

The Transmission Effect of Costume Dramas on International Social Media

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Abstract: C-dramas are launched on YouTube platform, and the update speed overseas is the same as that at home. Overseas audiences can understand costume dramas through language symbols, star symbols, and they love costume dramas more than modern dramas. They have the ability to share joys and sorrows with film and television characters. The viewing of costume dramas leads to Chinese fever and star chasing behavior. In order to better spread costume drama, it can create contact opportunities for overseas audiences within the acceptable range of culture, reduce the cultural inaccuracy part of costume drama, provide background knowledge and provide quality dramas. Film and television works are an important way to tell Chinese stories. Story-based communication makes overseas audiences willing to learn about Chinese culture and history through film and television works. Swordsmen film is a folk hero myth in the Chinese world, similar to western cowboy in the United States and Bushido in Japan. Swordsmen films is the most complete in China film, and the most national characteristics of film type. In terms of TV dramas, costume dramas are rooted in traditional Chinese culture, displaying rich Chinese elements and carrying cultural symbols such as Chinese history, mythology, classical Musical Instruments, traditional costumes, architecture and Chinese food. They are unique types of dramas attracting overseas audiences with distinctive national characteristics. With the open, convenient, timely and effective features of the Internet, Chinese films and TV series have been released on overseas network platforms such as Netflix and YouTube, changing from passive communication to active communication. On YouTube, film and television organizations with copyright have opened channels to upload Chinese films and TV works. This study takes Tencent Video as the research object to analyze what efforts the online video platform has made for the spread of costume dramas? What are the comments of international audiences? How to improve the overseas communication effect of costume dramas?

Keywords: Costume Drama, International Communication, YouTube.

1. The communication characteristics of costume dramas on international social platforms

1.1 Open channels in multiple languages and timely update

Tencent Video started to set up a channel on YouTube in 2016 and had more than 6.6 million subscribers as of March 2022. Since 2019, Tencent has opened specialized channels in Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Korean and English, providing official subtitles and translating information such as posters and scene hints of dramas. Tencent's official video channel synchronously updates and translates popular costume dramas in China. Tencent Video does not upload classic costume dramas such as "A Dream of Red Mansions" and "Journey to the West", but chooses to upload popular dramas in China. The newly released movies and TV shows basically keep pace with the updates in China, allowing overseas audiences to see the latest episodes.

1.2 Officials provide abundant information and volunteers contribute subtitles

Tencent video main channel provides more comprehensive and rich historical drama works than special channels, but does not provide subtitles. Fans of C-dramas voluntarily contributed subtitles, so the number of languages translated varied for each period drama, such as "The Untamed", which was translated into 17 languages, while some dramas were only available in Chinese. The subtitles voluntarily contributed by fans make up for the deficiency of official translation, so that audiences in

other minor languages can also understand the well-praised costume dramas. In addition to the main drama, the channels also upload shooting sidelines and stories to meet the audience's curiosity and demand for the behind-the-scenes shooting. Various channels also upload and shoot side shows to meet the audience's curiosity behind the scenes and the demand for chasing stars.

2. The overseas transmission effect of costume dramas

2.1 Overseas audiences' cognition of costume dramas

The difference of cultural context hinders the audience's understanding of costume dramas. In cross-cultural communication, the communication of different languages needs to be mediated by translation. Although the second coding activity of translation helps to break the language barrier, However, translation activities are subject to the influence of language system, translators' ideas, personality tendencies, cultural background and other factors. In the court drama, the self-proclaimed emperor, empress, prince and princess are translated into "I (I)", losing the status and rank order symbolized by self-proclaimed. The lack of historical information in costume dramas and the difference of cultural context lead to deviations in the understanding of international audiences, who are unable to understand the plot and character relationships. However, the unreal condition themes will be explained in detail in the film and television works, which requires little historical background information in the process of watching, and the resulting cultural discount is relatively small, which is easy for foreign audiences to understand.

National characteristic symbol creates audio-visual feast for the audience. Costume dramas show rich Chinese elements, and the costumes, Chinese architecture and Chinese food of each dynasty silently convey unique cultural attraction. In China, red symbolizes celebration, auspiciousness, unrestrained and vitality, while in western countries, red symbolizes bloodshed and violence. Costume dramas vividly convey the symbolic meaning of color to foreign audiences and change their stereotypical impression of color. Costume dramas have diverse styles of costumes, exquisite accessories, and small ornaments with unique national characteristics. Scenes and decorations in the dramas also convey Chinese elements, such as screens and porcelain, which make foreign audiences marvel. The background music, theme song and ending song adopt traditional Chinese Musical Instruments such as Chinese zither, chime bell give overseas audiences different auditory experience.

2.2 Overseas audiences' emotional of costume dramas

They are exposed to costume dramas in a negative way, but love leads them to see more. Audiences' comments include their love for films and TV dramas. Before watching costume dramas, Audiences were skeptical and negative. However, as they watched costume dramas, their doubts were gradually dispelling and they even became loyal viewers after watching them. Lots of people watch it over and over again. After coming into contact with some Chinese costume dramas, overseas audiences have expressed their praise for the overall level of Chinese costume dramas and developed a strong interest in them, thus watching more of them. Overseas audiences can empathize with film and television works, be affected by the plot, and understand the happiness and sorrow of the characters. Even though the identity, background and birth of the characters in the play are difficult to understand, the fate, love and career of the characters still arouse the emotions of the audience.

