



The Visual Significance and Reflection of Chinese Traditional Cultural Programs from the Perspective of Educational Communication

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Abstract. In the era of visual culture, TV programs are not only entertainment, but also play the role of educational communication. This paper takes “China in Classics” as the research object, and points out the characteristics and reflective points in educational communication through a questionnaire survey in college specialized courses, highlighting that this program is suitable for guiding young students to re understand traditional culture and enhance their interest in learning classic texts. It shows that Chinese classics can break through the traditional framework and serve the public through the communication mode of “lowering one level”, becoming an excellent demonstration of contemporary cultural and educational communication.

Keywords: Education and Communication · Cultural Popularization · Visualization · China in the Classics

1 Introduction

In the past, most traditional professors played the role of “knowledge production”. However, with the popularization of media and the Internet, knowledge spread at an amazing speed, and “knowledge-based” We Media began to emerge. Although these We Media are not professors and scholars, they have greater influence in the popularization of knowledge. It is worth noting that they often pass on wrong knowledge to the public, because their knowledge is insufficient or the expression is inappropriate. Therefore, from the perspective of education communication, experts should also take the initiative to assume the responsibility of “knowledge Transfer” and popularize knowledge that is difficult for the general public to understand. If we take Chinese traditional culture as the object of observation, we can find that its popularization is mostly seen on TV. Whether it is the “Chinese poetry Conference” or the “Chinese characters dictation competition”, it has brought good educational effects to the spread of Chinese traditional culture. From basic to higher education, it has quite good repercussions. However, in the past, whether in physical publications or TV programs, there was a lack of popularization of traditional classics, which made it impossible for traditional classics to enter the folk like poetry,

let alone the purpose of education. Culture needs to be inherited, but the premise of inheritance is in-depth understanding. In ancient times, China has left a vast number of ancient books and records, of which the essence is the cultural foundation that nourishes the national spirit and the spirit of the times. But in modern times, we only know the name of most ancient classics, but do not know their meaning.

Fortunately, *China in Classics*, produced and broadcast by CCTV, filled this gap in real time. The program team selected several books that have the most profound impact on Chinese culture to show the content and ideas in the books in the way of live performance. Many researchers also made comments on *China in Classics* from different angles. There are a lot of relevant research, but it is rare to study from the perspective of education communication. Shen Haixiong pointed out in the article *Why We Should Plan “China in Classics”* that “shaking hands with history in a contemporary way makes people feel pleasant and amiable, makes audiences, especially young people, enjoy reading and thinking, and makes classics come alive”, “Classics are the treasure of the country. They should not only live in the library, live in scholars’ works, but also live in the hearts of young people” [1]. It can be seen that “young people” are the main audience of the program, and among the young people, senior high school students and college students account for the largest proportion, which can further highlight the educational significance of the program.

In fact, universities and research institutions must return to society and transform the common sense of experts into the knowledge of ordinary people. More and more teachers also learn to make good use of the increasingly popular network and multimedia tools in teaching. Many studies also show that traditional culture has been able to broaden its display platform through new media. The production of “*China in Classics*” represents an important milestone in the popularization of traditional Chinese classical knowledge in education and communication, and its educational significance and reflection are worth discussing.

2 The Characteristic Significance of China in Classics in Educational Communication

Why do traditional classics need to be popularized? The main reason is that the classical text is too difficult. Therefore, “*China in Classics*” performs the classic content with real people, undoubtedly in order to eliminate the difficulties in reading, especially to appeal to the role of “visualization” in the minds of readers, and adapt the content difficult for ordinary people to read into stories. It can be said that if we can combine experts, scholars and professionals to interpret the classics and broadcast them on authoritative media, it will be more effective for the educational dissemination of the classics. From the perspective of education communication, the distinctive significance of this form can be summarized as follows:

2.1 Experts Tell Classics in “Popular Language”

In the past, we could only understand the importance of ancient books through the school, but it was a highlight that the program team set up a “Scholar” way to gather experts and

scholars to increase the authority of this program. For example, Qian Zongwu, president of the International Society of Shangshu. Meng Man, Professor of the School of History and Culture of the Central University for Nationalities, Wang Qifa, Researcher of the Institute of Ancient History of the Chinese Academy of History. Zhang Dake, President of the Chinese Society of Historical Records. Kang Zhen, and Li Shan, professors of Beijing Normal University, all those are well-known experts and scholars in this field.

In the program, experts and scholars simplify and visualize abstruse and abstract words, and then translate classic expressions into simple and easy words that can be understood by ordinary people. Through this form, the popularization of Chinese classical knowledge and the spreading influence of classical education can be enhanced.

