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Study on the Symbol Construction of Cross-Cultural Variety Shows from the Perspective of Conjugation Theory

Yidan Zhao
School of Management, Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, China
***Corresponding author E-mail:1297029654@qq.com**

Abstract:

The wave of globalization promotes the increasingly frequent cross-cultural exchanges, and variety shows, as an important mode of communication, have become an important way of international cultural exchanges. In order to better spread excellent traditional culture at home and abroad, domestic variety shows have launched a series of excellent cross-cultural variety shows. Based on the perspective of connection theory, this study takes the variety show Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season as an example to analyze how cross-cultural variety show constructs the cultural meanings behind the program through nonverbal symbols such as language symbols, text language symbols, scene symbols, Chinese and foreign cultural symbols, character symbols, and instrument symbols, so as to form the connection effect.

Keywords:

Joint theory, Cross-cultural, Variety show, Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season, Symbolic construction

1. Introduction

The wave of globalization promotes the increasingly frequent cross-cultural exchanges, and variety shows, as an important mode of communication, have also become an important way of international cultural exchanges. How to make use of the ability of variety show's cross-cultural narrative to achieve the connection of Chinese and Western cultures has become a very worthy of discussion. Taking the cross-cultural variety show *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* as an example, the program closely follows the theme of the "Belt and Road" and takes a study tour through three countries, Saudi Arabia, Croatia and Iceland, to visit and understand the cooperation projects of building the "Belt and Road". In this regard, we are curious: How does the cross-cultural variety show represented by *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* reflect the cultural meaning behind the program through symbol construction?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conjugation Theory and Symbol Construction

First developed by Laclowe, a post-Marxist representative, and later introduced into cultural studies by Stuart Hall, the theory of engagement refers to the non-mechanistic deterministic correlation between a dis-

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course practice and its various elements of social context. Under the background of global communication, it has become a universal strategy in cultural communication to engage Chinese and foreign cultures. Clarke, a foreign scholar, studies the theory of articulation and links the three different dimensions of Stuart Hall's works, and believes that articulation theory is the core of cultural and political work, the core of hegemonic work, and the core of Hall's concretization teaching practice. Domestic scholars Liu Liyong and Li Zhou conducted in-depth research on the engagement theory of Marx, Althusser, Laclau and Hall.

Semiotics is the study of the expression, transmission, reception and understanding of meaning. Nowadays, the modern society has entered the "high symbolization era", and the theory of semiotics has become a tool for us to understand today's culture and effectively cope with the contemporary chaotic and mixed culture. Taking People on the Burma Road as an example, Liu Xuan, a domestic scholar, analyzed the cultural and symbolic construction of China's image, subverted the mainstream discourse of the international community on the construction of the Burma Road, and opened up a new aspect of the integration of Chinese literature into world literature during the Anti-Japanese War.

Although the research on conjugation theory and symbol construction is detailed, it does not involve the research on how to construct symbols in cross-cultural variety shows from the perspective of conjugation theory.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Variety Shows

At present, there are still few researches on cross-cultural variety shows, and the main research direction focuses on the cross-cultural elements of some domestic variety shows and the analysis of communication strategies from a cross-cultural perspective. Scholar CAI Xinjie took Hunan Satellite TV variety series Chinese Restaurant as an example to make a brief analysis of the application of cross-cultural elements in China's slow variety shows, and then explored its cross-cultural communication value. From the perspective of publicity, scholar Liao Keyin takes Informal Talks as the research object to discuss the performance of network variety shows in inclusive field, open topic and equal communication from three aspects: field, agenda setting and discourse right, providing certain reference significance for cross-cultural communication.

Although the above scholars have begun to study cross-cultural variety shows, they have neglected the research from the perspective of junction theory, let alone the research on the symbol construction of cross-cultural variety shows, so they have not answered the questions about the direction of this research.

