

Original Paper

On the Chinese Narratives of the Foreign Blogger

“YChina” on Bilibili

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Abstract

With the advancement of technology and the popularity of new media, short videos have become increasingly prominent in the field of cultural communication. Bilibili, a platform known for encouraging high-quality video production and providing a highly interactive environment, is favored by young people. The “YChina” has gained significant influence on this platform due to its solid fan base and strong cultural communication capabilities. Therefore, this study selects 60 videos released by the “YChina” on Bilibili from January 9, 2023, to April 3, 2024, as research samples. We employ content analysis, case analysis, and other diverse research methods. Utilizing tools such as “Xinxiang Toolbox”, Converter App, and Python’s jieba and WordCloud, it conducts word frequency analysis to explore the role of foreign bloggers in cultural communication from the “other” perspective and seeks new ways to tell Chinese stories well. The study finds that the “YChina” achieves high recognition and effectively enhances cultural communication through a rich variety of themes, relatively neutral emotional tendencies, diverse narrative subjects, multiple narrative methods, and mixed Chinese and English narrative languages, providing a reference for telling Chinese stories well.

Keywords

Bilibili, “YChina”, Chinese stories, new media

1. Introduction

The cultural influence of a country not only stems from the unique charm of its content but also relies on the advancement and strength of its communication methods. Cultural communication power has become one of the key factors in measuring a country’s cultural soft power. Therefore, while enhancing hard power, it is crucial to focus on improving China’s cross-cultural communication capabilities. As society evolves, cultural communication channels are adapting and transforming, presenting a diversified landscape. Short video platforms, with their rapid dissemination, strong interactivity, and diverse forms, have gained immense popularity and are playing an increasingly important role in cultural communication. As a special group in cross-cultural communication, an increasing number of foreign bloggers are using short video platforms to vividly present the Chinese cultural landscape from

the “other” perspective, injecting new vitality into China’s cultural communication.

The concept of “The Other” as a literary and philosophical term has existed since ancient Greek times. As a concept opposite to “self”, it refers to a third-party perspective in the field of cultural communication. Based on this concept, foreign bloggers’ presentation of Chinese culture is essentially an interpretation and understanding from the “other” perspective. This perspective offers several advantages: Firstly, as observers of the conflicts between Chinese and Western politics and ideologies, foreign bloggers are less directly affected by these conflicts, enabling them to engage in cultural communication from a more objective standpoint. Secondly, they typically possess strong cross-cultural communication skills, deeply understand the cultural differences between China and the West, and consider the thinking patterns and acceptance habits of Western audiences when disseminating Chinese culture, thereby reducing cultural barriers. Thirdly, the “other” perspective helps to shed the “cultural invasion” and “cultural promotion” labels often attached to Chinese people’s own perspective of disseminating Chinese culture, reducing cultural discounts and enhancing the effectiveness of cultural communication (Jian Zhang, 2011). Finally, foreign bloggers’ unique cultural background and perspective provide Chinese audiences with a new angle of cognition, prompting them to reflect on their own culture from multiple dimensions, recognize the uniqueness and value of Chinese culture, and the importance of cultural inheritance and innovation, deepening their understanding and identification with Chinese culture and actively thinking and exploring ways to combine traditional culture with modern life, promoting cultural inheritance and development.

This study selects the video of the representative Bilibili blogger, the “YChina”, as the research sample. It employs research methods such as content analysis and case analysis, utilizing tools such as “Xinxiang Toolbox”, Converter App, and Python’s jieba and WordCloud to conduct word frequency analysis. It deeply explores the role and value of foreign bloggers in cultural communication and the cultural communication effects of their videos on this platform, aiming to provide a new perspective and method for telling Chinese stories well. The study finds that the “YChina” successfully constructs a diverse and authentic Chinese image and significantly enhances cultural communication effectiveness through a rich variety of video subjects, relatively neutral emotional tendencies, diverse narrative subjects, multiple narrative methods, and mixed Chinese and English narrative languages.

