



Analysis of the narrative characteristics of topical short videos that have attracted the attention of mass media

Taking how Erjiu Cured My Mental Friction after Being Back in the Village for Three Days as an example

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Abstract. With the rise of new media, brief clips, characterized by their short length, flatness, and rapid speed, are swiftly entering people's minds. This article analyses the narrative characteristics of topical short videos that have attracted mainstream media attention and uses the most viewed short video of Bilibili, an online video sharing platform in China, in 2022, "How Erjiu Cured My Mental Friction after Being Back in the Village for Three Days." as an example. This article investigates how current short videos captured the attention of mass media through narrative style, narrative perspective, and narrative language.

Keywords: Topical short videos, Narrative features, Mass media

1 Introduction

With the further popularization of short videos, heap of young video enthusiasts has begun to become short video creators who shoot various short videos to seek more opportunities and development for their lives. Most of these short videos record their daily work and trivial matters. Through creative narrative techniques and accurate refinement of social real issues, they move people with emotions and form spiritual resonance with the audience to trigger heated discussions among more recipients. By analyzing the most popular short videos in recent times, this paper studies the characteristics of their narrative aspects can understands the general rules of short videos on topics that attract the attention of mass media. On July 25, 2022, a high school teacher called "Yigeaixiang" posted a short video called "How Erjiu Cured My Mental Friction after Being Back in the Village for Three Days" on bilibili. In just one day, the video topped the bilibili hot list, with more than 6 million views and more than 30,000 real-time viewers. Erjiu and his bumpy life are more like a portrayal of their real lives, which invisibly touched their weak hearts and aroused their resonance. In the face of his unfair life and bad luck, Erjiu gave them the best answer: Just be optimistic to your life and never give up the hope of future life. With more and more people's attention, the popularity is also rising, and naturally Erjiu has also received the attention of the national mainstream media. Among them, the mortal's Daily pointed out profoundly:

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In the face of the joke of cruel fate, Erjiu did not be a couch potato, and instead, he defeated the sufferings by himself.

2 Analyzing the narrative characteristics

2.1 Narrative style

2.1.1 Civilian Narrative.

Unlike traditional media which spare most of their effort in mainstream, civilian narrative focuses on the lives of ordinary people, usually recording interesting events in daily life in a narrative way that is close to the public, using a friendly dialect and authentic narrative tone to showcase one's daily life.[1]

Erjiu in the video who became disable in his early age and encountered plenty of misfortunes in his life, but he never complains about his life and is striving to make himself to live in a better life. In rural China, there may be many "Erjiu" who are usually quiet and diligent, but they are not afraid of fate's tricks and the hardships in their lives. They always maintain an optimistic and cheerful attitude, smiling at life. This kind of "Erjiu" full of local flavor makes the audience feel even more intimate. [2] Moving forward in the face of adversity and being strong in the face of setbacks is the consistent style of Chinese narrative of hardship. Using this tone to create content undoubtedly resonates with the public: In today's wave of globalization, the younger generation is under great pressure and desperately needs a spiritual medicine to fight against the depression, anxiety, and insecurity in their life. The Erjiu's video is exactly this antidote, which appeared in time at this critical time and injected thousands of young people's haggard spirits to inspire them to get out of trouble.

2.1.2 Vivid narrative.

A writer of Qing Dynasty, Yuan Mei once said, "An article is like a mountain peak, if it is too flat, it will not attract attention." The same is true for videos. The storyline's ups and downs, concise and fluent language with a sense of humor, and the music that fits the video will all act as invisible hooks, firmly capturing the reader's attention and immersing them in your video, following the plot you designed step by step, achieving a wholehearted reading effect.

The vivid narrative is one of the important reasons why the video "Erjiu" became popular. Although the general plot is single and only chronicles his Erjiu's life of not willing to fall and daring to struggle, nevertheless the author utilizes a literary style close to that of contemporary renowned writer YU Hua, while hitting the pain areas of the three generations of the old, middle-aged, and young. He developed a stunning yet consistent sense of rhythm in the copywriting of 'Erjiu' by blending scene details with contemporary popular web language via virtual and real cutting. "Grandma sits down for ten seconds after every twenty steps, and the 'Erjiu' is three meters behind her mother every twenty steps, and it takes exactly ten seconds to catch up with these three meters. The last time I saw Jordan and Pippen was with such a tacit positioning. The author

compares Erjiu and grandmother of vlogger to "Jordan and Pippen", and all the representations brought about by suffering are covered up by the author's humor. The ingenious narrative style and the combination of fiction and reality make the ordinary daily life between the Erjiu and the grandmother of vlogger become vivid and interesting, creating a meaningful feeling that makes people relish.