2.3 Questions Raising

Based on the perspective of junction theory, this paper tries to answer the following questions: From the perspective of junction theory, how do cross-cultural variety shows embody the cultural meaning behind the program through symbol construction?

3. Research Method

Based on the theory of articulation and semiotics, this paper adopts the research method of text analysis to explore, and takes the content of the program *Flowers and the Youth · The Silk Road Season* as the research object, trying to answer the question: From the perspective of articulation theory, what kind of symbolic construction is used to reflect the cultural meaning behind the cross-cultural variety show *Flowers and the Youth ·*

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The Silk Road Season.

3.1 Text Analysis

3.1.1 Sampling method

Based on the above problems, this study adopts the text analysis method to conduct sampling analysis of the overall broadcast content of the variety show. The corresponding research object of the analysis is cross-cultural variety shows. First, we take a representative sample of this kind of media and choose the cross-cultural variety show *Flowers and the Youth · Silk Road Season*. The reason for choosing it is its high influence, according to the statistics of "China Audiovisual Big Data" (CVB), *Flowers and Young people · Silk Road Season* after three periods of broadcast, the rating effect is excellent, while the competitiveness is strong, the scale of user review is increased, the average audience rating of each period nationwide is 0.224%, and the audience share is 1.375%. Both ranked in the top 2 ratings of local satellite TV programs at the same time. And the program focuses on the theme of "One Belt and One Road", which is both entertaining and social, so it has strong representation.

Secondly, the author adopts the method of random sampling to sample the 14 episodes of the program based on the principle of whether they contain cross-cultural elements, and selects 20 clips as samples for research.

Table 1 Select program segment content

Number	Number of Episodes	Time	Place	**Programme Content**
1	First Program	66：50	Saudi Arabia	Visit the Chinese logistics and transfer Center in Saudi Arabia.
2	First Program	74：00	Saudi Arabia	Saudi students who regard China as their "second home" and Riyadh residents who like to shop online for Chinese products.
3	First Program	81：49	Saudi Arabia	The Chinese son-in-law of the mixed marriage showed the guests Yunnan coffee and Chinese traditional medicine treatments: cupping and gua sha.
4	Second Programme	06：59	Saudi Arabia	Visit local residents in Saudi Arabia to experience traditional Saudi clothing and food; Learn Saudi script etiquette; Give the Saudi host a gift with Chinese characteristics.
5	Second Programme	29：19	Saudi Arabia	Visit modern city Riyadh.
6	The Third Programme	41：14	Saudi Arabia	Visit the historic heritage site of El Ora.
7	The Fifth Programme	11：51	Saudi Arabia	Ride and learn about the world's fastest two-track electrified railway crossing the desert, the Mai-Mai High-speed Railway, built by the 18th Bureau of China Railway.
8	The Fifth Programme	29：42	Croatia	Visit the imperial city of Dubrovnik.
9	The sixth programme	16：08	Croatia	Experience KAYAKING.

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10	The Sixth Programme	59：10	Croatia	On the Adriatic Sea, a sunset party was held on the traditional Caraka sailing boat of the Great Age of navigation, and Xinjiang dance, opera, Northeast Yangko dance, and cross talk "Young China" poetry recitation were performed.
11	Seventh Programme	14：25	Croatia	Visit the Pelesac Bridge.
12	The Eighth Programme	49：48	Croatia	Play Pichkin water polo, Croatia's intangible cultural heritage, with foreign friends.
13	Ninth Programme	20：26	Croatia	Visit Karst Blue holes.
14	Tenth Programme	48：56	Iceland	Visit Golden Falls, one of the top 10 waterfalls in the world.
15	Tenth Programme	55：36	Iceland	Visit the Stock Geyser.
16	Tenth Programme	72：40	Iceland	Visit the silk-float fracture where the Eurasian and American plates tear apart.
17	Eleventh Programme	15：32	Iceland	Visit the Unna Chinese Museum.
18	Twelfth Programme	07：30	Iceland	Experience the traditional Icelandic festival of Captive Breeding.
19	The Thirteenth Program	20：28	Iceland	Aurora chase.
20	The Fourteenth Programme	21：22	Iceland	Explore the Vatnajokull Ice Field.

