

The Construction of National Image through Multimodal Narratives by Official Media and Civilian Internet Celebrities: A Case Study of CGTN and Li Ziqi's Videos on YouTube Platform

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Abstract. National image constitutes a core subject in international communication, with the development of video social media platforms providing diversified, real-time, and interactive channels for its construction. In this process, official media and civilian internet celebrities have increasingly demonstrated their pivotal roles in shaping national image. This study examines 19 Spring Festival-themed videos from CGTN and Li Ziqi on YouTube, employing multimodal discourse analysis and textual analysis to investigate their visual strategies for national image construction. Additionally, 80 user comments were extracted to evaluate their communication effects. Findings reveal distinct multimodal approaches: Official media CGTN emphasizes modern Chinese achievements through political authority, technological innovation, cultural inclusiveness, and people-centered governance, fostering rational cognition. In contrast, civilian influencer Li Ziqi portrays traditional rural China through idyllic landscapes and emotional resonance, highlighting hardworking, simple, and traditional characteristics. Audience feedback demonstrates predominantly positive sentiment for both, yet with differentiated receptivity. Their complementary narratives collectively contribute to a comprehensive national image construction. Future international communication strategies should leverage the synergy between official and civilian narratives to enhance effectiveness in national image shaping.

Keywords: National image, Video social media, Multimodal discourse analysis, YouTube, Li Ziqi, CGTN.

1. Introduction

Driven by the dual forces of the globalization wave and the digital technology revolution, international communication is undergoing a paradigm shift from "mediatization" to "platformization." As the core arena of soft power competition, the national image is essentially the holistic perception of a sovereign state by the international community. Its construction mechanism has broken through the one-way communication model of traditional official discourse and evolved into a "digital meaning production network" in which the government, the market, social organizations, and individual users all participate. This collaborative communication ecosystem characterized by multimodal narrative not only reflects the distributed structure of communication power in the Web 2.0 era but also tests the decoding efficiency of Chinese stories in the cross-cultural context.

Currently, official media represented by CGTN have established a new type of external communication discourse field by entering international social platforms. Although their professional generated content (PGC) model has the advantage of agenda setting, this kind of official communication practice generally faces the dilemma of insufficient communication efficiency. Xing Liju and Zhao Jing (2021) pointed out that the constraints of the "Western strong and Chinese weak" international communication pattern, the Western discourse alliance and technology alliance, the influence of "noise" in the communication process, and the insufficient international communication ability of China itself pose challenges to the international communication of China's national image. The traditional communication model encounters practical challenges in the era of social media, and

exploring innovative paths for the construction of the national image has become an important topic in international communication research.

At the same time, the technological innovation of short video platforms has opened up a new dimension for the communication of folk culture. In the field of national image construction, diverse folk entities such as individual communicators, non-governmental organizations, enterprises, and key opinion leaders (KOLs) form a communication ecosystem complementary to the official narrative through differentiated communication paths. Among them, the emotional narrative carriers represented by individual online celebrities show unique advantages. Lv Peng (2025) pointed out that "online celebrities" can simply be understood as people who become popular on the Internet. Individual online celebrities represented by Li Ziqi have constructed a national image with both cultural depth and emotional resonance through non-official narrative methods, highlighting the soft influence of folk discourse in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, the above content reveals the "double helix structure" of the communication of the national image in the digital age – the official discourse provides a legitimacy framework, and the folk narrative accomplishes emotional penetration. The two jointly shape a national image with both authority and affinity in a dynamic balance.

Based on this, this study uses multimodal discourse analysis and text analysis methods to systematically analyze how the official media CGTN and the folk online celebrity Li Ziqi on the video social media platform YouTube construct the national image through image narrative. Taking the Spring Festival, the most culturally identifiable communication topic, as the breakthrough point, it compares the differences in their communication content and the characteristics of audience feedback, aiming to reveal the collaborative communication mechanism between official narrative and folk discourse in the new media era, and to provide a theoretical basis and practical path for exploring the shaping of the national image by constructing a communication community with "official guidance and folk collaboration."