2. Research Objectives and Methods

2.1 Data Sources

We chose Bilibili as the research platform. According to Bilibili’s 2024 Q3 financial report, the platform has 107 million daily active users, 5.7 billion daily video views, and 19.3 billion monthly interactions. 251 million users have passed the entry exam to become official members of the platform, and the 12-month retention rate remains stable at 80%. This indicates that Bilibili has built a user community with a high sense of identity and belonging. This sense of identity and belonging is not only reflected in the emotional connection of the nickname “Xiaopozhan” but also in the deep communication between

users and creators through diverse interaction methods such as bullet comments and reviews. This high level of participation makes Bilibili not only a video sharing platform but also a comprehensive cultural community integrating content creation, cultural communication, and community interaction.

2.2 Research Object

This study selects the “YChina” on the Bilibili platform as the research object. The association consists of five members: President Yousi Gao, Vice President Xingyue Li, and members Yedun Fang, Qi Liu, and Ximan Zhang. On October 13, 2016, the “YChina” uploaded its first video to Bilibili. Over the past eight years, the association has always been committed to eliminating cultural stereotypes and promoting cross-cultural exchanges. Their video content starts from the trivial aspects of life, focusing on hot social issues of interest to young people, exploring and highlighting the cultural differences and unique characteristics between China and the West (Xin He, 2023). As of October 2024, the association has accumulated 4.441 million fans on Bilibili, received 37.121 million likes, and was honored with the title of BILIBILI POWER UP 2019 Top 100 UP Masters. These achievements indicate that the association not only has a solid fan base but also has significant capabilities and influence in cultural communication. The video content of the “YChina” is rich and diverse, covering various fields such as technology, tourism, and food. Their high-quality video production effectively breaks down the barriers between Chinese and Western cultures and comprehensively showcases the charm of Chinese culture to the Western world.

2.3 Research Process

This study adopts quantitative research methods, with content analysis as the main research method. Krippendorff (2018) points out that content analysis has the characteristics of systematicness, objectivity, and quantification, and can deeply analyze the amount of information and its changes contained in the communication content through objective, systematic, and quantitative description. We use “Xinxiang Toolbox”, Converter App text conversion, and Python’s jieba and WordCloud tools for word frequency analysis. Through data collection, data conversion, and preprocessing, we construct categories based on video themes, narrative subjects, and perspectives. We explore the characteristics and laws of the “YChina” videos and their vocabulary choices through word frequency statistics, screening, and keyword extraction.

2.3.1 Data Collection

Considering the likes, coins, collections, shares, and comments of 234 videos released by the “YChina” on Bilibili from January 9, 2023, to April 3, 2024, this study selects 60 videos related to the shaping of the Chinese image and the comparison of Chinese and foreign images as research samples. Each video is treated as an independent analysis unit and numbered according to video popularity from high to low, numbered as “1, 2, 3, ... 60,” and the audio content of these 60 videos is extracted from Bilibili using “Xinxiang Toolbox.”

2.3.2 Data Conversion and Preprocessing

The Converter App text conversion tool is used to convert the selected 60 video corpora into text

format, and the converted text is preprocessed, manually deleting names and meaningless interjections to reduce interference with word frequency analysis and obtain more accurate data.

2.3.3 Word Frequency Statistics

The Python's jieba, a word segmentation tool, is used to segment the preprocessed text, and the segmented results are counted for word frequency, resulting in a total of 6,741 words, including 516 words that appear 10 times or more, 5,955 words that appear less than 10 times, and 4,951 words that appear twice or less.

2.3.4 Initial Screening

Based on the frequency of word occurrence, these words are initially screened, excluding words that appear less than twice to select more representative vocabulary. Words that appear less than 10 times are selectively retained, excluding words with low relevance to the theme and high frequency, as well as meaningless function words, ultimately obtaining 1,624 words.

2.3.5 Secondary Screening and Keyword Extraction

On the basis of the initial word frequency statistics, secondary screening is conducted based on the part of speech, frequency of occurrence, emotional tendency, and context of word occurrence. Synonymous words are integrated, focusing on retaining representative high-frequency vocabulary to ensure that key information is not omitted. After screening, 306 keywords are finally extracted, including 138 high-frequency vocabulary that appears more than 10 times and 168 words that appear less than 10 times.

