



Multimodal Mode of Guangdong Intangible Cultural Heritage Intercultural Communication from the Perspective of Digital Humanities: A case study of Guangdong Lion Dance

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Abstract. In the context of globalization and informatization, Guangdong lion dance (GLD), noted on the first list of national intangible cultural heritages (ICH), an important carrier of national culture, presents unprecedented challenges and opportunities in its protection and inheritance. Therefore, it is of particular significance to utilize modern technological means, especially digital technology, to effectively protect and transmit these precious cultural heritages. To address this, this study comprehensively applies digital humanities and multimodal discourse analysis theories in this field and proposes a multimodal mode of intercultural communication of Guangdong lion dance to facilitate the exportation and transmission of GLD and provide theoretical guidance for related practices.

Keywords: Multimodal Mode; Intercultural Communication; Digital Humanities; Guangdong Lion Dance

1 Introduction

In the era of globalization and informatization, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) faces both challenges and opportunities in its protection and inheritance [1]. Guangdong lion dance (GLD), listed as a national ICH in 2006, carries profound cultural significance and symbolizes the awakening of the national soul and the pursuit of prosperity. It plays a vital role in traditional Chinese festivals and celebrations, particularly during important events like the Spring Festival, where it serves as a significant auspicious symbol. As Chinese culture becomes more international, GLD is increasingly showcased on the global stage through competitions, performances, and other activities. However, modern lifestyles have impacted the inheritance and development of these ICH projects, making it crucial to utilize modern technological means, especially digital technology, for effective protection and transmission.

The Chinese government has recognized the importance of ICH protection and inheritance, issuing policies to promote digital preservation and dissemination. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage explicitly encourages the use of digitization and other modern scientific and technological means for ICH preservation, recording, and transmission [2] [3]. Digital humanities, an emerging research field, combines digital technology and humanities research methods, offering new approaches for ICH protection and transmission. With the rapid advancement of information technology [4], digital technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) [5], and 3D printing have been widely applied in cultural heritage protection and transmission. Additionally, big data and cloud computing provide strong support for ICH information storage, management, and analysis.

The high integration and visualized virtual demonstration of various modalities, including text, audio and video, images, and technological processes in ICH digitalization, align well with the multimodal theory's approach to information transmission through various symbol resources like text, images, sound, and animation [6]. This presents an opportunity for innovative research on ICH intercultural communication. This study analyzes the current situation of GLD intercultural communication and applies digital humanities and multimodal discourse analysis theories to construct a multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication. By integrating various symbol resources such as text, images, and sound, this study aims to facilitate the exportation and transmission of GLD and provide theoretical guidance for related practices.

2 Literature review

The field of Digital Humanities has matured significantly within the academic community, especially in foreign countries. Various projects, such as the Murrinhpatha dance & song database for indigenous languages by the University of Sydney (2005) [7], digitization of the Japanese Yamahoko parade (2012) [8], Korean tea culture semantic Wiki (2015) [9], Terpsichore project (2017) [10], iWareBatik wax printing project in Indonesia (2021) [11], DigiCult project (2022) [12], and WEAVE project (2022) [13], have been initiated to utilize digital technology for cultural heritage preservation and dissemination.

In China, despite a later start, Digital Humanities has rapidly developed, offering new avenues for the digital protection, exhibition, and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in intercultural communication [6]. Researchers have employed technologies like virtual reality and 3D printing to reproduce ICH, exemplified by the three-dimensional animation "Sa Ye Er He" in Hubei [14]. Digital tourism, leveraging high-tech for immersive cultural experiences, has also thrived.

The multimodal communication mode, integrating text, images, sound, and animation, extends language to visual, auditory, action, and emotional modes for better information interpretation and transmission [15]. This mode is a research focal point both domestically and internationally, diversifying across linguistics, communication studies, and interdisciplinary fields like psychology and cognitive science. In China, the

theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis is improving [16], with applications in advertising, news reporting, and teaching. In intercultural communication, multimodal communication is effective in overcoming barriers and enhancing transmission efficiency, widely applied in analyzing movies, advertisements, and social media.

A literature review reveals a scarcity of studies on ICH intercultural transmission through Global Language Diversity (GLD). Zhao (2023) illustrated how individuals diversify the inheritance path of the lion dance, aiming to transform it into a shared public culture [17]. Although multimodal communication in intercultural communication shows broad prospects, further research is needed to deepen understanding, particularly in utilizing multimodal modes to promote ICH [15, 16].

