

Research On The Communication Strategies Of Li Ziqi's Gourmet Food Short Videos From The Perspective Of Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract:

In recent years, Li Ziqi stands out as a pioneer in the promotion of Chinese gourmet food videos overseas. Through her videos, she narrates Chinese stories and spreads cultural awareness with cultural confidence, aiming to help the world understand China. The study aims to identify effective strategies for promoting Chinese culture overseas and to provide references and practical examples to enhance China's cross-cultural communication.

Background: *Gourmet food short videos have an advantage due to their universal appeal and minimal literacy and comprehension requirements, making them accessible to vast audiences across the globe. Li Ziqi's short videos has become a phenomenon. In April 2020, Li Ziqi's YouTube subscriptions exceeded 10 million for the first time, and the total video views surpasses 1 billion. She is also the first Chinese creator to exceed 10 million followers on the world's largest video-sharing site. Therefore, this paper aims to evaluate the success factors of Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos in promoting Chinese culture and provide targeted recommendations for other Chinese creators to promote cultural exports using short gourmet food videos.*

Materials and Methods: *Taking Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos as the research object, this paper uses the literature research method and case study method to study the communication strategies of Chinese gourmet food short videos from a cross-cultural perspective.*

Results: *The unique creative style, high-quality content, exquisite videos pictures, excellent video editing skills, and superb filming techniques all contribute to the success of Li Ziqi's gourmet food videos both at home and abroad.*

Conclusion: *Li Ziqi is a very successful case of overseas dissemination of China's traditional culture. Her gourmet food short videos are based on traditional culture, integrating China's gourmet food, costumes, and culture into the videos, and gaining the likes of overseas viewers. Li Ziqi's success threw a light on other Chinese bloggers who hope to promote Chinese culture overseas and to provide references and practical examples to enhance China's cross-cultural communication.*

Keyword: *Li Ziqi; gourmet food short videos; Chinese culture; cross-culture; communication strategies*

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I. Introduction

In the era of integrated media, short videos are gaining momentum. They provide an innovative approach to information dissemination and communication with the characteristics of a large volume of information, strong expression, and intuitiveness. With the improvement of China's international status and the increase of cultural output, Chinese gourmet food has become a part of cultural output and has received more extensive attention. *Therefore*, Chinese gourmet food short videos have gained immense popularity due to their universal appeal and minimal literacy and comprehension requirements, making them accessible to vast audiences across the globe.

Li Ziqi, a Chinese blogger of gourmet food short videos, stands out as a pioneer in the promotion of Chinese gourmet food videos overseas. Characterized by unique creative style, high-quality content, and exquisite videos, her videos have garnered widespread viewership and admiration. Li Ziqi's success greatly contribute to the application of dissemination strategy.

II. Materials and Methods

In 1948, American political scientist Harold Dwight Lasswell in his article "*The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*" clearly put forward the communication process and its five basic components—5W model theory, namely: "Who", "Says What", "In Which Channel", "To Whom", "With What Effect".^[1] The "who" is the communicator, "who" has the task of collecting, processing and transmitting information in the communication process. A communicator can be an individual, a collective or a specialized institution. "Says What" refers to the content of the message, which is a combination of meaningful symbols. Symbols include verbal and non-verbal symbols. "In Which Channel", here "channel" is the intermediary or material vehicle through which information must be transmitted. It can be an interpersonal medium such as a letter or telephone, or a mass communication medium such as a newspaper, radio or television. "To Whom" is the recipient or audience. Audience is a general term for all recipients of communication such as readers, listeners, viewers, etc., and it is the ultimate object and destination of communication. In "With What Effect" "Effect" is the reaction that a message elicits in the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions of the audience after it reaches them.

Based on Lasswell's 5W model theory and questionnaire survey, and studies the motivation of audiences who like to watch Li Ziqi's short gourmet food videos, the paper examines the strategies for overseas dissemination of Li Ziqi's gourmet food videos and discusses the strategies from the following aspects: the communication subject, communication content, communication channel, communication audience, and communication effect.