3.1.2 Feature description of intercepted fragments

This paper makes a descriptive analysis of 20 samples randomly selected from 14 programs of *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season*. The samples are mainly characterized by cross-cultural elements, and the three countries involved, Saudi Arabia, Croatia and Iceland, are all countries along the "Belt and Road". Among them, four samples, numbered 1, 2, 7 and 11, are mainly characterized by Chinese solutions and Chinese power. There are 8 samples, numbered 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 17 and 18, which are mainly characterized by the dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture and the embodiment of Sino-foreign cultural exchanges. There are 9 samples with foreign natural and cultural scenery as the main feature, which are numbered 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20.

4. Construction of the symbol system of cross-cultural variety shows

In this study, text analysis is used to analyze *Flowers and the Youth · The Silk Road Season*, and how the program constructs cultural meanings through symbols is analyzed from the two dimensions of linguistic symbols and non-linguistic symbols.

4.1 Analysis of language symbols in Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season

Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication and interaction between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. In the present communication globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an inevitable and important trend. *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* is a slow variety show based on "study tour" mode, and language symbols are an indispensable form to express its meaning.

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4.1.1 Constructing Chinese images with language symbols

Speech language symbols are expressed through the later narration, the verbal communication of the program guests and other participants. In the first program of *Flowers and Young People · Silk Road Season,* the program guests came to the Chinese express station in Saudi Arabia to visit and learn, through the later narration and the class interpretation of the general manager of the Riyadh branch of the Polar Rabbit Express station, Zhao Pengpeng, so that the program guests and the audience can directly understand the solution of China's self-manufactured automatic sorting equipment to the logistics problems in Saudi Arabia. The verbal symbols expressed by Saudi residents when receiving express delivery, such as "Chinese technology, the quality is also very good, the price is also very cheap, my car is also made in China", "China is very fast", "China is really great", also connect Saudi Arabia and China, arouse the audience's resonance, and construct the interpretation of "China's intelligence", "China's speed" and "China's service".

In addition, when introducing the fruitful achievements of the "Belt and Road" such as the Mai-Mai-high-speed railway built by China, the Pelesatz Bridge, the world's largest off-grid energy storage project photovoltaic power station, and the first desalination plant put into use in Saudi Arabia, the program used guest narration and later narration, supplemented by pictures to display the results. For example, the project leader of "Mai Mai high-speed rail" QiXiaoreh through the "story" narrative symbols from the "Mai Mai high-speed rail route map" and some construction photos, to explain the story of the construction process in detail, and the use of "study tour class" and "after-school test" way to make the "Mai Mai high-speed rail a total length of 450.28km, through 4 cities, The construction of 11 railway Bridges, 18 road Bridges, 5 channels, more than 100 culverts and other knowledge is widely known, but also by pointing out that the high-speed rail is jointly built by both China and foreign countries has led to the important spirit of "opening up leads development, cooperation and win-win future". During the broadcast of the program, macro-scene symbols and language symbols, such as the line map with animated effects, the high-speed rail station and the high-speed rail operation panorama, jointly constructed the image of "China's infrastructure monster" mentioned by Hu Xianxi, the guest of the program, leading the audience to immerse themselves in the "Chinese wisdom" and "China's power".

In the sixth program, the guest group and foreign friends had a sunset party on the traditional Karaka sailing boat of the Great Age of navigation in the Adriatic Sea of Croatia. Wang Anyu, the guest of the program, recited the poem Young China in English to express the engagement of Chinese culture in English. Through the foreign friends can understand the language to convey the Chinese young people's high morale and at the same time can rebuild the vigorous image of China.