3 Construction of multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication from the perspective of digital humanities

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) described "multimodality" as the use of multiple sensory symbols - visual, auditory, and tactile - through various means such as supplementation, reinforcement, and ordered arrangement [18]. The application of these multiple modalities in symbol product design, which involves combining and transforming symbols, is termed multimodal communication. This model has two primary aspects: content and expression. The content aspect encompasses discourse and design, typically presented in text form, while the expression aspect involves production and transmission, often relying on digital technology and multiple media [18].

Drawing on Chen's work (2021), a framework for multimodal GLD intercultural communication is constructed [19]. As illustrated in Figure 1, this framework, based on digital humanities technology, focuses on two main aspects. The content aspect involves narrative transformation (from Chinese to English), cultural system transformation, and modal transformation (from single text to multimodal), achieving a shift from the original GLD Chinese discourse to a new multimodal GLD discourse. The multimodal communication aspect includes the production of this new multimodal discourse (such as GLD digital product production) and its transmission (integrating online and offline communication channels).

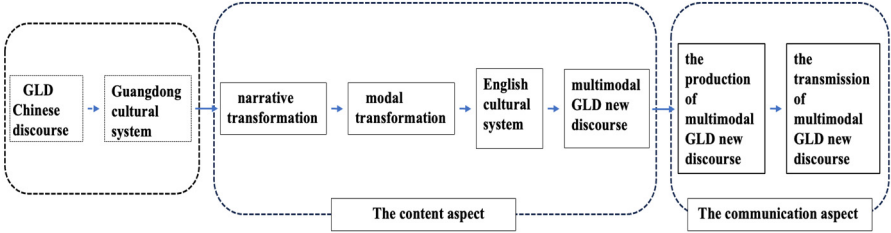


Fig. 1. Multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication from the perspective of digital humanities

3.1 The content aspect of multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication

The content aspect of multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication involves discourse and design processes, specifically including the extraction of the source Guangdong cultural system contained in the Chinese GLD discourse, the narrative transformation from the source GLD Chinese discourse to modern Chinese discourse, the modal transformation from GLD modern Chinese discourse to English, the transformation from the source Guangdong cultural system to the English cultural system, and the transformation from the source GLD Chinese discourse to the multimodal new discourse of intercultural communication.

Lu (2013) reported that the multimodal content in multimodal communication includes at least the following nine categories [20] (as is shown in Table 1).

Table 1. the multimodal content in multimodal communication

1	Integrated content that combines text, images, charts, videos, voice, emojis, and other elements
2	Professional live broadcasts from broadcasting and television institutions that provide information flow, ceremonial atmosphere, and interactivity and new media live broadcasts fully integrating various new media expression methods and distinctive mobile live broadcasts
3	Contents in a new form with various characteristics such as audibility, visuality, interactivity, sensibility, experientiality, and shareability
4	Visualized data content based on data mining
5	Dataset and data stream content based on online database platform
6	Data products that embody new media concepts, processing methods, and expression logic
7	Interactive content by using various high-tech means that can bring immersive experiences, such as VR
8	Contents such as text, images, audio, video, virtual scenes, etc. produced based on deep learning, virtual reality, and other generative synthesis algorithms
9	Contents directly generated by intelligent content generation tools, applications, etc. based on multimodal large models

Based on the viewpoint that "the driving force for the conservation of ICH should not lie in technology, but the users' needs determined by heritage practitioners and professionals" [21], it is vital to choose visual, auditory, and interactive media that cater to the needs and preferences of the English-speaking audience when disseminating GLD's discourse content. Consequently, this article categorizes GLD's multimodal discourse into several modes: picture-based (e.g., GLD English picture books, documentaries), text and video-based (TV, online, and mobile live broadcasts [22]), interactive media (short videos, games), digital resources (bilingual database, cloud museum, electronic exhibition hall, cloud platform APP), immersive experiences (AR and VR platforms), performing arts ("Awakening Lion" ethnic dance drama, "I Am What I Am" animation), and high-tech entertainment inspired by GLD stories.

In designing these multimodal communication strategies, it is important to preserve the uniqueness of Guangdong culture within the Chinese cultural framework while considering the interplay between Guangdong, Chinese, and English cultural systems. Moreover, the acceptance of the English-speaking audience must be a top priority.

Thus, when developing a multimodal discourse for GLD's intercultural communication, it is imperative to conduct market research and apply intercultural psychology to analyze the target audience's needs and preferences. Selecting images, painting styles, background music, and narrative techniques that align with Western aesthetics can help mitigate the unfamiliarity of Guangdong culture for the English-speaking audience. By leveraging familiar cultures, authoritative experts, and well-known media, we can gradually guide the English audience to become acquainted with, comprehend, and embrace GLD culture.