III. Results

The Communication Subject

There are two types of communication subjects in Li Ziqi's short videos: Li Ziqi herself, and the other characters, represented by her grandmother. Li Ziqi serves as the principal figure in the videos, which subverts the world's prejudice and stereotype toward women through the depiction of Li Ziqi. Li Ziqi gathers various images of women, showing women can be not only gentle and dexterous but also shrewd and capable. For example,

she can cut firewood in the mountains, plant rice seedlings in the fields, pick fruit from trees, and fish in the rivers. Throughout her videos, Li Ziqi portrays a character of industriousness, bravery, robustness, and filial piety. In addition, Li Ziqi's breezy attitude toward life has also gained great attention. Li Ziqi is attached to the label of Oriental gourmet by the audience, so her name is no longer just a simple name, but a carrier for spreading Chinese culture.

Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos feature not only the titular character but also other supporting ones. These include the secondary characters of Li Ziqi's grandmother, the neighboring villagers, the young assistant, and the cameraman. The central relationship in the videos is that between Li Ziqi and her grandmother, whose presence evokes tender emotions and resonates emotionally with the audience. The villagers occasionally appear in the video, depicting a cheerful portrayal of community and cooperation. Though infrequent in appearance, the voices of the young assistant and cameraman reflect a harmonious working atmosphere and the team spirit of mutual support.

In conclusion, the success of Li Ziqi's gourmet food short video can be attributed to the relationship between Li Ziqi and other secondary characters. Furthermore, her short videos promote the spread of Chinese gourmet food and Chinese culture with its great infectious power and emotional resonance in the story.

The Communication Content

From the analysis of communication content, the author mainly summarizes Li Ziqi's gourmet food short video content as endemic and shared culture. The endemic cultures in the short gourmet food video are the main factors that attract the audience. In cross-cultural communication, Chinese cultures, such as gourmet food and dressing, are exported to satisfy the curiosity of overseas audiences. Shared culture, on the other hand, evokes emotional resonance and breaks down language barriers. Therefore, gourmet food short videos would better combine endemic culture and shared culture in cross-cultural communication.

Endemic Culture

Content creators incorporate unique Chinese traditional culture and Chinese elements into gourmet food videos, which adds depth and increases engagement with different cultural backgrounds. The traditional Chinese culture has persisted for thousands of years and is a vital characteristic of these videos. By showcasing Chinese gourmet food culture, content creators can attract overseas audiences and attract their interests.

Firstly, the traditional Chinese farming culture is a unique product that was developed by industrious Chinese people during their extended period of agricultural production. This culture forms the basis of the emergence and evolution of Chinese culture by satisfying the fundamental needs of survival. Moreover, it shapes the unique identity of Chinese people and determines their way of life. Xiaotong Fei said, "*As far away as Siberia, when the Chinese lived, no matter what the weather was like, they still had to plant some seeds and try to see if they could grow the land.*"^[2] Such a farming culture demonstrates the excellent qualities of self-sufficiency, self-improvement, diligence, and bravery inherent in the Chinese people. Li Ziqi uses a wide variety of traditional farming tools and techniques and follows the twenty-four Chinese seasons for crop cultivation, harvesting, and processing. Li Ziqi records her life to let overseas audiences experience the most primitive farming civilization

and show the traditional farming culture by documenting her work from sunrise to sunset.

Furthermore, Chinese gourmet food culture is profound. Since ancient times, China has been fascinated with the heaven of gourmet food. Through the exploration of gourmet food, people have continued to develop Chinese cuisine, not only branching into eight major cuisines but also forming a unique Chinese traditional gourmet food culture. Emphasizing nature, climate, and seasonal eating practices, the Chinese have cultivated a unique tradition that different cuisines are cooked in different places.

Therefore, when creating short videos, the creators need to weave the concept of traditional Chinese cultural values throughout and understand that the core of short video communication is to show traditional Chinese culture.