2. Literature Review

2.1. Multimodal Construction of the National Image

As an important component of a country's soft power, the national image plays a crucial role in international communication. Generally speaking, the research on the national image by domestic scholars mainly falls into four categories: the theory of national strength (Wu Xianju, Zhang Kun, 2016), the theory of national reputation (Guan Wenhu, 2000), the theory of media image (Xu Xiaoge, 1996), and the theory of national identity or recognition (Li Zhi, 2011). It can be seen that the national image not only includes the rigid presentation of objective strengths such as the economy and the military but also involves the soft shaping of cultural identity, emotional resonance, etc. Its essence is a dynamic process of the collaborative action of multi-dimensional elements.

It is worth noting that there is a significant intertextuality between the multi-dimensionality of the construction of the national image and the iterative evolution of communication technologies. With the development of communication technologies, the construction of the national image requires multimodal communication. Traditional research has focused on the symbolic production of the text and image modalities (Liu Danling, 2014). However, due to the rise of video social media, the collaborative effect of the visual, auditory, and linguistic modalities has become an important dimension for shaping the national image (Liao Xiangzhong, 2022). Through scene-based narrative, emotional expression, and symbol integration, video language breaks through the abstractness of traditional text and the static nature of images, weakens cultural discount to a certain extent, and forms an advantage in cross-cultural communication (Zhang Yiyan, Shao Yihan, 2024). For example, China-related videos on the YouTube platform construct a national image that is both authentic and appealing through the combination of dynamic pictures, background music, and subtitles in multiple languages (Zhang & Guo, 2019).

However, most of the existing studies remain at the level of single-modal analysis, and the discussion of the multimodal collaborative mechanism is relatively weak. The formation mechanism of this communication closed loop urgently needs in-depth analysis from a multimodal perspective.

2.2. Presentation of the National Image on Social Media

The iterative upgrade of digital technologies has propelled social media platforms to become a strategic field for the communication of the national image. Their interactive features break down traditional communication barriers, the real-time mechanism reshapes the timeliness of information dissemination, and the user-generated content (UGC) model constructs a communication ecosystem with the participation of the whole people, achieving accurate information reach. Since 2010, China's official mainstream media have gradually entered international social media platforms. However, Zhang Chao (2022) believes that although China's mainstream media have a large number of accounts and a huge fan base on overseas social platforms, overall, in the increasingly fierce international discourse competition, China's mainstream media still face the problems of being unable to express their valid opinions, failing to spread their messages effectively, and having their messages not widely heard on overseas social platforms.

Against this background, the rise and development of social media platforms under Web 2.0 technology have opened up a new dimension for the shaping of the national image. Real-time live broadcasts supported by 5G technology can present major events in real-time and counteract the agenda setting of Western media. The accurate reach of social software can push cultural, geographical, and other types of content to specific groups based on the recommendation mechanism of user portraits. For example, the Panda Channel Ipana has received a warm response through accurate positioning of its communication (Zhou Yan, 2023). Social media platforms have unique interaction features, and users can participate in content production in real-time through functions such as bullet screens, comments, and likes.

The construction of the national image is inseparable from the interaction among multiple entities including the government, the media, and individuals (Xing Liju, Zhao Jing, 2021). With the "decentralization" of the technical structure of the Internet, the empowerment in technology provides a more equal, open, and democratic platform, giving people more opportunities to acquire knowledge and space to express their opinions, and realizing the generalization of the agenda-setting subjects. Zhang Yiyang and Shao Yihan (2024) pointed out that in the social media environment, official media and individual creators influence the audience's perception through different narrative strategies. Official media focus on grand narratives and policy promotion, while individual creators are more adept at a civilian perspective and emotional resonance (Zhang Juxi, Wang Qi, 2021). Nowadays, while the grand narrative mode of traditional mainstream media faces the bottleneck of communication efficiency, the folk communication forces represented by individual creators such as Li Ziqi construct a differentiated Chinese image in the international public opinion field through the emotional narrative strategy of non-verbal symbols (Zhang Juxi, Wang Qi, 2021). The innovation of this communication form makes its effectiveness rely not only on the creative transformation of cultural symbols by the communicators but also on the active decoding and secondary communication by the receivers based on cultural resonance, forming an image construction mechanism with the joint participation of both the communicators and the receivers.