2.3.6 Keyword Classification

The extracted keywords are analyzed in depth, focusing on nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that help reveal the blogger's emotional tendency. The discussion of the part of speech and emotional tendency of these keywords can more accurately grasp the theme of the video content and the blogger's communication intention. The classification results of keywords are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Keyword Types

Type	Number	Percentage
Noun	236	77.1%
Verb	35	11.4%
Adjective	20	6.5%
Others	9	3.0%
Adverb	6	2.0%

2.3.7 Word Cloud Creation

Word cloud is a visual tool that effectively summarizes and generalizes text content. It displays the main content of the text intuitively by arranging keywords in two-dimensional space. Typically, the size

of words in a word cloud is determined by their frequency of occurrence in the text, with high-frequency words being more prominent, thus more intuitively showcasing the relative importance of these words in the video content. Therefore, this paper selects representative vocabulary based on the 60 selected video texts and uses Python's WordCloud tool to generate a word cloud, clearly showing the high-frequency vocabulary that appears in the "YChina" videos, revealing the theme and emotional tendency of the video content.

3. Results and Discussion

The 60 selected videos have a wide range of dissemination and good communication effects, aiming to analyze the video themes and text content to explore the ways in which foreign bloggers effectively communicate Chinese stories and Chinese culture through selected themes and narrative methods in the Internet era. This study takes individual videos as coding units and conducts detailed analysis and collation of these texts. Based on key dimensions such as video themes, narrative subjects, and narrative perspectives, we construct analysis categories to reveal the content characteristics and communication patterns of these videos. The specific category construction is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Category Construction Table

Category	Encoding Description	
Theme	Food	Determined as one of the five major themes based on the overall content and keyword analysis
	Technology	
	Current Events	
	Tourism	
	Life Experience	
Emotional Tendency	Positive	Classified according to the communicator's attitude towards the video content
	Neutral	
	Negative	
Narrative Subject	Foreigners Living in China	Classified based on the different narrative perspectives appearing in the video
	Foreigners Living Overseas	
	Chinese Mainland Residents	
Narrative Method	Street Interview	Observed to identify the type of narrative method employed in the video
	Topic Discussion	
	Vlog	
Narrative Language	English	The language used in the video
	Chinese	
	Mixed Use of Chinese and English	

3.1 Rich Video Themes: Presenting a Diverse and Three-Dimensional Chinese Image

The video theme refers to the main content and central idea conveyed by the video. Analyzing the video theme helps quickly grasp the main content of the video and understand the creator's choice tendencies. By summarizing and analyzing the selected videos, this paper divides them into five major themes: food, technology, current events, tourism, and life experience. It should be noted that some video content may involve multiple themes, with overlapping phenomena, so one video may correspond to multiple theme categories. The distribution of video themes is shown in Figure 1.

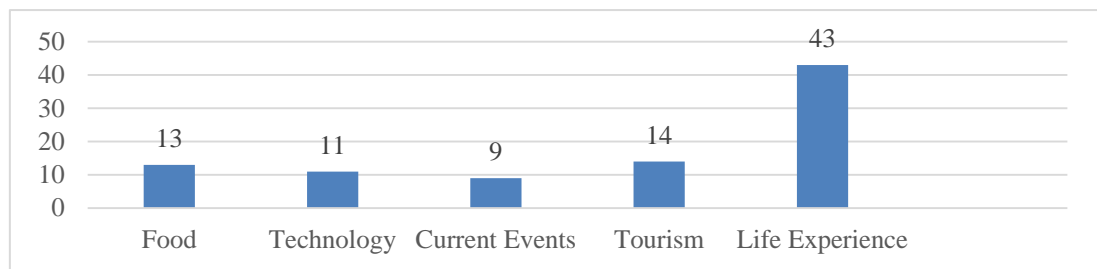


Figure 1. Distribution of “YChina” Video Themes

Based on Figure 1, an in-depth analysis of the “YChina” video themes reveals that the association's video themes cover a wide range, with a clear preference for life experience. These videos vividly depict the daily lives of foreigners in China and their genuine experiences and feelings towards Chinese culture, enhancing the authenticity and attractiveness of the content, providing an opportunity for audiences and the world to understand Chinese culture and development.