But behind the humor, there is an invisible sadness: the 66-year-old and disabled Erjiu is still taking care of his 88-year-old mother, so who will take care of the nearly seventy-year-old Erjiu? This invisibly reflects the shortcomings of China's rural pension system, and also reflects the responsibility of the Erjiu's generation to the family, who is still doing his best to take care of the old mother in such a physically inconvenient situation, and the relationship between the mother and the son is ordinary but contains strength, which has aroused everyone's emotional resonance.

2.2 Narrative perspective

Narrative perspective refers to the angle of observing the story during narration, and the author's choice of narrative discourse expression often leads to the difference and transformation of narrative perspective. When watching traditional video works narrated from a third perspective, people often ask: is the author on the scene, and can he gain insight into the psychology of the characters through his actions? This makes the reader skeptical of the author's narrative and therefore unable to be integrated into the plot.[3] And "Erjiu" from the first perspective will not have such a situation. At the beginning of the video, the two elderly people stand against the wall, the camera zooms in, and the identity slowly brings out: "This is my Erjiu, a genius boy in the village." Then, from the perspective of a nephew takes us to explore the world of his Erjiu and feel his life. From beginning to end, Erjiu did not say a word in the video, but silently cooperated with the shooting, and the real feeling was not said to outsiders. The author replaces the protagonist's personal interpretation voice with the first-person perspective narration, which not only overcomes the problem that Erjiu's acting skills which are difficult to cultivate and improve in a short period of time, so that everyone can truly experience the misfortune encountered by Erjiu from the perspective and language of the nephew in the video, and feel the tenacious vitality of Erjiu in the face of suffering up close, and let the optimistic image of Erjiu emerge in front of the audience's eyes, everyone is sighing at the unique magic of this old man - self-aware people will not complain about others, those who control their own destiny do not complain about the god. Instead of blaming everyone and everything, it is better to meet every morning steadily and let yourself live a wonderful life.

Most of the time in the video, Erjiu just smokes, strolls, and works, and these behaviors seem ordinary and have no highlights. But the text describing from the nephew as the first perspective obviously gives these simple behaviors a deeper meaning: most of today's young people, most of whom grew up in the city, they may have not lived in the countryside for a long time, so most of them have no sense of rural life. After adding a series of daily behaviors of Erjiu, the entire video is full of the local atmosphere of rural life, creating a unique sense of atmosphere in the environment where the Erjiu is lo-

cated, and strengthening the feelings of the audience. The description of the first perspective with the embellishment of plain and natural language inadvertently evokes the empathy of the audience, allowing their subconscious to enter the era in which Erjiu lives and experience the experience of Erjiu.

2.3 A unique narrative language

In comparison to some popular short videos, the video "Erjiu" does not overly depict the rural environment, and the reason for the omission of the description of the environment is because the author is a personal creation, lacking not only professional shooting tools and framing equipment, but also a professional photographer. The most important reason is that the creator wishes to concentrate the narrative on the Erjiu in order to dilute the depiction of the scene's details, establish a distinct major and secondary effect, and allow the audience to focus on the Erjiu and his story.

His spiritual power is not only powerful, but also extremely infectious, just like a small grass with seemingly thin power to pry the boulder of fate that can to win a breather for all the people who are overwhelmed. The spiritual power of Erjiu can be transmitted to society thanks to the author's literary and deep language, rhythmic sense of rhythm, and immersive music.

2.3.1 Language.

With the rise of short videos in recent years, some short videos have been labeled as thoughtless, and their language has been mocked as a pile of skills like building blocks, which have seemingly rich arguments, but in fact is out of the topic, confusing and illogical, and its expression is even more obscure, confusing the reader.

