communication, based on local culture, to achieve coexistence with the “other”. This requires cross-cultural communication entities to first maintain cultural confidence, then showcase their own cultural values, while leaving meaningful space to interact with other cultures in an equal manner. The short videos in rural China studied in this article should be a differentiated dissemination based on cultural confidence, with Dianxi Xiaoge and Li Ziqi taking local cultural values such as Yunnan and Sichuan as their cultural biases. They use nonverbal symbols and writable text structures to not only express their own information and meaning, making the world recognize and recognize “me”, but also satisfying the curiosity of foreign netizens and their imagination of the East. For example, foreign netizens commented that “this is the essence of Kung Fu” and “how much they respect their parents and grandparents... I hope I can also become a Chinese”.

### **5. Conclusion**

The current era is an era of globalization. In the process of economic and information globalization, Chinese culture, on the one hand, faces shocks and challenges, and on the other hand, needs to establish a foothold, strengthen integration and output. In recent years, Chinese rural short videos have been widely disseminated on overseas platforms with distinct characteristics. However, it should be noted that with the popularity and silence of “Li Ziqi”, there are still many Chinese internet celebrities who are flocking to “rural themes”. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the convergence in the logic of capital, and cross-cultural communication cannot go towards uniformity and immutability. The cross-cultural dissemination of short videos in rural China should be based on the confidence of traditional Chinese culture, adapt to the constantly developing new media environment, innovate communication forms, and truly tell Chinese rural stories that can resonate widely.

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