3.2 Neutral Emotional Tendency: Enhancing the Persuasive Effect of Cultural Communication

The emotional tendency of the video reflects the attitude of the video creator towards the content. Analyzing the emotional tendency of the video helps evaluate whether the “other” perspective can provide a more neutral and objective evaluation. The detailed analysis results are shown in Figure 2.

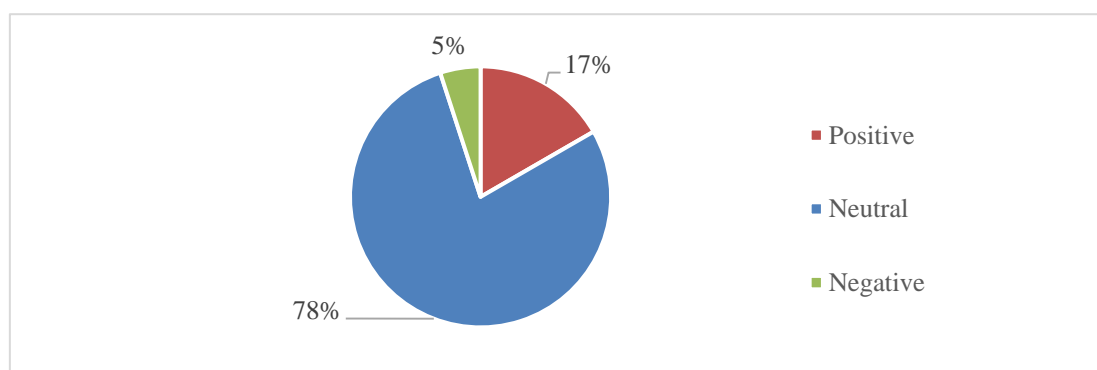


Figure 2. Distribution of “YChina” Video Emotional Tendencies

A detailed analysis of the emotional tendencies of the “YChina” videos in Figure 2 reveals that the association generally holds a neutral attitude towards the content, introducing Chinese culture and life from an objective and fair perspective. The negative attitudes in the videos mainly occur in relation to Chinese food and English slogan translations. The negative evaluations of Chinese food by foreigners are mainly influenced by personal preferences, while the problems with English slogan translations reflect the differences in thinking between the East and the West, as well as foreigners’ attention to and critical thinking about Chinese life. This negative attitude reflects the objectivity of the “other” perspective, making the video content more neutral and reliable, aligning with the research objectives of this paper.

To further intuitively present the emotional characteristics of the video content, we conducted a visual analysis of the text using the word cloud in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Word Cloud of Representative Vocabulary in “YChina” Videos

From Figure 3, it can be found that positive words such as “like”, “feel”, “very”, “good”, “particularly”, and “first” occupy a prominent position. These words carry strong emotional connotations, indicating that the participants in the “YChina” videos are highly satisfied with their experience of Chinese life and culture, setting a positive emotional tone for the video content. Words like “crazy”, “surprise”, “shock”, and “unexpectedly”, although not occupying the most prominent position in the word cloud, enhance the emotional richness of the video to some extent, indicating that the cultural and life experiences in the video resonate with the audience on a deeper emotional level. Additionally, words like “experience”, “attempt”, and “enthusiastic” also reflect the positive attitude of foreigners towards experiencing Chinese life and culture. Words like “try” and “language”, although not appearing frequently, indicate that the video content is not entirely positive, reproducing the real reflection of foreigners’ adaptation process to cultural differences, indicating the objectivity and authenticity of the video content.