Current research shows two major trends: On the one hand, official media achieve accurate communication by enhancing their agenda-setting ability and gradually construct an international authoritative narrative system, such as CGTN's integrated media figure series "Meet - France Edition" (Li Linxi, 2024); on the other hand, individual creators eliminate cultural discount through non-elite and de-politicized flexible narratives. For example, Li Ziqi and others show traditional Chinese aesthetics through short videos of rural life (Li Yong et al., 2022). It is worth noting that most of the existing studies focus on the communication effects of a single subject, and there is a theoretical shortage in the discussion of the official-folk collaborative mechanism from a multimodal perspective.

Based on this, this study raises the following questions:

1. How do official media and folk creators collaboratively construct the national image through visual non-verbal modalities and auditory linguistic modalities in YouTube videos?
2. Through the above strategies, what kind of national images do official media and folk online celebrities construct respectively? What are the differences in the national images they construct?
3. In the construction of the national image, what are the differences in the communication effects and the audience acceptance level between official media and folk creators?

3. Literature References

3.1. Research Objects

This study selects the Spring Festival-themed videos released by CGTN (China Global Television Network) and Li Ziqi on the video social media platform YouTube as the analysis samples, and explores their content features and communication strategies from the perspective of international communication. As of March 2025, YouTube, as the world's largest video platform, holds a core position in international social media. With a daily active user base of 122 million, a monthly active user base of over 2.5 billion, and covering 51% of Internet users, it is the second largest social platform after Facebook, and its influence in the video field surpasses that of other platforms (Shubham, 2025). Given its outstanding international communication effectiveness, choosing this platform as the research carrier is of typical significance.

CGTN has uploaded more than 130,000 videos on the YouTube platform in total, with over 2.2 billion views and 3.23 million subscribers, firmly ranking at the forefront of Chinese mainstream media's overseas social media presence. Its content matrix showcases Chinese characteristics, and the video mechanisms and strategies provide a sample for studying the international communication effectiveness of official media. Li Ziqi is a folk creator of cultural videos in the style of Chinese rural pastoral life. As of March 2025, she has uploaded 131 original videos on YouTube, with 26.1 million subscribers and over 3.3 billion views, ranking first in the Chinese region on YouTube, providing a unique case for studying the international communication effectiveness of non-official entities. The Spring Festival is an iconic symbol of Chinese culture, so this article selects the Spring Festival as the research direction for international communication.

3.2. Sample Selection

This article focuses on the phenomenon of Spring Festival culture communication on the YouTube platform. By using the keyword "Chinese New Year" for searching, in terms of selecting samples of official media, with the threshold of a playback volume of over 10,000 views, excluding the Spring Festival Gala and related clip videos, 19 videos are screened out from the CGTN channel. Secondly, for the samples of folk creations, 4 Spring Festival-related videos from Li Ziqi's channel are completely collected as the analysis samples.

In terms of comment collection, this study adopts the method of stratified sampling. First, the videos with the top 4 playback volumes from CGTN and Li Ziqi are screened out, and invalid videos are excluded at the same time. Secondly, for the above videos, the top 10 most popular comments from each video are captured, and invalid samples such as pure emoticons, repeated messages, and Chinese messages are excluded through manual screening. For example, in the video "Taikonauts celebrate Chinese New Year in space station" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2G8CU249GUI>] released by CGTN, there are only 19 comments on this video, all of which are simple Spring Festival blessings. After comprehensive evaluation, it is excluded. Finally, a total of 80 valid comment samples are collected.

3.3. Research Methods

This article uses multimodal discourse analysis and text analysis methods to conduct an in-depth analysis of the selected 19 video samples, and analyzes how the most influential official media and

folk online celebrities on the YouTube platform use image narratives to tell Chinese stories well and shape the national image.

Multimodal discourse analysis is based on systemic functional linguistics. In recent years, this theory has been integrated with communication studies, forming an interdisciplinary analysis framework. This article adopts Zhang Delu's theoretical system of multimodal discourse analysis, which divides multimodality into linguistic modality and non-linguistic modality (Zhang Delu, 2009). As an audio-visual composite medium, the communication of images naturally requires the use of multimodal symbols. Considering that videos mainly rely on audio-visual communication, for the effectiveness of this study, the symbol system is divided into two dimensions: visual non-linguistic modality and auditory linguistic modality to analyze the Spring Festival-themed videos of CGTN and Li Ziqi, and explore the differences in the national images they construct.

