Youth Subculture Performance from the Perspective of Emotional Communication ——A Research Based on the Phenomenon of "Meaningless words"

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Abstract: In the context of "Traffic is King ", a large number of videos and content with empty meaning, lack of information and striving for traffic are flooded with the network. In the social platform, the audience has created many language expressions rich in "meme", such as "meaningless words". As an important part of youth subculture, "meaningless words" mainly creates characters through collages, spoofs, parodies and other forms, and its expression is more direct and simple. It is an important way of satirizing and roast on the social media platform. Why do contemporary youth produce "meaningless words"? Why does "meaningless words" spread so widely? This paper will explore the production mechanism of "meaningless words" from the perspective of emotional communication.
Keywords: emotional communication, youth subculture, meaningless words

1 Introduction

With the development of self-media and digital technology, more and more meaningless and information-poor videos and content are coming into the public view driven by the "eyeball economy", and the competition for traffic has promoted the emergence of more terrible dramas and low-quantity essays. At the same time, cyberspace has gradually become an important channel for young people to express themselves and express their emotions. As a new cultural form under the internet environment, youth sub-culture has been paid more attention because of its anti-authority and anti-hegemony. Youth groups use cyberspace for discourse expression and emotional catharsis, and it gradually developed into a phenomenon of youth sub-culture. In this context, "meaningless words" and other languages with "meme" began to appear. The "meaningless words" mainly creates words through collage, spoof, parody and other forms, and its expression is more direct and simple. It is an important way of expression, satire and roast on the social media platform. We observe that many people are dissatisfied with the low quality of the content, so they use parody to learn nonsense to satirize these works and achieve resistance. We have a curiosity about this, why do today's youth produce "meaningless words"? What exactly is the motive behind this? Why does "meaningless words" spread so widely? What is the reason for the prevalence of "meaningless words" that meets the spiritual needs of contemporary youth?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature review on the phenomenon of "meaningless words"

In recent years, Chinese scholars have conducted multi-dimensional research on the cultural phenomenon of "meaningless words". Ding Weiqiang, Jiangsu Normal University, in 2022, summed up and summarized the types of "meaningless words" from the perspective of the meaning of "meaningless words" in his paper An analysis of the status quo and causes of online "meaningless words". Xie Lili of Liaoning Normal University analyzed "meaningless words" from the perspective of its source, characteristics and creative methods in her 2022 article A Brief Discussion on Network "meaningless words". Luo Min and Hu Mingyuan of Jinan University analyzed the irony and self-reference of "meaningless words" based on John Fisk's cultural consumption theory in their meaningless words: from ironic parody to the vortex of self-reference in 2022.

However, although these studies have studied the meaning and concept of "meaningless words", they have ignored its widespread dissemination mechanism and generation motivation among young people.

2.2 A literature review on "youth subculture"

With the wide participation of the younger generation in various fields of affairs, the concept of "youth" has gradually entered people's field of vision. The American Chicago School and the British Birmingham School have conducted fruitful research on the issue of youth subculture, and formed a unique theoretical research method and paradigm. In the mid-1970s, the Birmingham school introduced ideological construction theory, cultural hegemony and structuralism semiotics into the study of subculture, analyzed the "resistance" style of subculture from the perspective of class and power, and put forward the paradigm of "resistance-integration" to reveal the sociological mechanism of the occurrence and development of youth subculture. Since the 1980s, in the context of globalization and information, the Birmingham School's study of youth subculture has been reflected and corrected for its overemphasis on the decisiveness of class and other grand structures. "Post sub-culture theory" emerged as the times require, and the theory of youth sub-culture also got more perfect development.

