

A Summary of the Enlightenment of Short Videos in Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

As a short video creator, Li Ziqi has become popular on various online platforms in recent years. Her short videos attract the attention of tens of millions of fans, thus trigger the "Li Ziqi Phenomenon". Those videos take Chinese traditional culture as its core to tell Chinese stories well in intercultural communication, and forms a new research field. This paper would make a preliminary review and evaluation of the intercultural communication of Li Ziqi's videos, and systematically combs the phenomenon and ways of intercultural communication, in order to provide a useful reference for the international dissemination of excellent Chinese traditional culture.

Keywords

Intercultural Communication; Li Ziqi; Short Videos; Traditional Culture.

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication is the communication between people with different cultural backgrounds (Hu, 1999; Zu, 2015). The rise of intercultural communication in the United States is marked by the book named "The Silent Language". And its author is Edeard Hall. Over the past decades, different scholars have done a lot of research in the fields of intercultural communication, such as the transmission mode, value orientation, verbal communication, non-verbal communication and so on. Contemporary intercultural communication relies on the society development and progress of Internet technology. As a result, it has a new communication carrier, and has achieved remarkable communication results.

As a short video creator, Li Ziqi has become popular on various online platforms in recent years. Her short videos attract the attention of tens of millions of fans, thus trigger the "Li Ziqi Phenomenon". Those videos take Chinese traditional culture as its core to tell Chinese stories well in intercultural communication, and forms a new research field. Li Ziqi started shooting short food videos in 2015. In November 2016, it gained wide attention with the short video called "Lanzhou Beef Noodles". In 2018, Li Ziqi's original short video won the YouTube website silver and gold creator medals with tens of millions of fans from different countries and regions. As a matter of fact, she is popular on the Internet all around the world from then on. By the beginning of 2021, Li Ziqi had 13.7 million subscribers on Youtube and nearly 2.1 billion video views in total. Furthermore, the number of Li Ziqi's fans on Weibo has up to 21.16 million in total.

It can be said that she has created a miracle of intercultural communication between China and other countries and nations. As part of intercultural communication, these videos not only show the vigorous side of Chinese young people's lifestyle, but also show the unique charm of Chinese traditional culture to the world. As a matter of fact, this is the proper meaning of intercultural communication.

This paper makes a preliminary review and evaluation of the domestic research focusing on Li Ziqi's short video in intercultural communication, in order to provide a useful reference for the international dissemination of excellent Chinese traditional culture, and then promote the development of research in this field.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Overview of the Study

Using "intercultural communication" and "Li Ziqi" as the key words to search on CNKI website, we can find that a total of thirty-six valuable documents directly related to it were obtained by the middle of January 2021, including twenty-eight journal papers, six master's dissertations, one conference and one newspaper. According to the year of publication, the research in this field is more concentrated in the year of 2020.

Analyzing the existing research results, it is a great pity that most of them are analyzed the phenomenon from the perspective of marketing strategy, while the research on the international dissemination of intercultural communication is still relatively scarce.

2.2. Theoretical Basis

After reading the research on Li Ziqi's short video from the perspective of intercultural communication, this paper found that most of them are based on the concept of "Cultural Discount" proposed by Colin Hoskins and R. Mirus, and the concept of "Creating Shared Value" which is put forward by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer.

The concept of "Cultural Discount" indicates that due to differences in cultural backgrounds, when a culture is transmitted its cultural value is often reduced because it is not recognized or understood by people in other regions, which seriously affects the effect of intercultural communication. From the perspective of communication, reducing and eliminating cultural discounts, and improving the effect and quality of communication have great important theoretical significance and practical reference value for the international communication of excellent traditional culture.

The concept of "Creating Shared Values" was firstly appeared in the article named "Strategy and Society: The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility". In intercultural communication, we should adhere to the principle of seeking common ground while reserving differences, choosing appropriate materials for intercultural communication, so as to seek and create common values in human civilization.

2.3. Research Perspective

In terms of the ways of mass culture dissemination in intercultural communication, a few study proposed that the dissemination of elegant content and official values is indispensable in intercultural communication. On the other hand, we should also select vivid and positive content to mass culture dissemination. Publishing videos on the new media platform can achieve the positive effect of "moistening things silently", in order to greatly reducing cultural discounts and achieving twice result with half effort. At the same time, the spread of folk culture, as it is widely recognized, may not only expands the space for the spread of elegant culture, but also attracts foreigners to pay attention to all kinds of diachronic and synchronic cultures.