Jiang Xin et al. (2020) pointed out that qualitative text analysis is a systematic analysis method that pays more attention to the role of text understanding and interpretation in revealing the potential meaning of texts. Through text analysis of media content, it is possible to reveal the capabilities and emotional colors contained in the text during the encoding and decoding processes, and obtain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of media content. Therefore, this article uses the text analysis method and the emotional tendency analysis approach to analyze the communication effects of the videos of CGTN and Li Ziqi among relevant online users and their intertextuality in constructing the national image.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Differences in Strategies for Constructing the National Image between Official and Folk Entities

4.1.1. Visual Symbols in Agenda Setting: From Rational Cognition to Emotional Resonance

The agenda setting theory points out that the media influences the audience's perception of reality through the ranking of issue salience and the construction of symbolic frameworks (Guo & McCombs, 2011). CGTN and Li Ziqi, respectively from the official narrative and the folk perspective, through the selection and combination of visual modalities, and by using dynamic and static visual strategies, have successfully set two important agendas: national development and cultural inheritance, and have set differentiated national image agendas in international communication.

CGTN employs a dual strategy of camera language and symbols, transforming the development achievements of modern China into visual narratives with global communication power. When studying the videos themed on the Spring Festival, it is found that CGTN mostly adopts the "Spring Festival +" narrative mode, breaking through the traditional narrative category of Spring Festival culture. Among the 19 valid samples, there is only 1 piece of content purely about the origin of the Spring Festival. In terms of camera language, it uses technologies such as drone aerial photography and real-time images from the space station, combined with montage editing, to transform modern achievements such as the high-speed rail network and the city skyline into visual symbols. For example, in the Spring Festival blessing video from the space station in 2023 [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2G8CU249GUI>], through a 49-second montage editing, scenes such as in-cabin experiments, overlooking the Earth, and astronauts writing Spring Festival couplets are connected in series, achieving a symbolic integration of scientific and technological strength and traditional culture. In terms of the construction of the symbol system, CGTN frequently presents symbols of transnational cooperation such as lion dances in China and Malaysia and speeches by leaders of international organizations, constructing a global communication matrix for the national image. The data shows that the average number of likes for its diplomatic videos is significantly higher than that for cultural videos, highlighting the communication advantage of modernity issues in agenda setting. This dynamic visual strategy not only meets the international audience's cognitive

needs for China's development achievements but also strengthens the perception of the country's strength in its national image.

In contrast, Li Ziqi's videos are shot with fixed camera positions and recorded with long takes, creating a unique cultural space for the audience. In the video "Chinese New Year's decorations, goods and snacks!" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGOTCCVDLlQ>], through the combination of close-up shots and medium shots, the process of "pasting up lanterns" and "putting up couplets" is vividly shown in detail. The object symbols such as wooden furniture and traditional farming tools in the video, as well as the quaint villages surrounded by green mountains and clear waters and the pastoral scenery of the changing seasons, jointly construct a cultural space like the "Peach Blossom Spring," allowing the audience to feel the tranquility and beauty of traditional Chinese rural life. Li Ziqi deliberately blurs the concept of modern time in her videos, avoiding modern timekeeping tools such as clocks and mobile phones, and with the help of time symbols such as solar terms changes and natural light and shadow, she strengthens the cyclic characteristics of agricultural civilization. This way of handling time makes the audience seem to travel back in time and appreciate the profound heritage of traditional Chinese culture.

In summary, through different visual modalities, CGTN and Li Ziqi have achieved remarkable results in setting the agendas of national development and cultural inheritance respectively. The two complement each other and jointly construct a diverse and three-dimensional image of China, contributing significantly to the communication of China's image on the international stage.

4.1.2. Official Authority and Folk Tenderness Expressed by Auditory Linguistic Symbols

The cultural discount theory proposed by British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall points out that due to cultural background differences, when cultural products are communicated across different cultures, their value will be reduced due to the barriers of cultural understanding (Pan Kewu, Ma Yunhui, 2020). In international communication, audio-visual symbols are the key to breaking down cultural barriers, especially the auditory dimension, which can break through the barriers of rational cognition through the mechanisms of emotional arousal and cultural association. The differentiated practices of CGTN and Li Ziqi fully demonstrate the complementary value of institutional communication and folk narrative in reducing cultural discounts.