3.3 Diverse Narrative Subjects: Inspiring Emotional Resonance among Video Audiences

The narrative subject of the video refers to the person who takes on the narrative responsibility or tells the story in the video. Different narrative subjects reveal the diversity and transition of narrative perspectives. The videos of the “YChina” fully utilize diverse narrative subjects, mainly divided into three categories: foreigners living in China, foreigners living overseas, and Chinese mainland residents. This diversity of narrative subjects greatly enriches the video content, helping audiences find resonance in different cultural backgrounds and experiences, thus attracting a wide range of audience groups and promoting cross-cultural understanding and communication. For example, video number 26, “The Business Mind of Zhejiang People: The Aunt Selling Onion Baozi Speaks English and Wants Snack Globalization”, describes the sights and sounds around the Asian Games through the personal narration of Brian, a foreigner living in China, and his dialogue with Hangzhou people. He shares his personal experiences in Hangzhou and shows their life attitudes and business wisdom through interviews with local residents, helping to enhance the audience’s comprehensive understanding of culture.

3.4 Multiple Narrative Methods: Promoting Understanding and Communication between Chinese and Foreign Cultures

Narrative methods refer to the different ways in which video creators tell stories, which have a significant impact on the audience’s experience and feelings. The videos of the “YChina” mainly adopt three forms: street interviews, topic discussions, and Vlogs, showcasing diverse views on the same topic from different individuals. For example, video number 18, “I Let Americans Vote for Their Favorite Chinese Brand, and the Results Are Surprising!” uses street interviews to allow foreigners to vote for their favorite Chinese tech companies and provide reasons. This method allows interviewees to directly and truthfully express their views on Chinese products, thereby enhancing the authenticity and credibility of the video content. Video number 23, “The Game That Can Best Help Foreigners Understand Chinese Culture? I’ll Make Five Foreigners Try to Challenge It!” uses a topic discussion format to allow five foreign friends to experience and discuss the game “Cave of Scriptures” with Chinese cultural elements, thereby deeply feeling and spreading the charm of Chinese culture. The distribution of different narrative methods is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Narrative Methods in “YChina” Videos

Narrative Method	Number of Videos	Percentage of Videos
Street Interview	20	33.3%
Topic Discussion	14	23.3%
Vlog	26	43.4%

Based on the analysis of the narrative methods of the “YChina” videos, it can be found that the content of the association’s videos is mainly presented in the form of Vlogs, focusing on sharing life

experiences. Street interviews and topic discussions also account for a considerable proportion, reflecting the diverse presentation forms of the association's video content, promoting understanding and communication between Chinese and foreign cultures through different perspectives of communication.

3.5 Mixed Narrative Languages: Reducing Cultural Barriers Caused by Differences

Narrative language refers to the language used to tell stories, reflecting the role of language media in cultural exchanges. The videos of the "YChina" mainly use Chinese, English, and mixed use of Chinese and English. The classification criteria for the narrative language mode of a video depend on the language used more frequently in the video, ignoring those used less frequently. The use of these languages not only ensures the accurate transmission of information but also showcases interaction and integration with different cultures, highlighting regional language characteristics and helping to broaden the audience base. The specific distribution of narrative languages is shown in Figure 4.