The language of 'Erjiu' is obviously not like this. Chinese people always say 'birth, aging, illness, and death', why bother to have aging and illness between birth and death? This is the description of life in the article, which may seem like a few strokes, but it seems like a startled swan, giving the best interpretation of the four words of birth, aging, illness, and death with a straight shot: "Aging and illness" are not the inhumanity of God, but mercy. Otherwise, if we all die at the age of 70 or 80, yet still in our prime of health and strength. How much nostalgia should we have for this world? Isn't that even more painful? In this sense, 'aging and illness' is a necessary exercise between 'birth and death'. Simple language and a hasty sentence reflect the author's great wisdom and his understanding of life, which is a realm that many literati and poets have pursued throughout their lives and have never reached. The text of 'Erjiu' is accurate, delicate, and full of visual sense. Its language originates from the author's rich life experience and meticulous observation of life, with a genuine sense of affection for others.

2.3.2 Rhythm.

The aesthetic emotion created by the regular periodic changing movement shapes of objective things and artistic imagery is referred to as rhythm. It's blurred, people can't see or touch it, but it's critical to the narrative's control. A typically popular short video whose language and words, must have a feeling of rhythm that suits the topic. Why is

it that if the same sentence is used in some copywriting, everyone feels that there is depth and implication; while in other copywriting, it seems jerky? This is due to a rhythm issue, and in the video copywriting, how to break each sentence and utilize punctuation marks can be regarded as a science.

3 Why did this video become popular?

3.1 Persistence in self-expression

Content is always crucial to a video. The creator of the Erjiu's insistence on self-expression is the key to its massive spread. The plot of the Erjiu is unique and cannot be replicated. To some extent, it's just a simple character introduction, but a good plot never fails to impress.

3.2 Top copywriting design and unpretentious sense of graphics

Outstanding language expression is the first impression of this video by most readers, and some even think that the style of this copywriting is not inferior to the writing of literary masters: peaceful, phlegmatic, unpretentious, and a little humorous. At the beginning of the video, Erjiu is called as a talented teenager in the village, and the grandmother is described as an old lady who dances Popping every day. This is because grandmother's hands have been trembling involuntarily due to the growing age and pain accumulated over the years. It does not magnify grandmother's suffering but brushes it off in a lighthearted and humorous tone.

In contrast to publications that solely focus on copywriting, the importance of short video visuals is equal to that of copywriting. The "Erjiu" video effectively balances the copywriting and the images, achieving the appearance of one plus one being larger than two. The entire film lacks the Erjiu's dictation, much alone the customary processing of the sound and rhythm of the original scenario that documentaries frequently employ; instead, it is the simplest scene with the narration of his own dictation. If a movie wants to be full of copywriting and wants to show off techniques in the picture, it may not form such a widespread transmission, and it will become a lonely 'artwork'. "Erjiu" can be called a textbook for copywriting and picture matching.[4]

3.3 Voice

The voice in the video is also referred to as auditory narrative language. When a picture full of historical colors is paired with melancholy voice, the expressiveness of short videos is elevated to a new level. The sound has a shaping ability comparable to the picture, and most of them appear in the picture in music, vocal music, simultaneous voice, dubbing, and so on to aid the narrative and stimulate emotional resonance, creating a very charming three-dimensional world. [5] And that what exactly shown in the video of "Erjiu".

The video "Erjiu" adopts the audiovisual language of monologue, which is recorded in the first-person voice in the process of narration, and leads the audience to understand the story of the Erjiu from the first perspective of nephew. The advantage of monologues is that there are few disputes, and the introduction of arguments is always combined with creators' own observation of the real world and leads the audience into their own ideas. The monologue can always implicitly express the inner emotions of the creator, as it advocates the sense of truth, and usually leaves enough space for the reader's imagination. The entire video of "Erjiu" has always adopted the method of monologue, using vlogger's own video to interpret the words of solemnity and self-improvement on the Erjiu, expressing his admiration for the Erjiu, and hoping to bring the spirit of the Erjiu to every fighter who is deeply involved in suffering and torture.

4 Conclusion

With the rapid expansion of the short video age, many relevant short movies have grown up in people's minds, and there is no coincidence that Erjiu's video can stand out from the crowd. Even though it is only 11 minutes long, it has depth, layers, and implications. It is a dazzling light in the frantic content market of the modern short video field, and its content is ingenious and flexible, full of creativity; the character of the Erjiu also brings to the audience an energy that transcends the mundane world, especially powerful, and is worth chewing on multiple occasions.

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