The Shared Culture

The French structuralist mythologist Levi Strauss, based on linguistic and psychoanalytic, proposed that human beings have a common existential contradiction, which is contained in the myths of the world's nations and forms common cultural psychology. Therefore, he argued that through the study of mythology, one can observe the cultural commonalities among the peoples of the world, which constitutes a common psychological structure and becomes the basis for cross-cultural communication.^{Error! Reference source not found.} In the process of video creation, based on respecting the differences in cultural background, social environment, and religious belief of different countries, Beina Song once said, "*Creators should seek the similarities and common cultural topics, rendezvous point and value consensus of different countries to break cultural barriers.*"^[4]

Firstly, non-verbal symbols can facilitate the spread of culture across language barriers, so they are widely used in short video communication. Regarding non-verbal symbols, Samovar defines "*Cross-cultural Communication*" that "*all stimuli other than language can be nonverbal communication.*"^[5] According to Huirong Wang and Yangming Bai, many studies have concluded that 70 percent of the content of messages conveyed by people's interactions is conveyed nonverbally, and verbal communication only accounts for one-third of the total communication.^[6] There are roughly two types of non-verbal symbols: auditory non-verbal symbols and visual non-verbal symbols, which help Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos break the limitation of the language barrier. Due to language and cultural differences, Li Ziqi avoids using flashy rhetoric and instead incorporates nonverbal symbols such as body language and video language, along with rich video content, fine gourmet food production process, appropriate background music, and empty shots, so that overseas viewers can watch the video content without barriers and immersion. In Robert McKee's Story Seminar, it is stated that simple dialogue lacks character and influence.^[7] Therefore, videos can help viewers concentrate on the content, overcome cultural barriers, enhance cultural communication in cross-cultural communication, and video is more effective in cultural dissemination than written text.

Secondly, getting away from the hustle and bustle of the city and promoting a beautiful idyllic life is what people aspire to. Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos meet the emotional needs of viewers around the world through cross-cultural communication, generating emotional resonance that drives video transmission. Jonah Berger, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, found that emotion is one factor that drives what people share.^[8] As the main character of the videos, Li Ziqi shows the comprehensive process of gourmet food production and records the slow rural life, which is contrary to the contemporary fast-paced daily life, thus comforting the soul and fulfilling the yearning for freedom and simplicity. Li Ziqi takes gourmet food

as the subject of her filming, and the farmhouse courtyard as the shooting environment, to create an antique atmosphere that exudes peace. Furthermore, Li Ziqi's short video improves the connection between Chinese and foreign cultures in cross-cultural communication by showcasing Chinese gourmet food and culture to foreign viewers.

Thirdly, many countries, not just China, are advocating building the image of women. Li Ziqi, who was born in a small village in Mianyang, Sichuan province, has amassed over 100 million followers on the Internet, China Women's News named her "*Top 10 Women Figures in 2019*" and she was elected a member of the 13th All-China Youth Federation. Li Ziqi is depicted as a hardworking, brave, strong, and filial oriental woman in the short videos, highlighting her omnipotent talent to justify stereotypical stereotypes of women. The construction of positive female images is not confined to China, but is also a trend seen overseas, such as the progressive and avant-garde depiction of women in Western media. Both depictions signify the empowerment and expression of women's ideas, challenging traditional and patriarchal perspectives and striving toward gender equality.

Traditional Chinese virtues are the essence of Chinese culture and contain rich ideological and moral resources. The spread of positive images of women allows overseas audiences to break the prejudice against traditional Chinese women, and instead of letting foreigners portray the image of Chinese women, they should take the initiative to show the image of Chinese women.

The Communication Channel

Communication channel plays a crucial role in short video communication, as it conveys information from the communication subjects to the audience and establish a direct link between them. Uploading videos on multiple channels allows for greater leverage of diverse platforms, boosts the visibility of short videos, and enables users from distinct platforms to connect.

Utilizing short videos as the medium, Li Ziqi's gourmet food-based content has created a comprehensive and multi-faceted communication network using international platforms including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, and Chinese counterparts such as Tiktok and Kuai Shou. These platforms have enabled Li Ziqi to broaden her reach, expand her influence and attract a large following worldwide which helped her become China's first online celebrity to make a significant impact abroad and contribute immensely to the dissemination of Chinese culture.