In terms of the contrast between high contexts and low contexts, Fang & Li (2020) pointed out that in the process of cultural transformation between high and low contexts, some meanings will inevitably be lost. Li Ziqi uses more non-verbal communication in the video, which reduces the cultural discount in the process of language encoding and decoding. At the same time, she gives an English translation in the introduction of the videos, which make it easier for foreign viewers to understand the main content.

In terms of the spread of cultural compatibility, Cai (2020) proposed that in order to eliminate cultural discounts, we should create common values, and always follow cultural compatibility and cultural proximity, and seek to narrow the maximum common denominator of cultural conflicts. Through the videos, Li Ziqi conveys the values that are widely accepted by cultures around the world, such as benevolence, diligence, courage and harmony with nature, which can arouse the audience's emotional resonance and value resonance.

3. Future Research Directions

3.1. Highlight the Effectiveness of Intercultural Communication

Firstly, there is no doubt that the combination of quantitative research and qualitative research can highlight the effectiveness of intercultural communication. The current research on the phenomenon of Li Ziqi mainly focuses on the qualitative study of the effect of intercultural communication. Quantitative research in this field concentrate more on Li Ziqi's record of the number of fans and video broadcasts on Weibo, Bilibili website, YouTube website.

It is suggested that online and offline questionnaires can be used to combine this phenomenon with foreign people's perception and impression of Chinese cultural symbols, willingness to contact Chinese culture, and finally present it by visual data analysis. By this way, maybe we can make an intuitive analysis of the effectiveness of these videos in intercultural communication, and also give sustainable guidance to other folk communication subjects.

3.2. Official and Folk Intercultural Communication should Go Hand in Hand

Secondly, folk intercultural communication and official intercultural communication should go hand in hand. The phenomenon of Li Ziqi deserves our deep consideration, which enlightens us that we should build a folk communication system corresponding to the official communication channels.

In the past, we paid too much attention to the official communication, instead of attaching enough importance to the folk and informal intercultural communication, especially the spontaneous folk intercultural communication. Li Ziqi's video organically combines food symbols, costume symbols and audio-visual language symbols, which constitute a powerful carrier of the folk intercultural communication perfectly. This recessive and flexible mode of communication, which conforms to the acceptance habits of foreign people, is not only arouse their resistance, but also arouse their emotional resonance, so that foreign people may realize the infiltration of culture. In intercultural communication, whether it is folk or official, we need to gradually form a sense of intimacy with a certain culture through a more detailed and closer psychological distance, so as to find a specific emotional foothold for the grand narrative process. It can be said that it is of great strategic and practical significance to adhere to the principle of "walking on two legs" between people and the government in intercultural communication.

3.3. Attach Importance to the Combination of Mode and Content

Additionally, we should attach great importance to the organic combination of communication mode and content. In the way of communication, we should take the Internet as the starting point and the new media as the main channel as well. In the era of Internet, intercultural communication should keep pace with the society and apply the new media technology. Network communication has the characteristics of diversified information, three-dimensional forms of expression and interactive communication, which can transcend the limitations of time and space. As a result, we can make timely feedback and adjustment the way of making videos and uploading them to the website like Li Ziqi. On the one hand, it has the advantages like low economic cost and easy operation.

What is more, the main body of practice is more extensive. In terms of communication content, the arrangement and editing of Li Ziqi's short video are of high quality. In addition, the background music and her dress are full of strong Chinese style. For the audiences, the videos totally present a visual and auditory feast actually. Intercultural communication should not only absorb the essence of excellent traditional culture, but also grasp the pulse of contemporary culture, so as to provide dual driving force for the intercultural communication nowadays.

3.4. Focus on the Role of the Younger Generation

Fourthly, we should focus on the role of younger generation in intercultural communication. Growing up in the 21st century with the rapid development of the Internet and society, the younger generation has an active mind, so that they are more likely to critically inherit and develop Chinese traditional culture. Similarly, the younger generation of foreign people are more willing to contact new things and pay more attention to the interaction of intercultural communication. The post-90s, represented by Li Ziqi, have gradually mastered to speak in intercultural communication obviously. On one hand, they are proficient in the use of various communication tools and channels, especially the Internet resources. On the other hand, they are more active in thinking, and they may have a strong sense of curiosity and exploration about various things. It is to say that they are more likely to find and choose appropriate materials for intercultural communication.

4. Conclusion

Cultural self-confidence is a more basic, deeper and lasting force in the development of a country and a nation. Li Ziqi's popularity has opened up a new road for intercultural communication in China, and has also strengthened our cultural self-confidence. In intercultural communication, the content and form of communication should be organically combined to tell Chinese stories and convey Chinese voice better.

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