Jia Taoxin of Harbin Normal University, taking "Talk Show Conference" as an example, studied the impact of online talk show programs on youth subculture, and described the characteristics of youth subculture diversity, entertainment tendency and virtual reality. Wu Yimeng of Shanghai University is combining the "Use and satisfaction theory" with the development of youth subculture, from the perspective of audience, with a view to bringing enlightenment to enhance the communication effect of online variety shows. Wang Zechen of Xi'an Finance and Economics University explored the important role of group identity and identity in the interaction of fans in the article Emotional consolation and flexible resistance: Linna Belle from the perspective of youth subculture in 2023, and pointed out that "Youth in

confusion will produce a kind of "We" group identity, which can help Linna Belle fans enhance their self-concept, enable young people to quickly join the social circle and seek a sense of pride and security in the group, and the consistent values can be recognized by Linna Belle fans ".

All of these studies have conducted multi-level research on "youth subculture", but they have not linked the phenomenon of "meaningless words" with youth subculture, ignored the important role of emotion transmission in the generation and development of youth subculture, and have not analyzed the mechanism and motivation of subculture output such as "meaningless words".

2.3 Question raised

Therefore, starting from the theory of emotional communication, this paper tries to take the typical youth subculture exhibition of "meaningless words" as an example, to analyze its production mechanism and the spiritual needs of contemporary youth groups reflected by it.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

3.1.1 Assumption establishment

In order to fill the gap in the study of youth subculture performance from the perspective of emotional communication, we chose the research method of audience survey. According to the output mechanism of "meaningless words", we propose corresponding assumptions:

H1:The more young people need emotional relief, the more "meaningless words" they produce.

H2:The more young people choose to "lie down", the more "meaningless words" they produce.

H3:The stronger the tendency of young people to attack language formalism, the more "meaningless words" they produce.

In order to prove the hypothesis, this study adopts a questionnaire survey to answer the above questions by setting questions of different dimensions.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The corresponding research object of this hypothesis is the young people who contact with "meaningless words" and spread it on the social media platform.

We designed the Questionnaire on the Reasons for Producing "meaningless words" (see Appendix) on the Questionnaire Star platform, and then released it via QQ, WeChat and offline channels. The survey completed the data collection, collation and analysis process on February 10, 2023. The survey mainly focused on open and closed questions, with a total of 19 questions. The main contents are: (1) Confirmation of basic information: including gender, age, educational

background, etc. (2) Emotional catharsis, "lying down" psychology and attacking language formalism tendency. Through the respondents' cognitive status of the above three independent variables, the tendency and degree of different respondents' in emotional catharsis, "lying down" psychology and criticism of language formalism were obtained. (3) The output part of "meaningless words". The reasons for the public to produce "meaningless words" can be found by using questions from several dimensions such as the scene, frequency and attitude to "meaningless words".

3.2 In-depth interview method

3.2.1 Preparation of interview outline

The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.

The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewees, including their occupation and city.

In the second part, the research questions are reduced to interview questions. It includes the scene of its use of "meaningless words", a specific sentence of "meaningless words" and its views on the phenomenon of "meaningless words".

In the third part, preparation mainly involves problems that may be dug deep.

3.2.2 Interviewee selection

This study conducted a 15-minute semi-structured in-depth interview with 12 randomly selected interviewees. The interview began in January 2023 and ended in February 2023. The 12 interviewees have differences in age, occupation, location, and understanding of "meaningless words", and the degree of homogeneity is low.

The interview was conducted by telephone interview/WeChat text interview/one-on-one face-to-face interview. The processing of interview content is completed by myself. See the table for the basic information of the interviewees.

Table 1 The Basic Information of the interviewees

	Gender	Occupation	Region	Know anything about"meaningless words"
1	Female	Editor	Beijing	NO
2	Male	Bank Teller	Zhejiang	Yes
3	Female	Postgraduate	Beijing	Yes
4	Male	Product operator	Xi'an	Yes
5	Male	Undergraduate	Beijing	Yes
6	Female	Not yet	Shanghai	Yes
7	Female	Freelance	Shandong	NO
8	Male	Teacher	Anhui	Yes
9	Male	Programmer	Beijing	Yes
10	Male	Not yet	Inner Mongolia	NO
11	Female	Undergraduate	Beijing	Yes
12	Female	Lawyer	Tianjin	Yes

4 Research Findings and Discussion Points

4.1 Description of sample features

More than 60% of the samples were female, and 34.21% were male. From the distribution of the highest education level, most of the samples are "undergraduate", with 219, accounting for 72.04%. From the perspective of age distribution, the majority of the samples are "18-25 years old" group, with a total of 224, accounting for 73.68%. From the perspective of occupation distribution, most of the samples are "students", accounting for 46.71%, followed by "office workers", accounting for 38.82%. There were 190 samples from Beijing, significantly higher than any other region.