As an official media, CGTN's content closely revolves around core themes such as national image, cultural communication, and people's livelihood development. In the application of auditory modalities, it has distinct characteristics. For videos of leaders' speeches, the duration is mostly controlled within about 1 minute, and the language expression is formal and solemn. For example, in the videos related to President Xi Jinping's New Year's congratulatory messages, the audio mainly uses the clear and serious original speech sounds, fully reflecting the authority and solemnity of the country, enabling the global audience to accurately receive the official information and stance. In cultural documentaries and in-depth reports, corresponding music and sound effects are skillfully matched according to different themes. For example, in the Spring Festival blessing video from the space program, the inspiring background music, combined with the images of the space station, enhances the sense of technology and grandeur; the synchronous sounds such as the gongs and drums integrated into the video of lion dances in China and Malaysia create a lively atmosphere and a sense of reality, highlighting the vitality of cultural exchanges. Through formal language and a variety of suitable sound elements, CGTN effectively conveys information, helps to shape and spread the national image, and reduces the impact of cultural discounts caused by language differences and other factors.

In Li Ziqi's videos, the auditory elements mainly consist of gentle and soothing natural sound effects, such as the sound of the wind, the chirping of birds, and the sounds of utensils colliding when making food, creating a peaceful and serene pastoral atmosphere. In terms of language, there is almost no voiceover, and occasionally there are gentle exchanges in dialects among family members, accompanied by a mild Chinese-style background music, conveying a strong flavor of life and the warmth of family affection, highlighting the charm of traditional Chinese culture. Through the universal audio-visual symbols, Li Ziqi's videos reduce the cultural discount generated when Chinese

culture in a high-context environment is transmitted to Western culture in a low-context environment, vividly showing the natural scenery, pastoral scenes, people's actions, and living scenes of Chinese villages, which also conforms to the traditional Chinese cultural ideal of "retiring to the mountains and forests." The commonality of people's perception of the essence of food and life, as well as her skillful use of universal non-verbal symbol presentation methods such as images that appeal to audio-visual perception, are beneficial to the understanding and acceptance of Chinese culture by overseas audiences.

There are significant differences between the two in auditory language modalities. CGTN focuses on information dissemination and grand themes, with formal and diverse audio, serving the country's macro-narrative and shaping the image of a great power that is positive and enterprising; Li Ziqi focuses on creating a warm and cozy life scene, with an auditory style close to life, showing the tranquility and peace of Chinese villages. The two each show their own characteristics in international communication. From the perspectives of both official and folk entities, they break through cultural discounts through audio-visual symbols and effectively spread the true image of China.

4.2. National Images Constructed by Official and Folk Entities

4.2.1. The Image of a Great Power in Official Narratives

As an official mainstream media, CGTN, through the selective reporting of news events, highlights China's achievements in the fields of scientific and technological innovation, cultural inheritance, and international cooperation, and constructs the image of a great power that combines political authority, scientific and technological innovation, cultural tolerance, and the warmth of people's livelihood.

CGTN's reports enable the world to clearly see China's strong political authority and leading ability demonstrated in shaping the international order, constructing the image of a great power with political authority. By releasing Spring Festival blessing videos from leaders of other countries or international organizations and using the perspective of others, it shows the authoritative information of China in international diplomacy.

In the field of scientific and technological innovation, CGTN fully presents China's cutting-edge technologies, constructing the image of a great power in scientific and technological innovation. By showing astronauts celebrating the Chinese Spring Festival in the space station, it demonstrates China's strong strength in cutting-edge space technologies, highlighting China's image as a great power that is driven by scientific and technological innovation, at the forefront of the times, and leading the global trend of scientific and technological development.

CGTN deeply explores the charm of China's excellent traditional culture, enabling the world to appreciate the profound heritage and unique charm of Chinese culture, and constructing the image of a great power with cultural tolerance. In the reports of international cultural exchange activities, it shows China's open and inclusive attitude towards different cultures and the strong international influence of Chinese culture going global. In addition, CGTN focuses on the changes in the lives of ordinary people. Through reporting on national leaders' inspections in various places and their exchanges with the people, it comprehensively shows China's unremitting efforts in improving people's living standards, vividly interpreting the image of a great power full of the warmth of people's livelihood.

