A Brief Analysis of the Cultural and Social Phenomenon of Internet Memes in the Context of Media Convergence

Danqi Wang[1,a,*]

[1]*School of Journalism and Communication, China West Normal University (CWNU), No.1 Shidai Road, Shunqing District, Nanchong City, Sichuan Province, China*
a. 2695995356@qq.com
*corresponding author

Abstract: As a major branch of network buzzwords, "meme culture" refers to the cultural phenomenon that the majority of netizen groups in the network field repeatedly quote and use events that are commonly agreed upon and have a certain special meaning, so as to achieve the expected funny effect and cause certain social resonance. In the era of media convergence, the endless emergence of network buzzwords and "meme culture" social phenomenon is overwhelming, these secondary language expression has gradually integrated into the three-dimensional real life, the language and writing expression ability of modern people is being reshaped, so these network meme culture has become the cultural sign of the times. Therefore, this paper tries to analyze the rise and development of network terrier culture under the context of media integration, as well as the reasons for the emergence of the social phenomenon of network meme culture, its social impacts and social mentality, etc. The aim is to help people better deal with this linguistic phenomenon in their lives, to treat it rationally and to guide it with goodwill, to realize the benign development of network meme culture, and to put forward effective suggestions in line with the requirements of the development of the times.

Keywords: meme culture, internet buzzwords, the context of media convergence, social phenomena, development proposals

1. Introduction

In this era of media integration and development, with the continuous construction of the Internet's own culture, the Internet 'terrier culture' has emerged with popular entertainment as the value orientation, emotional resonance as the identity label, and rich expression as the purpose of participation. In the current era of media convergence, the network media seems to have invariably entered an era of 'playing terrier', so that more and more people feel that even if they do not browse the social media in just one day's time, it is like accidentally dropping a piece of rubber in the maths class, and when people bend down and pick up the rubber, they will not be able to understand what people in the Internet are doing. After people bend over to pick up the eraser, they can't understand what new content is being discussed and exchanged on the Internet.

Meme culture is often what people call some of the laughs, grooves, often in variety shows and social networks, mostly used in today's popular things, such as cartoons, reality shows, emoticons, variety shows, novels, online games, films and short videos, etc., which allows people to quietly

discover that in the corners of the network world, there are also different subcultures such as gaming circle, secondary circle. Nowadays, the prevalence of terrier culture is no longer based on the principle of "exclusivity", but rather seeks to break the status quo that people being are in different information cocoons, and endeavor to promote the exchange and commonality of information. In this sense, the network culture will naturally form a public opinion space that can communicate and influence each other. As a network subculture phenomenon, "meme" is built on the basis of the new media situation, integrating text, picture and video, reflecting the cultural revelry of the network era through the material selection of hot topics and the creation of arbitrary connections, as well as showing the unique aesthetics of contemporary youth. [1]

From the perspective of social common emotion, the popularity of network meme culture carries people's common memory and emotion, which provides a powerful support for people's interesting cultural interactions and dynamic expression of opinions in the network era; from the perspective of language symbols, it also impregnates the discourse ideological system and framework of the general public, and presents a social debate on "energy reference" and "reference". From the perspective of language symbols, it also infiltrates the discourse representation system and framework of the general public, presenting a textual feast on "energy reference" and "reference" for the society. Thus, it is clear that in the process of investigating network information in the era of media convergence, "meme" culture has become an important part worthy of further study.

2. The Development of China's Internet Meme Culture

Domestic meme culture originated in 2007, due to the rise of domestic BBS and network community platforms, "meme" gradually entered the vision of the Chinese people, and became a new word with unique cultural symbols of the network. At the same time, the diversity of meme culture not only exists in the text carrier, although people were still 2G network surfing, but still can't stop them from sharing the enthusiasm of the hot meme.

With the arrival of the 3G era, netizens are no longer bound to publish graphic posts on the Internet, the rise of video sites has brought more interesting videos and related terriers. For example, Bili Bili's ghost animal video has formed a kind of ghost animal culture hot terrain. Under the cultivation of such a batch of network culture, the meme culture has further developed into various forms, such as the "Stampede" in the talk show and the red-hot Internet animation *Hundred Thousand Cold Jokes*.

Later, with the continuous development and progress of the 4G and 5G era, more and more short video platforms are rising, which makes people really do the free entertainment on the cell phone, and at the same time of the information transmission speed is more rapid, the spreading speed of all kinds of hot news on the network is also accelerated, and the terrier culture will be gradually derived along with the hotness of the short video platforms.

3. Causes of the phenomenon of Internet meme culture

In today's era, people are surrounded by an endless stream of terriers, which are not only widely distributed on online platforms, but also appear in real communication environments, and as people continue to change and simplify their communication habits, this novel way of language is gradually integrated into the lives of the general public.