Costume drama viewers prefer costume dramas to modern ones. Modern dramas differ little from country to country in terms of costumes and scenes. Costume dramas have themes of palace dramas and historical dramas adapted from history, as well as unreal condition themes such as mythology and time travel, which are hard to be seen in other countries' film and television works. The uniqueness and nationality of costume dramas make audiences deeply attracted by the charm of Chinese culture and history. Therefore, overseas audiences like costume dramas more than domestic modern dramas, and some audiences gradually give up watching Korean dramas and become loyal fans of Chinese dramas.

2.3 Overseas audiences' behavioral of costume dramas

Watching costume dramas stimulates the audience's interest in learning about China. Tencent Video has channels for different languages, but the number of period dramas on these channels is still too small to meet the needs of overseas audiences. In addition, some videos do not provide official translation, and the subtitles come from the spontaneous labor of fans. As a result, some overseas users cannot understand the content of the TV series without subtitles, which makes the audience take the initiative to learn Chinese to understand the unique vocabulary in costume dramas, learn more background knowledge, and take the initiative to reduce cultural discounts. The love for Traditional Chinese clothes makes overseas audiences yearn for Chinese weddings and wedding clothes, and Hanfu has also become popular and desirable clothes for them to try on. Watching costume dramas also makes audiences yearn for China and they are willing to travel to China.

Love for actors leads to star chasing behavior. Actor are important cognitive symbol in the TV series, and the star is a factor of their interest in the TV series. Most of the costume dramas uploaded by Tencent Video channel are new dramas after 2019, and there are few international movie stars such as Jackie Chan. For overseas audiences, watching movies and TV works is a process of becoming familiar with Chinese celebrity. People who have watched "Chinese drama" tend to believe that a certain star represents the quality of film and television. After watching a star's work, they tend to look all their works. They can also recognize the role played by the actor in the previous TV series when watching a new TV series. Foreign netizens will always praise the looks of the leading actors. Costume dramas have greatly increased the popularity and influence of Chinese stars abroad.

3. Strategies to improve the transmission effect of ancient costume drama

3.1 Promote costume dramas with the help of overseas opinion leaders

The "two-level communication" theory proposed by Harold Lasswell. finds that opinion leaders have an impact on others' attitudes in interpersonal communication. Rogers later expanded this into a "theory of multilevel communication". Both two-level and multi-level emphasize that information flow must go through intermediate links before reaching the audience. The involvement of opinion leaders improves the visibility of information and influences and changes the attitudes of others. Opinion leaders in the Internet era who are active on various social platforms and have a large number of fans. Their information is highly concerned and their comments are recognized. They have strong radiating power and high arrival rate, and the information they spread tends to focus on a certain field. Under algorithmic recommendation technology, when overseas audiences do not have access to information about Chinese dramas, It is difficult for Chinese films and TV dramas to appear in their recommendation list, so they cannot watch costume dramas. Therefore, the spread of costume dramas should make use of the power of vloggers and overseas stars to create opportunities for audiences to contact costume dramas. At the same time, vloggers' easy, teasing and humorous explanations can also reduce the difficulty of understanding costume dramas.

3.2 Do a good job in the background of costume dramas

Southeast Asian countries, Japan and South Korea have "high-context culture" with China, while Europe, America and the Middle East have "low-context culture" with China. Audiences find it difficult to understand Chinese history, myths, idioms, allusions, values, beliefs and rituals in costume dramas. Overseas audiences tend to be skeptical before watching Chinese dramas, which makes them give up watching Chinese dramas and leads to the loss of potential audiences. In cross-cultural communication, the acceptable range between cultures is needed to identify the audience's concerns, points of interest, questions, appeals, excitement or attraction, and conduct targeted publicity. For example, "Detective Dee" wrote "Chinese version of Sherlock Holmes" when spreading on YouTube, which is the theme of the play understood by overseas audiences in one sentence. In cross-cultural communication, the acceptable range between cultures is needed to identify the audience's concerns,

interest, questions, appeals, excitement or attraction, find the commonality between Chinese and Western cultures, and increase the audience's understanding of Chinese history and culture. For example, when "Amazing Detective Di Renjie " was spread on YouTube, it was written as "The Chinese version of Sherlock Holmes". In addition, Chinese history and culture can be explained through Confucius Institutes, open classes and other forms, so that more overseas audiences can have a systematic understanding of it, create a good environment for the spread of costume dramas.

3.3 Improve the quality of costume dramas and reduce cultural inaccuracy

Tencent Video will spread the current hit drama to the overseas, these scripts are being updated, the word of mouth has not formed, the quality of the work is not guaranteed. Some costume dramas have received a flood of bad reviews, and low-rated and low-quality dramas have lowered the overall standard of Domestic dramas. In addition, unreal condition themes dramas is quite different from the traditional Chinese myth and real history, so it is necessary to make a clear explanation to reduce the misunderstanding.

C-dramas have far less influence on overseas video platforms than Korean dramas. However, in recent years, with the efforts of C-dramas copyright owners such as online video platforms and TV stations, the influence of costume dramas abroad is gradually expanding. Spreading high-quality costume dramas and reducing the decoding difficulty of costume dramas will attract more audiences. The dissemination of C-dramas will enhance the overseas popularity of stars, and the overseas publicity activities of stars will also drive the audience to watch C-dramas and form a benign interaction. Overseas audiences' love for costumes in the play can also expand the market of Hanfu and other commodities overseas. The overseas dissemination of costume drama should form a communication chain from film and television to physical objects and from online to offline.

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