However, relevant research (Fan Qianqian, 2021) shows that when Chinese mainstream media carry out international short-video communication work through overseas social platforms, a series of problems are exposed. Although CGTN has achieved remarkable results in the construction of the national image, there are still some problems. As an official mainstream media, its reports tend to be grand narratives with a relatively strong political color. This communication style is likely to make some overseas audiences feel a sense of distance. At the same time, there are deficiencies in its international news reporting capabilities, failing to fully balance the relationship between the display of China's image and the objective reporting of international affairs, and it is difficult to meet the global audience's demand for diverse information. In terms of content expression, the depth and breadth of communication in the fields of people's livelihood and culture are insufficient, and it has

not completely broken-down cultural barriers, resulting in certain limitations in the communication effect and influence, which is not conducive to establishing a broader sense of identity and credibility in the international public opinion field.

4.2.2. The Image of Chinese Villages in Individual Narratives

Public diplomacy, as an important part of a major country's diplomacy, is a key path to enhancing international discourse power and shaping the national image. With the vigorous development of new media technologies, the theory of new public diplomacy points out that diplomatic activities led by the government and participated in by non-governmental organizations and private institutions open up new possibilities for the shaping of the national image (Zheng Hua, 2010). The videos of individual bloggers on YouTube, the world's largest video social platform, not only shape personal images but also, imperceptibly, construct the national image. Li Ziqi, with her civilian identity and simple language, has shaped a diverse image that demonstrates the country's soft power.

Li Ziqi's videos comprehensively show the broad and profound nature of traditional Chinese culture. From the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis, she presents rich intangible cultural heritages by showing traditional crafts, agricultural production, and seasonal food customs, such as the making of Spring Festival snacks, conveying the philosophical concept of "harmony between man and nature" and emphasizing the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, allowing the global audience to appreciate the long history of Chinese culture.

In constructing the image of Chinese villages, Li Ziqi uniquely focuses on rural life, records daily life from a civilian perspective, and creates a peaceful and beautiful pastoral picture through image communication and narrative. This idyllic presentation conforms to the common emotional demands of people in the context of global urbanization, breaks down cultural discounts, and achieves emotional resonance and cultural identity. At the same time, the traditional customs in the videos vividly show the charm and heritage of the countryside, helping international audiences recognize the diverse and symbiotic national landscape of Chinese cities and villages. However, it should be noted that in the Western cultural context, this single pastoral presentation may lead to stereotypes. Influenced by their own cultural systems, Western audiences are prone to forming a stereotyped and simplistic perception of Chinese villages, thus ignoring the diverse changes in China's modernization process.

In addition, Li Ziqi's videos also highlight the warmth of human nature, shaping the image of hardworking and simple people and the image of powerful women. In the videos of New Year's goods and delicacies, the warm scene at the end, which shows grandma, the little dog, and the whole family sitting around the stove enjoying the food, conveys eternal family affection and the harmonious relationship between man and nature, breaking through the barriers of time, space, and culture and touching people's hearts. In the international public opinion environment full of the "China threat theory" (Wu Fei, 2015), such content that demonstrates personal struggle and warmth interprets the "Chinese Dream" from an individual perspective and effectively responds to false statements.

Therefore, the flexible narrative of folk online celebrities is conducive to making up for the deficiencies in the communication of official media, and the communication of multiple subjects by official media and folk online celebrities is conducive to the construction of the national image.

4.3. Analysis of Comment Effects

This study analyzes the comments on the top 40 Spring Festival-themed videos of CGTN and Li Ziqi in terms of popularity on the YouTube platform. CGTN's videos have constructed a three-dimensional and charming national image in the international public opinion field, attracting the extensive attention and positive discussions of overseas Chinese and international friends. Li Ziqi's videos, through emotional mobilization, have achieved value penetration, transforming the image of China from grand narratives into perceptible life details. This "de-politicized" communication method effectively avoids ideological confrontation, making the image of China more approachable and persuasive. Through a comprehensive consideration of the relevant video data, it is concluded that

the audience has a relatively higher acceptance of videos with a lower political attribute and dominated by personalized narratives.

4.3.1. Analysis of the Emotional Tendency of CGTN's and Li Ziqi's Videos

In terms of emotional tendency, the comments on CGTN's and Li Ziqi's videos are quite similar, both showing that positive emotions dominate and there is no negative emotional tendency. This reflects the good communication effects of the above videos in international communication.