4.1.2 Using written language symbols to construct the Silk Road spirit

In the second program, the guests visited the homes of local residents in Saudi Arabia and learned to write Arabic characters with the hostess. The guests wrote "love" and "peace" in Chinese and Arabic. The subtitle team of the program also adopted the subtitle "Exchange and coexistence under different civilizations. The written language symbols such as "love and peace" and the spoken language symbols such as "People all over the world, one family" jointly construct the profound meaning of "love and peace" and "great unity of the world", focusing on the Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit and win-win and common development" expressed by the program.

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4.2 Analysis of non-verbal symbols in the program Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season

The cross-cultural variety Flowers and Young People: *The Silk Road Season* focuses on the revival of the Belt and Road Initiative, traveling across the Eurasian continent, through Saudi Arabia, Croatia and Iceland. As a sound and picture integrated program transmitted on electronic media, non-verbal symbols carry the important task of transmitting visual and auditory information.

4.2.1 Scenario Symbols

Scene symbol is the core of travel variety show, its value lies in the sense of substitution. The program *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* focuses on Saudi Arabia's Riyadh Kingdom Center Tower, the ancient city of Drahiyah, the ancient city of Hegra, the Cliff of the World, Croatia's King's Landing city Dubrovnik, the Adriatic Sea, the Blue Hole, and Iceland's Golden Falls, Stock Geyser, Sefla Cracks, Vatnajokull Ice Field and other different natural scenery. A large number of overhead and overhead shooting techniques were used to intersperse mobile phone shots from the first perspective, such as guests chasing the aurora and watching the sunset, and the introduction of "tips" from the subtitle team of the program was adopted to present different scene symbols to the audience, and connect the audience to the exotic travel of the guests, so as to finally construct the audience's all-round understanding of the exotic scenery and immersive experience.

4.2.2 Chinese and Foreign Cultural Symbols

The show included many Chinese and foreign cultural symbols in the above scenes. In the sixth episode of the show Adriatic Party, Dillireba performed the traditional dance of Xinjiang ethnic minorities in the traditional dress of Uyghur, Qin Hailu performed the Peking Opera Ode to Li Hua in the Xiuhe dress of Red Sorghum, and Hu Xianxi performed the Tianjin cross talk in the traditional gown. Other guests such as Qin LAN and Xin Zhilei also wore costumes with Chinese characteristics, such as Qipao and Northeast flower dress, to spread Chinese culture in the collision of cultural symbols such as dance symbols, clothing symbols and music symbols familiar to the Chinese people and the traditional Karaka sailboat, the iconic geographical symbol of Croatia. In addition, before the official start of the program, Dr. Amon, cultural Counselor of Saudi Arabia in China, gave a detailed explanation to the guests from the history of exchanges between China and Saudi Arabia, to the current close cooperation between the two countries, as well as the common local language, script and etiquette. In the second program, the program guests also visited the homes of local residents in Saudi Arabia, experienced the local traditional ethnic costumes, visited the traditional Arab houses and traditional food production. In Croatia, program guests and foreign friends experienced the Croatian intangible cultural heritage Pichkin water polo and KAYAKING kayaking. These foreign cultural symbols, through the personal experience and introduction of the program guests bearing Chinese cultural elements, to a certain extent narrow the distance with the Chinese audience and weaken the cultural discount. After the broadcast of the program, the unique writing of Arabic numbers, "hello", "thank you", "goodbye" and other Arabic must-know communication terms, as well as local customs and etiquette such as skirts above the knee, can not directly ring the doorbell have been popularized, in the above cross-cultural exchanges, the civilization of different countries can be more vivid face with the Chinese audience.