2.2 The Educational Significance of Drama Performance

As for the importance of drama performance for humanistic education, Chinese and Western scholars have done a lot of theoretical and practical research, and their basic conclusions all point to improving students' creativity and thinking. Jonathan Neelands pointed out that "drama plays an important role in helping teachers to step into an integrated curriculum in teaching. These courses have their educational relevance and purpose for young students of all ages" [2]. From this point of view, the program production team takes drama as the display form, which is of great educational significance. In addition, in terms of content, the program team bravely broke through the content framework dominated by novels and stories, and rose to traditional classics, such as *Zhouyi*, *Shangshu*, *Heavenly Creations*, etc., which broaden the vision of cultural communication.

2.3 The Educational Communication Significance of "Interaction Between Ancient and Modern Times"

The program uses the modern scholar played by the host Sa Beining to interact with the ancient sages to reveal the cultural significance of each classic. Such the interleaving of ancient and modern in the classics connects the history and reality that should not intersect. The new technology of ring screen projection and real-time tracking provided by the program production team has further achieved a dialogue narrative structure [3], which helps the audience interact with the sages and achieve the goal of continuing to carry forward the traditional Chinese classics. However, the significance of education is not limited to this. Previous literature and history education was often criticized for "Rote Memorization". Today's research shows the importance of "Interaction" in literature and history education. For example, how He Xunyi let students play the role in the story in class and let students understand the role setting by asking questions. Her aim is to give students a better understanding of the context of the ancients [4]. It can be seen that the "story transmission field" designed by the program team conveys the important concept of making students have "sympathy and understanding" for "ancient" and "modern" in the education of literature and history. In other words, on the one hand, it can make the audience understand the meaning of classics through the interpretation and questions of modern people. On the other hand, it can serve as a demonstration of literature and

history education: the meaning of classics can not only rely on teachers and professors, but also TV programs can play a guiding role.

3 The Practice and Reflection of “China in Classics” in Professional Course Education

“China in Classics” marks the cultural power and educational influence of the Chinese media. Just considering that the power of the media is so huge, we should pay more attention to the content. Especially today, many teachers are using media as a teaching method. How do you think of applying such “classic popularization” programs to professional courses? It is worth further discussion. The classic book introduced in the first issue of “China in Classics” is Shangshu, and the writer has set up the course Shangshu and Ancient Chinese Culture in Guangzhou N University. Therefore, the writer played the content of this period in the first lesson and designed a simple questionnaire (Table 1). There are five questions in the questionnaire, which are scored with Likert’s five sub-scale, namely “very disagreed”, “disagreed”, “average”, “agreed” and “very agreed”. The scoring method is “1–5”, and the second question is a reverse design question. Finally, a total of 16 valid questionnaires (small class system) were collected, and the results of the questionnaire are as follows.

It can be seen from the average and median values (>3 for each item) in the above table that most students agree that watching this program will help improve the learning effect. Moreover, most students also agreed to use drama to convey the content of ancient books and understand the content explained by experts ($\bar{X} = 4$). As mentioned earlier, Shangshu is known for its difficulty in reading, but the survey results of 1, 3, 4 and 5 are enough to show that the function of China in Classics as a cultural program in educational communication “will play a significant role in solving teaching priorities and difficulties, improving teaching quality, shortening teaching time, and improving teaching efficiency”[5].

Table 1. Questionnaire design and results

Survey Result						
Topic	Sample	Min	Max	AVG	S.D.	M
1. Watch this program to help me understand the theme of Shangshu.	16	3	5	4.188	0.75	4
2. I can’t understand the content explained by the experts invited in this program.	16	2	5	4.188	0.75	4
3. I fully believe in the content conveyed in this program.	16	3	4	3.375	0.5	3
4. I think drama is easier to understand than reading the text.	16	2	5	4	0.894	4
5. I think watching this program before class is good for learning.	16	1	5	3.75	1	4

However, if you carefully watch the spread of the ancient books interpreted by the program, it is worth reflecting. For example, in Q3, “I fully believe in the content conveyed in this program”, although students support the “method” and “form” of introducing classics in the program, they do not fully believe in the transmission of knowledge. According to the statement of the program team, the Shangshu program consulted 65 relevant experts, inquired about 68 relevant books and thousands of papers, sorted out millions of words of information, revised 53 versions before and after the script, and embodied professionalism in every detail [6]. But why do students doubt the content of the program? The reason is that after the interview, the students said that although TV programs can spread knowledge in a more vivid and direct way, they are worried that the program will form an incomplete knowledge system due to time, nature and other reasons, so it is better for teachers to teach directly in class. However, as the guide of a course or the expansion of the second course, we can integrate the confidence and learning of Chinese traditional culture into life and entertainment. Therefore, this program is more suitable as a key window to guide contemporary young students to re understand traditional culture and enhance their interest in learning classic texts.