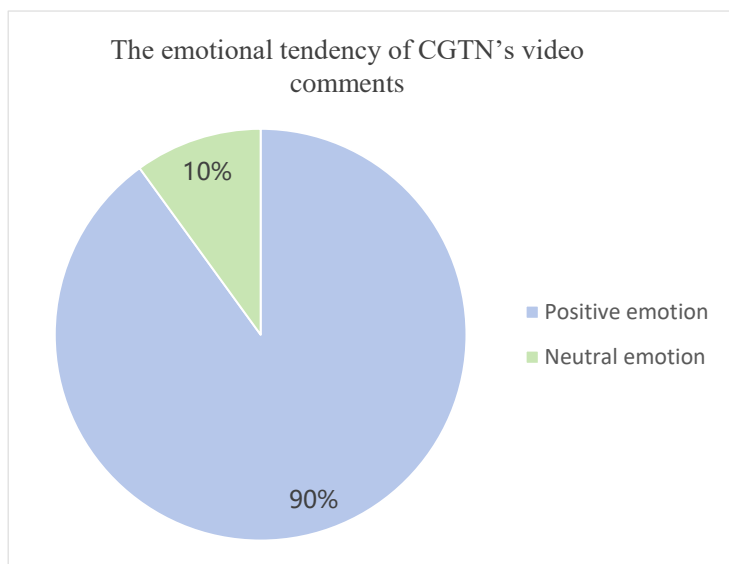


Figure 1. The emotional tendency of CGTN's video comments

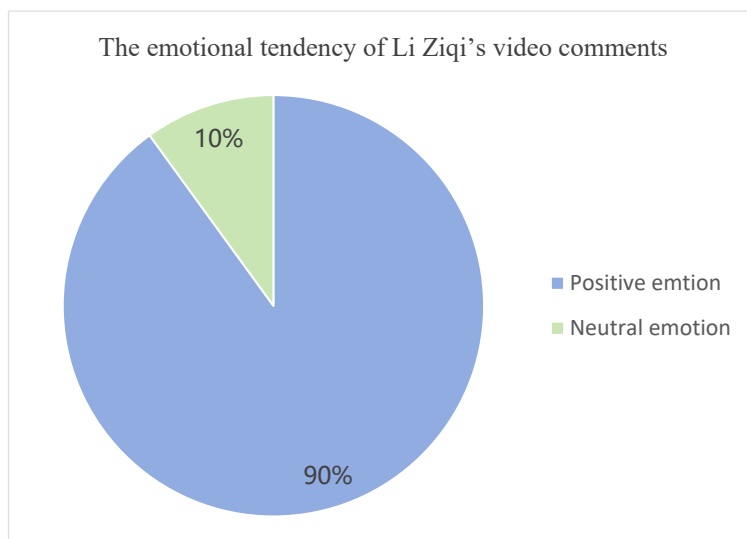


Figure 2. The emotional tendency of Li Ziqi's video comments

4.3.2. Analysis of Comment Themes on CGTN and Li Ziqi's Videos

Through the analysis of comment themes on the videos, it can be seen that CGTN focuses on presenting the international influence and diverse integration of Chinese culture, building the national image at a macro level. The themes are diverse and comprehensive, playing a significant role in shaping a multi-dimensional and stereoscopic image of a major country and promoting international exchanges. Li Ziqi, on the other hand, focuses on the reflection of traditional culture in daily life, with themes revolving around traditional culture, life insights, and family emotions, which can provide viewers with life inspirations and achieve emotional connections.

The comment themes of CGTN's videos are prominently cultural, with significant content related to the Spring Festival, such as "Chinese New Year flash mob surprises tourists in SW China",

highlighting the cultural appeal of the Spring Festival. Chinese language learning and cultural dissemination are also of concern, with "Mandarin" appearing frequently. The identity of overseas Chinese is clearly recognized, and terms like "overseas Chinese" are frequently used. Their videos have achieved good dissemination effects, created an attractive national image and promoted international cultural exchanges. For instance, non-Chinese viewers express their fondness for the Spring Festival activities.