3.2 The communication aspect of multimodal mode of GLD intercultural communication

From the perspective of digital humanities, the production of communication aspect of GLD multimodal intercultural communication mainly refers to transforming discourse and design into more three-dimensional and vivid multimodal GLD digital products through digital technology and various symbol resources such as images, sounds, animations, etc. And the transmission of this aspect mainly refers to online and offline transmission of GLD discourse and multimodal GLD digital products.

Specifically, in the process of the production of GLD multimodal discourse, it is required that digital technology and various symbolic resources such as images, sounds, and animations be applied to transform a series of GLD historical stories into more three-dimensional and vivid multimodal GLD digital products. GLD intercultural multimodal communication channels include online and offline propagation (as is shown in Figure 2).

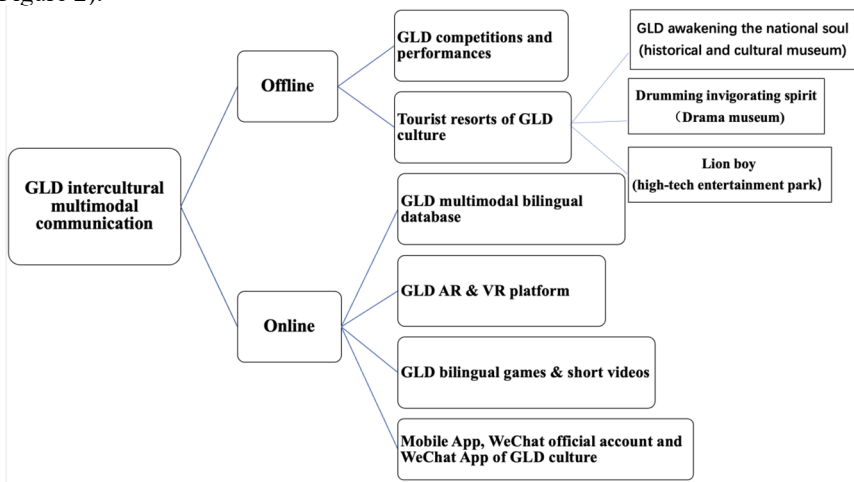


Fig. 2. GLD intercultural multimodal communication channels

3.3 Diversified Narrative Transformation

The narrative transformation of the intercultural multimodal mode of GLD is manifested in the conversion of relevant textual materials of GLD from source Chinese discourse to modern English text, as well as the multimodal translation that integrates the modern English text of GLD with images, audio and video. The language of the translation strives to be popular, concise, and interesting, focusing on the readability and comprehensibility of the translation. It is advisable that the translation should not rigidly adhere to the language form and rhythm of the source text without changing contents of the discourse. Therefore, it is compulsory to invite GLD inheritors, relevant personnel in charge of GLD text materials, and professional ICH translators to participate in the translation and modification process. Then, foreign readers should be invited to verify the readability and acceptability of the translation, and furthermore the translation should be repeatedly modified based on reader feedback until readers are satisfied.

3.4 Cultural System Transformation

Owing to the fact that GLD contains profound Lingnan cultural deposits and characteristics, during the process of translation, it is compulsory to initially understand the source Guangdong cultural system GLD represents, and then conduct the narrative conversion to modern Chinese and eventually transform it into the English cultural system. Therefore, in order to overcome the language and cultural barriers of GLD external communication, relevant personnel must bear a deep understanding about Lingnan culture, modern Chinese, and English culture. In that case, the translation can cater to the aesthetic needs and acceptance of audiences in English culture while retaining the core cultural system of GLD. Thereby these cultures mentioned above can be fully integrated, and consequently a new cultural system of GLD intercultural communication can be successfully constructed.

4 Conclusion

In the era of globalization, the globalization of Cantonese ICH and its recognition worldwide is a pressing concern. The multimodal communication mode can transcend language and cultural barriers, vividly showcasing ICH's cultural connotations and values, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding [23]. This study introduces digital humanities concepts and technologies to ICH communication, offering a fresh perspective and enriching cross-cultural communication theory. By analyzing traditional culture rationally and employing diverse, three-dimensional dissemination methods, this approach revitalizes ICH transmission. The study aims to present GLD to international audiences through a multimodal, digital humanities lens, effectively narrating China's story and showcasing authentic, comprehensive traditional Chinese culture. This endeavor seeks to enhance ICH's cross-cultural communication efficiency and facilitate the international dissemination of Chinese ICH.

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