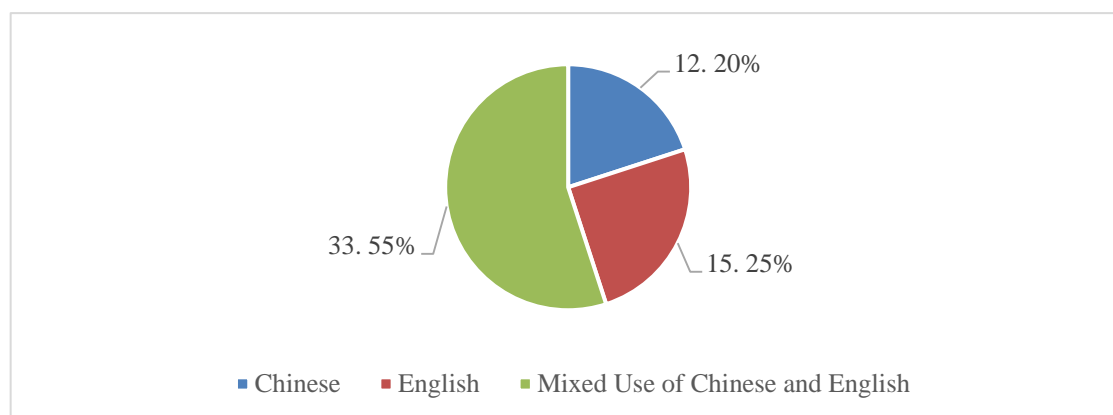


Figure 4. Main Narrative Languages in "YChina" Videos

Research on the main narrative languages used in the "YChina" videos finds that the association's videos tend to adopt a mixed Chinese-English narrative style, mainly interviewing Chinese and foreign residents who have experienced life in China. The strategy of using a mix of Chinese and English can present different experiences and feelings from multiple perspectives, allowing audiences from different countries to feel the local cultural characteristics and making the content of the video more understandable. Chinese is mainly used for discussions on specific topics by the Chinese people interviewed, while English is mainly used for communication on the same topic by foreign interviewees, directly expressing their feelings towards China. This narrative style can more effectively convey information and enhance the acceptability and dissemination effect of the video.

4. Conclusion

With the rapid development of science and technology and information technology, new media has provided new opportunities for the connection and exchange of diverse cultures. To more effectively

utilize new media to promote the dissemination of Chinese culture, we must deeply understand and analyze the dissemination forms of new media to explore effective strategies for cultural dissemination and continuously expand the influence of Chinese culture globally. Therefore, to complement the existing single perspective of cultural dissemination, this paper starts from the “other” perspective, employing research methods such as content analysis and case analysis, using tools such as “Xinxiang Toolbox”, Converter App, and Python’s jieba and WordCloud, to conduct in-depth analysis of the themes, narrative subjects, emotional tendencies, narrative methods, and narrative languages of 60 videos by the “YChina”, providing a useful reference for the dissemination of Chinese culture in the new media era. The research results show that: Firstly, a rich variety of video themes helps audiences understand Chinese culture comprehensively; Secondly, an objective emotional tendency can enhance the credibility of cultural communication content; Thirdly, diverse narrative subjects help to inspire emotional resonance among the audience; Fourthly, flexible narrative methods can enrich the content of cultural communication; Finally, appropriate narrative languages can reduce cultural barriers caused by differences.

Compared with existing research results, this paper has both inheritance and innovation. In terms of commonalities, this paper and other related research recognize the importance of narrative themes and narrative emotional tendencies in cultural communication. In terms of differences, other literature research shows that the presentation of the “YChina” videos is mainly through street interviews, focusing on the feelings and experiences of foreigners experiencing Chinese culture and life. However, the research results of this paper are mainly in the form of Vlogs, focusing on the cultural and life experiences of foreigners. This difference is mainly due to the different selection criteria for research samples: other research focuses more on audience feelings and experiences in video selection, exploring the effects of cultural dissemination; while this paper focuses on the production of the video itself and its implications for cultural dissemination in video selection.

This paper also has certain limitations. Due to the scattered nature of user comments on the Bilibili platform, it is difficult to extract representative common vocabulary. Therefore, in the analysis of cultural dissemination effects, this paper mainly focuses on quantitative indicators such as video shares, likes, and the influence of bloggers, and fails to deeply analyze user feedback content. Future research can further expand in this direction, combining the emotional analysis and word frequency analysis of user comments to more comprehensively evaluate the effects of cultural dissemination from the “other” perspective.

Based on the research findings, this paper draws the following inspirations: When disseminating Chinese culture, we should give full play to the advantages of new media and innovate cultural dissemination paths from both the “self” and “other” perspectives. We can learn from the successful experience of the “YChina”, focusing on the diversity of theme selection, the diversity of narrative perspectives, the innovation of narrative methods, and the authenticity of content presentation in video production. At the same time, we should encourage more foreign bloggers to participate in the

storytelling of Chinese stories. Through their relatively objective stance and cross-cultural expression advantages, they can present a real, three-dimensional, and comprehensive Chinese image to the world, effectively enhancing the international dissemination power and influence of Chinese culture.

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