3.1. Specific requirements for audience expression and participation are relaxed

Meme culture often does not limit the scope of the circle of people, almost everyone can participate in the process of its re-circulation, can always create and enrich the meme culture related scenes, so as to deepen its inner meaning, and also can be encountered in life through different things to produce

a new meme definition and interpretation, at the same time, some of the mainstream media are also relying on the learning of more rich meme culture to get more traffic and attention.

3.2.   Satisfies the audience's subjective need to be amused and flirtatious

Since the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* did not include the meaning of the word "gěng", which is familiar to netizens nowadays, some people generally believe that its origin is a misidentification and misuse of the word "gén". Regarding its origin, some people generally believe that it is a misrecognition and misuse of the character "gén". In 2009, Zhang Dachun, a teacher at the Chinese Department of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan, pointed out that it was due to "the 'ignorant creation' of the subtitle writers of TV companies that we nowadays often write the character 'gén', which should be written as 'gén'. ', we nowadays often write the word 'gén' as 'gěng'" when it should be written as 'gén'" [2].

Similarly, a Weibo post by comedian Guo Degang in 2017 had said, "The word "gén" refers to comical and humorous language and actions....... For historical reasons, numerous Peking Opera artists have been exiled from their home countries, bringing a batch of vocabulary with them. Not everyone can accurately read out the comic, so blackmail reads as meme." [3]

In the *History of the Pear Garden in Yandu during the Qing Dynasty* compiled by the Fangzhi scholar Zhang Zixi, it is recorded that "in the Pear Garden clown play in the Peking Opera, there is the so-called catching comics, no matter who or what, can be pulled in at any time in order to help the wit ...... "[4] also corroborates the historical facts behind this opinion. The fact that this opinion is based on historical facts is also supported by [5]. In addition, there is still a view that "meme" can be regarded as a direct translation of "gag". Regardless of whether this argument is wrong or not, it can at least be judged that the generation of meme culture has the factor of satisfying the audience's subjective need to be amused and flirted with.

3.3.   Enriching the rhetorical form and corpus content of the audience

The meme culture is similar to the proverbs, hiatus and sayings that have been passed down for a long time in the history of China. For example, "nephews playing lanterns - as usual (uncle)" covers the addition of harmonies, while showing the characteristics of puzzle solving, through the flexibility, metaphorical expression, and the Internet era of the background of the terrier culture of this novel linguistic phenomenon echo, so that it is gradually becoming a popular linguistic and cultural phenomenon of Internet users in the context of media convergence. It has gradually become a popular linguistic and cultural phenomenon among netizens in the context of media integration. For example, the popular "meme" such as "rat-rat literature", "Versailles literature", "Kong Yi Ji literature" and "monkey literature", etc., are all popular expressions of Internet users. While recognizing the popular "meme", netizens continue to trace their origins and sources, and enrich the corpus of today's network era, making them both figurative and interesting forms of speech, which is also the process by which the meme culture is able to continuously grasp its interesting expression rules and meaning representations.

4.   The social impact of the phenomenon of Internet meme culture

In the current context of media integration, the prosperity of " meme culture" appears to be a manifestation of folk power and network vitality, but in fact, it is actually a kind of decline and exhaustion of language ability. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once said, "To imagine a language is to imagine a way of life." If life's contradictory and complex states, as well as its fine details and emotions, can be summarized in a single sentence using the popular Internet meme language, it will

inevitably omit too much of the beauty inherent in life and language itself. Naturally, the independent cognition and way of thinking that makes a person a human being will be missing in the society.

The way of life represented by Internet terrestrial culture is often flat, compressed and single. Tens of thousands of short videos play the same "meme" over and over again, and this "meme" is often a generalization of the context. Real life is always rich, unfolding and complex, and people walking on the road seem to have large colorful wings behind them carrying their memories and stories.

As for the attitude of network meme culture, its influence is often to compress the expression of people's life situation, enrich the supplementation of daily language, and add people's communication interest, while the "meme" itself is a means of tool, but not the end, in the context of media convergence, we need to maintain independent learning and thinking, because people really want to reach the other side or people are more interested in the future. In the context of media integration, the general public need to maintain independent learning and thinking, because people really want to reach the other side of the shore or people's more meaningful and valuable existence.