4.2 Description of structural analysis results

A total of 304 valid questionnaires have been collected in this questionnaire survey, among which 84% have been exposed to "meaningless words". Through the investigation on the channels of people's exposure to "meaningless words", it is found that social media and close friends are the two major ways for people to get in touch with relevant content of "meaningless words". The scene used is mainly "communicating with friends". It can be seen that "meaningless words", as a text with a very hot meme attribute, has a strong social communication attribute. In addition, from the audience's exposure to "meaningless words", the medium frequency (11-20 times per week) is the most common frequency of exposure.

In this study, both independent and dependent variables were measured in the form of five-level Likert scale. Therefore, in data analysis, corresponding variables were generated by summing and averaging corresponding measurement statements of corresponding variables, which were included in subsequent statistical analysis. Pearson correlation analysis found that there was a significant positive correlation between emotional catharsis and the frequency of individuals using "meaningless words" ($r=0.213$, $P<0.05$), and the research hypothesis H1 was supported. There was a significant positive correlation ($r=0.152$, $P<0.05$) between reclining psychology and the frequency of individuals using "meaningless words", and the hypothesis H2 was supported. There is a significant positive correlation ($r=0.0.303$, $P<0.05$) between the verbal formalism criticism tendency and the frequency of individuals using "meaningless words". The research hypothesis H3 was supported. This indicates that the stronger the need for emotional catharsis, the stronger the psychological strength of "lying down", the stronger the tendency to attack language formalism, and the more frequently the use of "meaningless words" is.

From the above results, social and emotional factors are essential elements in the generation and dissemination of "meaningless words". Among the main ways for young people to get in touch with "meaningless words", social media and friends around them are sociable and can achieve emotional influence through information exchange and dissemination. Therefore, when spreading "meaningless words", these two factors work together to change people's emotions in the communication with strong social attributes, and achieve the effect of boosting the rapid online

and offline popcorn spread of "meaningless words". At the same time, the audience will continue to share with their friends according to the "sociable" and emotional factors in the communication process after being exposed to "meaningless words". Communication with friends is characterized by a strong relationship, which makes "meaningless words" spread widely under the influence of many factors including emotions, occasions, external environment and so on. It has become a phenomenon with obvious characteristics and a wide range of audiences.

At the same time, emotions include both positive and negative emotions, which leads to a wider range of scenarios and frequencies for the use of "meaningless words". In terms of emotional catharsis, the audience may feel pressure, frustration and other bad emotions, so they have the need to use "meaningless words" to relieve embarrassment and pleasure. When the audience is in a positive mood of excitement and joy, they will also have the need to share the joy. In this case, "meaningless words" will also become the expression of young people because of its unique expression of humor and playing jokes. In terms of the psychology of "lying down", scholars Li Shuai and Zhao Weilong from the Central University of Finance and Economics pointed out in their article Arousal or Avoidance: Preparation of Lying Down Questionnaire and related Psychological Factors in 2022, "Lying down is divided into avoidance lying down and awakening lying down, which are two completely opposite life states." This finding is also consistent with the fact that emotions contain both positive and negative attributes, further expanding the context in which "meaningless words" is used. Among the elements of attacking language formalism, on the one hand, there are the audience's feelings of resistance, and on the other hand, it reflects the sentiment of pursuing free and valuable language expression. Therefore, this index also has a duality, which further broadens the occasions for the use of "meaningless words" and promotes the output and dissemination of "meaningless words". In addition, from a longitudinal perspective, the above data show that three factors, namely the need for emotional catharsis, lying down psychology and the tendency to attack language formalism, are positively correlated with the use of "meaningless words". Therefore, as the intensity of emotion deepens, it will inevitably promote the output of "meaningless words" in a larger range and a higher frequency.