4.2.3 Character Symbols

In addition to the regular guests, the program also covers various international friends, forming a crucial

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character symbol in the meaning construction of the program. The program gives these international friends the same characteristic, that is, "love Chinese culture". For example, a Saudi student who studied in Wuhan, he regards China as his "second home", a Riyadh resident who likes to buy Chinese products online, a Chinese son-in-law under the Sino-Saudi transnational marriage, he showed Yunnan coffee and Chinese traditional Chinese medicine therapy cupping and gua Sha to the guests, and also included the Icelandic grandma Unna who opened a Chinese museum and likes to collect Chinese antiques. Through the character symbols of different countries that all have the characteristics of "loving Chinese culture", the fruitful results of the "Belt and Road" cultural exchanges are constructed, and the dialogue and understanding of different cultures are promoted.

4.2.4 Symbols of Objects

In the first stop in Saudi Arabia, the guests of the program *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* visited the homes of local residents. The guests presented Yuyao green tea, paper-cut lanterns, mugstraw, ancient silk scarves, Nanjing cloud brocade, Xinhua dictionary, Xinjiang milk tea, panda toys and other gifts with Chinese characteristics to the host. These symbols mean that in the friendly exchanges with foreign friends, Chinese traditional culture is constantly promoted to the world.

4.2.5 Topic Symbols

At present, the "Belt and Road" cooperation has entered the stage of "meticulous painting" from "sketching", transforming planning maps into real pictures, and a large number of landmark projects and "small and beautiful" projects that benefit people's lives have taken root." *Flowers and Youth · Silk Road Season* is closely linked to the "Belt and Road" theme on the 10th anniversary of the "Belt and Road" initiative, and the travel route selected Saudi Arabia, Croatia and Iceland, which stand out among the countries along the "Belt and Road". On the one hand, the high-speed railway and bridge built by China were introduced along the way through scene symbols, and the local beautiful scenery was enjoyed. On the other hand, cultural exchanges were carried out through typical Chinese and foreign cultural symbols such as Xinjiang dance and Arab traditional costumes. Use language symbols such as "love and peace" and "world unity" to create a public opinion field for win-win cooperation and common development.

5. Summarizing and Reflecting

5.1 Summary

As an important classification of symbols in semiotics, linguistic signs and non-linguistic signs both play an important role in interpersonal communication and audio-visual communication, especially in variety shows that take cross-cultural communication as the entry point, both of them have an important impact on the construction of program meaning. *Flowers and Young People · Silk Road Season* first establishes the tone of both entertainment and sociality through the theme symbols of the "Belt and Road", and then leads the audience into the foreign life through verbal language symbols, written language symbols, and non-verbal symbols such as the unique scene symbols of each country, Chinese and foreign cultural symbols, character symbols, and instrument symbols. While enjoying the beautiful local scenery, they also walked into the key cooperation projects and Chinese enterprises along the Belt and Road, taking the audience to deeply understand the positive impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on the countries along the Road, earnestly understand

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the development opportunities provided by Chinese wisdom, Chinese solutions and Chinese strength for the countries along the Road, and carry forward the Silk Road spirit of "mutual benefit, win-win and common development".

5.2 Reflection

Through the research method of text analysis and the comprehensive application of semiotics theory, this study analyzes and studies the representative cross-cultural variety show *Flowers and the Youth · Silk Road Season* from the perspective of junction theory, analyzes how it reflects the cultural meaning behind the program through symbol construction, and "tells Chinese stories well and spreads Chinese culture well" under the background of global dissemination. The analysis is more comprehensive, comprehensive and accurate.

The disadvantage is that for the sample of cross-cultural variety shows, only the most popular variety show *Flowers and the Youth · Silk Road Season* is selected, and no cross-sectional comparison of the same type of variety shows is conducted. At the same time, it only focuses on how the variety show itself constructs meaning through linguistic symbols and non-linguistic symbols, and does not specifically study the program's narrative mode and publicity mode, nor does it use questionnaire survey and in-depth interview to study the specific communication effect of the variety show from the perspective of the audience.

In future studies, researchers in the field of cross-cultural variety shows may need to keep an eye on the new changes and phenomena of program theme, narrative mode and program planning brought about by the change of media, the development of media integration and the change of international communication situation in this field.

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