With the increasing diversification of people's ways of expression, a prominent phenomenon is the extreme economic pursuit of textual expression, in the network communication, people often use a variety of emoticons to replace the output of text, and language abbreviations are no longer just four-word idioms like "unknown", but have gradually evolved into a large number of pinyin abbreviations. In today's context of media convergence, the convenience of the Internet has made the inertia of contemporary people not only manifested in "forgetting words when putting pen to paper", but even in daily expression, they no longer comply with the basic norms of using words, so that it is even more difficult for them to comply with the words in their written expression, and this kind of linguistic inertia may be a side effect of the booming development of visual culture. The greatest charm of the media convergence era lies in the folding and compression of network time and space, which greatly shortens the physical distance of communication between people in different regions, and enables people to fully enjoy the wonderful experience of meeting with different groups. [6]

Through the inheritance of Chinese meme culture, in fact, we can also see the evolution of China's Internet history, with the speed and timeliness of people's online surfing accelerated, terrier culture is more and more diversified, more and more related industries about the network meme culture, people's understanding of the meme culture is more and more in-depth, and so in the common promotion of the nation's netizens, unconsciously, the meme culture inheritance of more than a decade still Vigorous and endless.

5.   Social mentality reflected in the phenomenon of Internet meme culture

Nowadays, meme culture is the intuitive mapping of the digital life of the majority of netizens, and it is also the cultural form and language way of intergenerational communication between people, behind which often lurks the social mentality of the general public, and at the same time reflects people's value pursuit and social psychology.Under the context of media convergence, the Internet has promoted the networkization of social relations, and the Internet has gradually become the link between the whole society, and the dissemination and development of meme culture has become more and more frequent, just as more and more people lament that they are often: "Offline only promise, online heavy attack." Digital communication has enlarged the social circle of the general public, enabling people to form temporary, diversified and multiple network communities based on different hobbies and interests at any time, creating a "hotbed" for the further spread and promotion of meme culture.

The emergence of meme culture is often not only a sociological phenomenon, but also represents an aesthetic and moral standard. The meme culture that is popular nowadays inevitably has different degrees of pandering and cliché, but they reflect the linguistic wisdom and social life of the majority of netizens, and help the general public to effectively accomplish the task of daily communication.

The content of today's terrier culture is not a new language, because it has not changed the basic rules of language use, but only a creative and innovative use of vocabulary forms, positions and conceptual references.

Of course, in the process of spreading the terrier culture, there is a possibility that it may become transgressive and vulgar, and even some Internet meme culture may provoke the confrontation between the civil and official public opinion, and destroy the social identity and cultural consensus of some netizen groups.

6. Conclusions

Cyberspace is an indispensable digital space in the daily life of the majority of Internet users, and the meme culture produced in it is an organic product of the linkage between online and offline, the reconciliation of tradition and modernity in the era of media integration, and also an important product of the contemporary social situation, which creates a new order and mode, and enriches the critical spirit of the language and the aesthetics of interest.At the same time, the society should treat the negative effects of Internet meme culture objectively and guide them rationally, so as to prevent netizens from evading their public responsibilities and entering the world of virtual immensity. Most of the terrier culture will be shed and reincarnated, and a small part of it will even enter the discourse system of the mainstream culture and become the common language used in the process of human production and life interactions.

Regarding the correct guidance of network meme culture, the general public should adhere to the principle that most of the network meme culture should be guided by rational language, some of which can be restrained by moral means, and a small amount of serious part should be reasonably stopped by legal means.

At present, what kind of linguistic phenomenon do people need more? Or maybe there is a deeper problem behind this question: the general public should rethink how contemporary people can face themselves and others without burden and with sincerity. Whether in the online world or in real life, people are in dire need of a more benign communication environment. After making fun of ourselves and making jokes, can people still return to ourselves, think seriously and speak out sincerely?

As the main force of today's Internet era, and as young people taking on new responsibilities of the era, perhaps each young person with his or her own strength can't stop the spread of vulgarity in the phenomenon of Internet meme culture, but they can do their best to shape a healthy, benign Internet environment, thus endeavouring to create a present that will be beneficial to the future.

References

[1] New Criticism of Literature. An Interpretation of the Contemporary Young Meme Cultural Phenomenon by Li Xiaoqing. [2023-08-22]
[2] Chen Qian.(2020)Groups and Rituals: A Semiotic Study of the Communication of Internet "Meme" Texts[J]. Southeast Communication, 11, 79-82.
[3] Cited in Sina Weibo [EB/OL]. (2017, August 21) [2021-03-26].
[4] Zhang Cixi. The history of the pear orchards of Yandu in the Qing Dynasty [M]. Beijing: China Theater Press, 1988: 823.
[5] Tianjin Daily / 2022 / August / 26 / Edition 006. Entertainment. When "meme" culture enters the "museum".
[6] Guangming Daily's full-page focus on " meme " culture: the birth of new tropes in cyberspace. [2021-09-09]