4.3 Description of interview results

When we conducted in-depth interviews on the usage scenarios of "meaningless words" and the reasons for using "meaningless words" and tried to get answers, we were surprised to find that the respondents' answers to the above questions confirmed my ideas.

4.3.1 Using scenarios of "meaningless words"

"I respond to my friends' "meaningless words" when I'm relaxed and happy, but I don't respond to people I don't know or strangers who use "meaningless words" to communicate with me, whether online or offline, because we don't have a high level of intimacy and I don't think it's appropriate."

"I often use "meaningless words" online. For example, when I comment on topics I

am interested in on Weibo, it helps me find like-minded people. I often unconsciously use "meaningless words" when playing offline with my friends. In some awkward situations, I use "meaningless words" deliberately to relieve embarrassment, but not much."

"I only use it with friends who are also familiar with the meme, otherwise my use of the meme will cause embarrassment if others don't understand it."

"meaningless words" first appeared on the Internet, and its viral spread was promoted by netizens' widespread use on social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat and video platforms such as Douyin and Bilibili. According to the interview results, although there is a difference in the frequency of using "meaningless words" in online and offline scenes, it is not the most critical factor affecting the output of "meaningless words". Audiences use "meaningless words" online mainly for the purpose of emotional communication such as communication, sharing and expressing opinions, which has social and communication attributes. In the offline use, the scope of the target group is limited to "relatives and friends", which further highlights the emotional connection and emotional transmission characteristics in the production process of "meaningless words". It can be concluded that social and emotional factors have a significant impact on the output of "meaningless words". The stronger the social nature and the higher the need for emotional expression, the higher the frequency of using "meaningless words".

At the same time, "meaningless words", as a kind of youth subculture, enables users to find groups who also understand and play memes and join different groups and circles. In the group, the audience's behavior of producing "meaningless words" is recognized by the group members, and it is easy to produce and spread "meaningless words" more frequently under the influence of group dynamics.

4.3.2 Reasons for using "meaningless words"

"I use meaningless words mainly to rebel and ridicule, meaning that I neither approve of what you are saying nor want to continue the conversation with you."

"meaningless words is all about memes, which are perfect for awkward situations."

"meaningless words is mainly able to express the true thoughts of the heart, in some embarrassing occasions on which people are not convenient to directly express emotions, the use of meaningless words can not only say their true thoughts, but also more polite, and does not affect everyone's feelings."

The above results show that the reason why people use "meaningless words" is mainly based on the emotional features contained in "meaningless words", such as sarcasm, humor, directness and so on. It has the characteristics of sarcasm. While expressing people’s own opinions, people can also show their own emotions to the other side. Analyzing the reasons for its use, some groups make use of the humorous features of "meaningless words" to relieve embarrassment and promote the development of social interaction to a more positive state. The other group has the sense of resistance and mockery: to vent negative emotions and express their true thoughts, to attack language formalism and show their dissatisfaction with meaningless and worthless language expression, and to magnify their own "lying down" psychology, and convey an attitude of refusing to engage in communication by using "meaningless words" to not respond positively to the topic

in the communication process. Therefore, it is found that people's need for emotional catharsis, "lying down" psychology, and tendency to attack language formalism are the main reasons for frequent use of "meaningless words". The research hypothesis H1,H2,H3 are supported.

5 Summarize and Reflect

5.1 Reasons for the output of "meaningless words"

Through the combination of questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, this paper studied the output and dissemination phenomenon of "meaningless words" and tried to analyze the causes and influencing factors of the output of "meaningless words". The study found that the generation and dissemination of "meaningless words" is highly social and emotional, so it can be widely spread on social media and among relatives and friends. At the same time, the frequency of the output of "meaningless words" is correlated with the need for emotional catharsis, the psychology of lying down and the tendency of attacking language forms. The stronger people's need for emotional catharsis, the stronger the psychology of lying down, the stronger the tendency of attacking language formalism, the more frequently they use "meaningless words".