In addition, the dramatic interpretation of ancient books still has something to be discussed. For example, in the first phase of Shangshu, Fu Sheng, played by Ni Dahong, told the audience the story of himself, his wife and children who were displaced to protect Shangshu in order to escape the war. Even in the end, his wife died of illness in order to protect the classics. But in fact, there is no relevant record in the historical records, so we can speculate that this is a dramatic interpretation. Although for a cultural program, this interpretation is reasonable imagination, but if viewed from the perspective of “education communication”, we should make appropriate interpretation in the program to spread correct knowledge; If teachers use programs as teaching materials, they must carefully evaluate them.

4 The New Path of Educational Communication of Traditional Culture

The new media era has achieved multi-channel communication for traditional culture, but some scholars worry that “Chinese culture is a cultural type of high context, and communication out of context is very likely to lead to distortion of the essence of traditional culture. To meet the needs of social entertainment, eye attracting visual pleasure has become the basic form of information, and the seriousness of historical culture after adaptation and interpretation has been resolved “[7]. Although this theory points out the challenges faced by traditional culture communication in the new media era, it is actually a necessary process from the perspective of the long history of thought communication. Wang Fansen believes that thought is a way of life, so thought must become “Actionable” in life. In order to be “Actionable”, we must go through the way of “lowering one level”: “For many years, I have been puzzled about why thoughts cannot affect reality? First of all, in order to put ideas into practice, it is often necessary to “downgrade” them into clauses, maxims and etc. All the thoughts of the past dynasties in China that have had an important impact in the world of daily life must have gone through the process of “lowering one level” - including an omnipresent “principle of parsimony”, which is to

lower the relatively complex and profound thoughts step by step. Later, it may become several concepts or slogans, or constantly popularize or rewrite (including visualization and figuration)” [8]. Although Wang’s theory is aimed at philosophy, it is actually an important path for the spread of culture and education. The reason why it was difficult to spread traditional culture in the past is that, apart from the barriers between words, the most difficult place is that whether the abstract aspects such as thought and spirit can be accepted by the majority of the audience. Wang believes that if we want to make ideas work in the real world, we need to “constantly popularize or rewrite (including visualization and figuration)”. In fact, ancient books and records should follow the same idea in today’s educational communication. The problem is that, in the process of “lowering one level”, how to take into account the popularity and rewriting without losing professionalism has become a key to push traditional culture to the general public. It can be seen from the fact that many ancient books have been turned into TV dramas, or presented in the form of animation and comic books, “visualization” is the key to solve this problem at this time. In order to carry out the “TV transcoding” of ancient books, which is both popular and artistic, the program production team consulted many experts and checked many papers. From this perspective, *China in Classics* actually continues and innovates the way of “visualization” of traditional culture. If we say that the animation and cartoon forms are oriented to a lower age group, the birth of “*China in Classics*” can be said to broaden the educational age group of Chinese traditional culture. More importantly, from the perspective of the design and structure of the program, its combination of popularity and professionalism is actually better than other ways of introducing ancient books, which is a new mode of education and communication of traditional culture.

5 Conclusion

Neil Potzman once said, “Television cannot extend or expand the literal culture, on the contrary, it can only attack the literal culture” [9]. However, today, television, new media and other programs have been integrated into our lives. It is also an undeniable fact that many cultural and historical programs have reached a wider and stronger communication goal through television media than pure text publications. In the past, in addition to the dramatization of ancient novels, most of the pure language programs in traditional culture were in the form of award-winning questions and answers. Although they also achieved their educational significance, strictly speaking, they did not reveal the depth of thought and cultural connotation. On the contrary, it is a major goal of contemporary cultural and educational communication that how the vast number of Chinese classics can break through the past framework and improve the ideological level in the “lowering one level” communication mode, and “*China in Classics*” has taken an important first step towards this goal.

Acknowledgment. We would like to express our gratitude for financial support from the following three Projects. 2021 Guangdong Education Science Planning Project (Higher Education Project): “Research on Visual Communication Path and Practice of Traditional Chinese Culture in Application-oriented Universities” (2021GXJK279), 2022 Research Project of the Steering Committee of Online Open Courses for Undergraduate Universities in Guangdong Province; “Research

on the Reform of Blended Teaching in Universities Driven by Online Open Courses -- Taking the course of Advertising Copywriting as an example” (2022ZXKC581) and 2021 Teaching Reform Project of Guangzhou Nanfang College: “Ideological and Political Research on the Course of Advertising Copywriting” (XJJG2118).

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