Firstly, multi-channel video dissemination has been found to enhance dissemination timeliness and expand audience outreach and communication impact. In the current era of the Internet, short videos offer unparalleled advantages over conventional information dissemination methods like text, pictures, radio, and television. For instance, Li Ziqi maintains accounts on other platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to grow her audience base. The adoption of multiple channels eliminates channel barriers, enabling short video promotions to reach a vast range of fans quickly, thereby enhancing their global communication effect.

Secondly, bloggers need to make full use of YouTube because of the amount of distribution. Since its establishment in 2005 and its development up to now, the daily visits to YouTube have reached 100 million, which is more than other platforms. The advantages of YouTube's short video platform's huge user scale, inclusive content, and complete advertising realization are convenient to form a beneficial closed loop of communication and promotion. Therefore, YouTube can be the preferred platform for overseas communication of gourmet food short videos. In addition, YouTube can also provide users with subtitle translation services in multiple languages

to minimize the cultural discounting phenomenon caused by cross-cultural communication, allowing users from different countries to watch videos without barriers and to communicate and interact across borders, promoting understanding and communication between different cultures. The concept of “*cultural discount*” was first proposed by Canadian scholars Hoskins and Milos and was first applied in the field of economics, referring to the diminished value of cultural products in international markets that are not recognized or understood by audiences in other regions due to cultural differences.^[9] In cross-cultural communication, cultural discounting can be understood as the different degrees of communication barriers and communication barriers in the process of communication due to the different cultural backgrounds and audience acceptance, resulting in the weakening of the communication effect of culture. Therefore, YouTube should be the preferred platform for the overseas dissemination of short videos on gourmet food, and actively explore the international market for overseas dissemination, so that Chinese voices can appear on the world stage.

The Communication Audience

The audience is the object of the communicator, referring to the recipients and responders of the information. Li Ziqi's gourmet food short videos are spread on overseas platforms, so the recipients are people from all over the world. Taking YouTube as an example, the comment section below her gourmet food videos is available in dozens of hundreds of languages, such as English, Japanese, Russian, and Arabic. In terms of age, Li Ziqi is popular with all age groups, and the comments from viewers show that they have different preferences for characters, content, and values. According to the theory of “*use and satisfaction*”, there are different needs for spiritual relief, nostalgia, and social values because of different cultures and regions. Li Ziqi's short videos satisfy the spiritual needs of all ages to relieve stress in their busy lives and the pursuit of truth in social life.

In the era of self-media development, the spread of culture has a layering effect, which is not only expressed in the content itself but also in the audiences, each of them is an independent individual with his or her preferences. In the process of dissemination, when viewers have emotional resonance, they will like, comment and retweet, so that more viewers have the opportunity to see Li Ziqi's videos, thus widening the scope of the dissemination audience.

Therefore, in terms of spreading the audience, the audience on the YouTube platform is not restricted by age, country, and gender, which creates good conditions for the spread of Li Ziqi's short videos.

The Communication Effect

Quality videos have characteristics that adapt to the needs of the audience and communicate effectively, which is demonstrated by the high number of video views. The production process of short videos mainly includes pre-preparation, filming, and post-production editing. Gourmet food videos are the first choice of many short video creators because of their simple production, diversified creativity, and wide audience range. With the emergence of many kinds of gourmet food short videos, many problems have been exposed, such as the uneven level of producers, the difficulty of ensuring the quality of content, and the lack of video artistry. Gourmet food short videos are not only about gourmet food, but also a way to show the rich emotions of Chinese people, therefore, creating quality videos is the key to gourmet food short videos.