The comments on Li Ziqi's videos mainly revolve around traditional Chinese culture, with many related to Spring Festival customs, evoking cultural resonance. The word "inspiration" appears frequently, as her videos encourage viewers to pursue a better life and help them improve their state and overcome depression. Some comments focus on family emotions, evoking viewers' memories of their families and enhancing parent-child relationships.

4.3.3. Analysis of Video Dissemination Effects

From the feedback in the comments, it can be seen that the acceptance of the two is different. CGTN presents the international influence of Chinese culture, its diversity and integration, and the image of national leaders through grand narratives, constructing a three-dimensional national image at the macro level. Li Ziqi, on the other hand, uses personal life narratives to integrate traditional culture into daily details, achieving emotional penetration. Although both have a positive emotional orientation, the audience has a higher acceptance of Li Ziqi's "de-politicized" personal narratives. Her video comments mainly focus on cultural resonance, life inspirations, and family emotions, which are more likely to trigger individual emotional connections. Although CGTN's comments also show good dissemination effects, highlighting cultural appeal and overseas Chinese identity, the content involving political elements has a relatively lower acceptance in international communication.

5. Summary

This study takes the Spring Festival-themed videos released by CGTN's official account and Li Ziqi's personal account on the YouTube platform as the research objects, and uses a method that combines multimodal discourse analysis and text analysis. By constructing a comprehensive analysis framework of visual non-verbal modalities and auditory verbal modalities, it systematically explores the differences between official media and folk creators in terms of symbol use, narrative strategies, and national image construction.

The study finds that CGTN and Li Ziqi each have their own characteristics in aspects such as the use of multimodal symbols and the shaping of the national image. In the use of multimodal symbols, CGTN uses camera and symbol strategies as well as the "Spring Festival +" narrative model. With the help of aerial photography, montage techniques, and diverse sound elements, it presents the achievements of modern China and guides the audience to rationally understand national development. On the other hand, Li Ziqi constructs a "Peach Blossom Spring"-style cultural space through fixed camera positions and long takes. By relying on synchronous sound, ambient sound, and traditional Chinese music, she showcases traditional artifacts and rural scenery, triggering cultural and emotional resonance. In terms of national image shaping, CGTN demonstrates China's achievements in multiple fields and shapes the image of a major power. Li Ziqi comprehensively showcases traditional culture and creates a rural landscape that highlights the warmth of human nature.

In terms of audience feedback, the comments on both of their videos are mainly positive. Regarding the comment themes, CGTNs are diverse and comprehensive, with an emphasis on cultural themes to assist in the construction of the image of a major power. Li Ziqi's comments focus on traditional culture, life insights, and family emotions, triggering cultural resonance and emotional connections.

Based on the above research findings, this study attempts to explore the path for the communication strategies of CGTN and Li Ziqi to shift from differences to synergy. In terms of content creation, the two sides can learn from each other. While maintaining its authority, CGTN can integrate folk perspectives and emotional elements to make "hard news" more approachable. Li Ziqi

can increase her attention to grand themes such as national development achievements to enrich the content levels. For example, when presenting rural life, she can appropriately mention the connection between rural development and national policies. In terms of communication channels, official media have an extensive international communication network, and folk online celebrities have strong social media influence. The two sides can strengthen cooperation, share communication channel resources, promote media convergence, and expand the communication coverage. For instance, official media can promote their content through the social media accounts of folk online celebrities, and folk online celebrities can enhance their popularity through the international communication platforms of official media. In terms of communication strategies, the two sides can jointly explore effective ways of international communication, combining the comprehensive authority of official discourse with the emotional penetration of folk narratives to form a complementary communication force. For example, in the coverage of major international events, official media can use flexible means such as Vlogs for communication, jointly shaping a believable, respectable, and adorable image of China and enhancing China's discourse power and influence in international communication.

However, this study has certain limitations. The sample selection is limited to the Spring Festival-themed videos on the YouTube platform, resulting in a narrow research scope and making it difficult to comprehensively reflect the communication situations on different platforms and with different themes. The user groups and communication characteristics of different platforms vary, and the research results of a single platform cannot cover all situations. Studying only the Spring Festival theme cannot represent the communication effects of other cultural themes. In addition, the research methods mainly rely on qualitative analysis, lacking quantitative research, and thus insufficient in the precise evaluation of communication effects.

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