5.2 "meaningless words" plays an important role in expressing views and communicating

"meaningless words" mainly refers to the slightly funny remarks and videos in the field of new media, which seem to be said but have no useful information. The core of expression effect lies in humor and low amount of information, and the essence of grammatical structure lies in repetition. This study puts forward that "meaningless words" is affected by the need for emotional catharsis, the psychology of lying down and the tendency of attacking language forms, explores the usage scenes of "meaningless words" and analyzes the social and emotional factors reflected in the use of "meaningless words", so as to provide some references for the study of the subject, communication mechanism and communication channels related to the phenomenon of "meaningless words".

As a kind of youth subculture, "meaningless words" is closely related to the stratification, emotionality and sociability of the youth group. The generation of "meaningless words" is related to the attitude of the youth group to pursue relaxation and freedom. At the same time, it implies the resistance and mockery of the young people to all kinds of worthless and meaningless social phenomena in life. The emergence of "meaningless words" provides a new way of expression for young people to express their inner emotions more truly, and plays an important role in expressing views and communicating.

5.3 When using and disseminating "meaningless words", people should still pay attention to the occasions and objects

It is worth noting that "meaningless words" is more commonly used in informal situations due

to its meme nature, so the use of "meaningless words" in formal situations should be considered more carefully. Due to the low amount of information contained in the dialogue, both sides may have difficulties in understanding, and may even lead to unnecessary misunderstandings, but it does not play a positive role in communication. At the same time, we should avoid excessive use of "meaningless words", because its expression contains more repetitive components and strong emotional characteristics, excessive use may affect the efficiency of learning, work, making friends and other aspects. At the same time, because individuals have different cognition of the concept of "meaningless words", we should also consider individual differences when using "meaningless words" to the audience.

On the other hand, we should pay attention to the influence of "meaningless words" on teenagers. The Internet provides a broad platform and audience for the generation and dissemination of "meaningless words", but there are many young people among them. Many we-media use "meaningless words" to chase clout, transmit bad values or publicize some violent contents, which is easy to form "propaganda oxygen" among teenagers. When watching videos and reading articles, teenagers may have a biased judgment on "meaningless words" due to their small experience area.

It is worth mentioning that a lot of "meaningless words" is based on classic works, poems and famous sayings, such as: "listen to your words, such as listening to your words", which may have a negative impact on teenagers' learning related content. This is all worthy of vigilance and reflection.

5.4 Conclusion

In addition, in future studies, researchers in the field of communication may need to pay more attention to the generation and communication mechanism of numerous emerging phenomena in the youth subculture, and explore the spiritual needs of contemporary youth through the study of various phenomena, and use them to guide various communication practices.

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Appendix 1 A Questionnaire on the Reasons for Producing "Meaningless Words"

Dear Sir/Madam, How do you do? We are conducting a survey on attitudes towards "meaningless words", and we are looking forward to your careful filling in. "meaningless words" such as: "three people like three people", "listen to your words, such as listen to words", "seven days, such as every other week", "if I am not fat that would be quite thin" and so on

Thank you for your support and help!

I.Basic information

1. What is your gender?

A. Male B. female

2. What's your age?

A. Under 18 years old B.18-25 years old C.26-35 years old

D.36-45 years old E.46 years old and older

3. What is your highest degree (including current education) so far?

A. Graduate B. Undergraduate C. Junior college and below

4. What is your current occupation?

A. Student B.Office worker C. Freelancer D. None E. Others

5. What is your local area? (Province)

6. Before this survey, did you know "meaningless words"?

A. Yes B. No

7. Which of the following statements do you think is "meaningless words"?

A. I had just left when you arrived

B. There are two trees in the yard, one is a date tree, the other is also a date tree

C.YYDS

D. Why are you putting me off? Do you care about me? I don't think you care at all

8. How do you know "meaningless words"?

A. Social interaction platforms such as Weibo and Wechat

B. Video platforms such as Douyin and Bilibili

C. Connect with others offline

D. Other

II. Subject Survey (5-level Likert Scale)

Emotional catharsis:

9. Please answer the following questions according to your real situation

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement.