Firstly, to produce a high-quality video, the creator ought to be clear about the type of video narrative. The types of content produced by gourmet food short videos are concluded into the following points by Yanyan Hou.^[10] The first is story-based, the video content is mainly to narrate a story. This category is taking a simple storyline as a narrative clue to give the emotion behind the gourmet food. The second type is about teaching, the video attracts viewers who like to learn how to make gourmet food by introducing the steps of gourmet food making. The third kind is Reality TV program acted by stars, and a representative work is “*Chinese Restaurant*”. The fourth kind is creative play to attract attention, this category is mainly through unexpected ideas to attract the audience, but video production of this type is too simple and rough. The fifth kind is about eating, this kind of video is mainly about eating and gourmet food introduction. Li Ziqi’s gourmet food short video is a representative of quality video, the production type is the first kind of story-based line, in addition to Li Ziqi in the videos, there are many other characters, and these characters are also the main character and narrator of the Chinese stories. Form and Function of Narrative holds that “*the narrator maintains a large or small distance from the narrated events, the characters represented and/or their narrators.*”^[11] As the name implies, the specific story is told from Li Ziqi’s filming perspective, which is immersive and shows the most realistic picture in its original form, bringing overseas viewers closer, increasing user stickiness, and satisfying users’ needs for gourmet food videos. The viewers are contacted to the medium of short gourmet food videos because of the social factor of the wide spread of gourmet food videos and the psychological factor of the pursuit and desire of gourmet food in their hearts, to meet the demand for gourmet food. Katz E and Gurevitch H M summarized the audience’s media exposure behavior as a causal chain of “*social + psychological factors to media expectation to media exposure to demand satisfaction*” to satisfaction.^[12] Use and Satisfaction views audiences as individuals with specific needs, and their media exposure activities as a process of using media based on specific need motivations, so that these needs can be satisfied. Li Ziqi’s gourmet food short videos are positive, showing the production process of traditional Chinese gourmet food one by one, from planting, picking, cooking, filming, and editing, which is time-consuming but meticulous. And the delicate images, sounds, and montage language increase the integrity of the story while enriching the video content, So the positive videos can make more people interested in Chinese gourmet food and Chinese culture and more willing to learn about Chinese stories.

Secondly, excellent video editing and filming techniques are essential for creating videos with significant audio-visual effects, because picture and sound are the core components of video composition. Different visual elements serve to express different messages, different colors in the picture can evoke various emotions. Li Ziqi’s videos creatively combine light and color, utilizing changes in light and shadow, day, and night, and transitioning from sunset to the moonrise. What’s more, Li Ziqi skillfully uses these changes in the video clips to show the unique beauty of rural life. Sound is not only the inevitable product of the pictures, it will become a theatrical element of the film. Sounds can be roughly divided into three categories: vocals, music, and acoustics. Firstly, Li Ziqi’s gourmet food short video appeared in the following categories: Li Ziqi’s voice explanation, the sound of talking with her grandmother and neighbors, the sound of making gourmet food, the sound of water and insects and other nature, synchrony is more into the sense of immersive experience, rendering the quiet atmosphere to set off the sense of freedom and comfort. Secondly, through music to express the emotions of the characters, videos mostly use pure music. China’s most typical is “*A Bite of China*”, the background music and voice commentary avoid the monotonous video, which has the same effect as the Li Ziqi gourmet food short video. Montage is a technique that connects the shots taken separately according to a certain logic, removes unnecessary content, and uses montage to enhance the compactness of the story of the work.

Therefore, the key factor to create a quality video is that either type requires a different narrative

perspective, quality video content, excellent video editing skills, and filming techniques. So high-quality videos can enhance the viewers' happiness in watching the video and the artistic impact of the video, and bring the video itself closer to the viewers' sense of distance.

IV Conclusion

As a pioneer of gourmet food short videos, Li Ziqi's videos can not only provide a reference for other gourmet food short videos but also promote more excellent Chinese gourmet food short videos to go abroad and adapt to the development of short videos. Firstly, Chinese bloggers need to focus on the unique Chinese traditional culture and combine the content of traditional culture with the common values and emotions of human beings with the development of modern society. Secondly, to satisfy the audience's entertainment, aesthetic, cognitive, and self-actualization needs, gourmet food bloggers should analyze the characteristics of the audience, and grasp the needs of the audience. Thirdly, the disseminator should grasp the trend of overseas popularity and mainly focus on YouTube with a large number of fans to achieve cross-cultural communication. Finally, it is also necessary for Chinese gourmet food bloggers to pay attention to the mode of communication. The way of soft communication is easier for overseas viewers to accept and understand Chinese culture, that's why it is possible to broaden the breadth of Chinese cultural communication.

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