(1) I care more about others' impression of me

(2) My mood is easily affected by various factors (such as work, study, emotional problems, etc.)

(3) I need to deliberately control my emotions

I often feel that I have emotions to vent

(5) I will not choose a mild way to vent my emotions (including shopping, playing games, singing, sports, teasing, etc.) within a reasonable range.

Lying flat psychology:

10. Please answer the following questions according to your real situation

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement.

(1) I don't think school grades are important. Passing is good

(2) If you can't afford to buy a house, you won't buy one

(3) Team work is the same as doing more or less, as little as possible

(4) I don't care about other people's opinions and opinions, and I don't force myself to do

things I don't like

(5) What would you like to change about your current life

Language formalism:

11. Please answer the following questions according to your real situation

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement.

(1) I often worry that not speaking tactfully will affect my image in the eyes of others

(2) I always think twice when responding to questions, and sometimes I lie or go against my heart

(3) On some occasions out of some need to say lies or against the heart

(4) I feel regret or dissatisfaction with myself after telling lies or going against my heart.

(5) I want to be free to speak the truth, tell the truth, and speak from the heart.

III. the output of Nonsense literature

12. When do you use "meaningless words"?

A. Communicating with Friends and Family online

B. Communicating with strangers online

C. Communicating with friends and family offline

D. Communicating with strangers offline

E. Use at any time, regardless of the occasion F

13. How often do you use "meaningless words"?

A. Never used B. 1-10 times a week C. 11-20 times a week

D. Use 21-30 times per week E. Use more than 30 times per week

14. What is your attitude towards the use of "meaningless words"? (Likert 5 scale)

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement.

(1) "meaningless words" can help me express my true emotions

(2) When I need to let off steam, I will choose to use "meaningless words"

(3) I feel at ease using Nonsense literature

(4) "meaningless words" can narrow the distance between each other

(5) "meaningless words" is the embodiment of relaxation, can enhance the relationship

15. What is your attitude towards the use of "meaningless words"?

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement

(1) "meaningless words" does not conform to the expression habit I do not use

(2) "meaningless words" doesn't help me get my point across quickly

(3) "meaningless words" will hinder normal communication

(4) "meaningless words" will trigger my boredom in communication

(5) In order to avoid invalid questionnaire, please choose "strongly agree".

16. What do you think of Nonsense literature?

A score of 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement, and the lower the score, the lower the agreement.

(1) Low information density and low value

(2) Short, flat, fast, easy to express and understand

(3) It is sufficiently interesting

(4) Derivatives of negative subculture, which are more objectionable

(5) It has certain social functions

17. What is your attitude towards Nonsense literature?

A. Having A meme can express emotion and support!

B. It is not often used or excluded. Neutral!

C. Does not conform to the language expression habits, exclusion!

18. What do you think of the future development of "meaningless words"?

A. Will be formally integrated into daily life

B. It is just a fad and will be obsolete.

C. Other

19. What is your opinion on the use of "meaningless words", or what you need to add to the topic of "meaningless words", please leave your valuable opinion.

Appendix 2 Outline of In-depth Interview

1. Do you know "meaningless words"? / What do you think is "meaningless words"?

2. How did you come into contact with Nonsense literature?

3. Do you use "meaningless words" online/offline?

4. In what situation did you use it? Can you describe it?

8. Why do you use "meaningless words"?

9. What role do you think "meaningless words" plays in this?

10. Can you roughly describe one of your most memorable lines from "meaningless words"?

11. Why do you remember it so deeply?

12. Do you think there are any negative effects of "meaningless words"?

13. What do you think of the phenomenon of "meaningless words"?