Impact of International News Narrative Approaches on the Attitude Discrepancy among TikTok Users

--A Case Study of TikTok Comments on the Assassination of Shinzo Abe

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Abstract: Under the background of globalization, diversified narrative approaches have been increasingly adopted in international news reports in the context of new media, leading to varying degrees of influence on the audience's opinion. In virtue of their fast-paced, penetrative and fragmented contents, short video communication platforms, represented by TikTok, cater to people's reading needs in the rush of modern life. They are also found to differ from traditional media in the reporting and dissemination of major news events. On July 8, 2022, Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan and a current member of the House of Representatives, was shot and killed during his street speech in Nara City, Nara Prefecture. After the incident, many relevant news reports and short videos emerged on the platform of TikTok, with different emotional attitudes highly perceivable from users' comments. Based on the Theory of News Narratology, this article collects and encodes first-hand data from 100 short videos with the largest number of likes after July 8 and 9 on the short video platform of TikTok, such as video length, release time, video presentation mode, narrative approach and music style, and explores the impact of different narrative approaches and elements in international news reports on the attitude and behavioral orientation of Internet users using the method of content analysis. The results of comparative analysis show that the audience's comment tone is relatively flat under the sad style of music and the short news videos with low timeliness; the narrative approach of incorporating subjective comments and human participation into short videos is conducive to the rational return of public opinion.

Keywords: news narrative, news comments, international news

1. Introduction

Recent years has witnessed the booming of new media in China. More and more new media platforms have come into sight and play an important role in people's daily life. The short video platform of TikTok is exactly one of the flourishing platforms. As a type of mobile social software dedicated to shooting and releasing music and creative short videos, TikTok is mobile, interactive and visual, not only fully meeting the current youth's expectations for entertainment and social interaction, but also making it possible for anyone to become a disseminator with the help of its openness. From the perspective of news content production, it seems that the mainstream media is no longer the only information producer on short video platforms. Social organizations and even individuals can be providers of news clues and engage in institutionalized communication via the Internet, offering certain news clues to the audience. Due to its timeliness, interactivity and other characteristics, the short video platform of TikTok has not only become one of the main channels for people to obtain news information but has also quickly occupied a central position in public opinion crazes.

Recently, the news # Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan, was shot in the chest # became a trending topic and attracted extensive public attention. The assassination of Shinzo Abe (or the incident of Shinzo Abe being shot) is an assassination and shooting event that took place on July 8, 2022. At about 11:30 am local time in Japan, Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister and a current member of the House of Representatives, was shot from the back by a gunman when he was making a street speech in the ordinary election of the 26th Japanese Senate members near the Japanese Railway Yamato-saidaiji Station in Kinki, Nara City, Nara Prefecture. He fell to the ground after being shot in the chest and neck and was pronounced dead at 17:03 pm that day, at the age of 67. Many people believe that the assassination of Shinzo Abe by Yamagami Tetsuya was politically motivated [1].

This emergent event was instantly reported on all major network platforms all day in real time. On the short video platform of TikTok, a large number of short news videos about the assassination of Shinzo Abe speedily attracted public attention after being reported by the mainstream media. After being fermented by users' likes and forwarding, such short videos entered the flow pool of TikTok and were made accessible to more and more users. With the high participation and attention of the public, such news became increasingly popular, continuously inducing public opinion. While the reports of this incident were perceived to have an explosive increase on TikTok, Internet users also expressed their opinions and attitudes below each short video. The reason why the assassination of Shinzo Abe caused widespread concern and discussion on the platform of TikTok is related to the significant impact of the content production approach and communication mode based on short videos. The platform of TikTok focuses on the mode of communication via "short videos". In a short video, the audience can enjoy the infectious background music while watching the video content supported, personalized and customized by intelligent algorithms. Undoubtedly, they have easy access to rich audio-visual experience. In addition, short videos can be as short as 60 seconds or as long as 3-5 minutes, allowing users to get the main information or content released by a short video with a fast review. This evidently meets the viewing needs of users in the era of fragmented reading. Consequently, the short video-supported transmission method of TikTok has immediately obtained favor from users. When short videos are combined with news, users can be exposed to current news around the world in a short time, get to know recent hot events more quickly, and obtain official attitudes and responses to relevant events.

This article takes the platform of TikTok as the research object to examine the narrative characteristics of short video platforms. A case study is conducted on the assassination of Shinzo Abe to explore the unique advantages of the short video platform of TikTok in news

communication and the impact of the narrative approaches adopted by TikTok on the attitude of Chinese Internet users and predict the development direction of short news videos on Chinese new media platforms in the future, for the purpose of enriching the research of international news narrative on new media platforms.

2.　Literature Review

As a branch of Journalism, News Narratology has been receiving a lot of attention from scholars at home and abroad. News narratology itself focuses on the common narrative elements that exist in news reports. Scholar Zeng Qing Xiang elaborated that news narratology is the scientific study of the narrative acts and strategies of news, taking news texts as the research object and using the research method of discourse analysis in an integrated way. Zeng also mentioned that some scholars summarized three main theoretical frameworks of news narratology, including news narrative texts and discourse structures, news narrative acts and strategy research [2].

Reading the relevant literature of news narratology, our study find that early studies were mostly confined to commercial and official media such as newspapers, magazines and television news. In recent years, the emergence of new media has opened up a new chapter of research in this field. Among these, the impact of news narratives on public opinion has been the focus of scholarly discussion. Gabore and Xiujun examined the impact of news length on public opinion and found that short news stories had a greater impact on social media opinion than long news articles, and that news article length was negatively correlated with its impact on public opinion [3]. Moreover, some scholars have focused on how audiovisual language influences audiences' emotions. In Immersive News Narratives: Taking VR News and Audio News as Examples, Meng points out that immersive news, represented by VR news and audio news, constructs a sense of presence and immersion with news presentation that is mainly characterized by first-person perspective and subjective emotional experience, thus more easily arousing audiences' emotional resonance [4].

Among the many branches of research in news narratology, the news narrative of international news is an important area that cannot be ignored. In the final chapter of International Communication: Continuity and Change, "International Communication in the Age of the Internet", British scholar Thussu examines the global digital divide [5]. Cheng analyzed the characteristics of international communication in the age of the Internet in the last section of chapter 2 "History of International Communication" of the Course of International Communication [6].

The dissemination of international news is an important way for each country to transmit cultural and political information. Therefore, its public opinion guidance is one of the effective manifestations of cultural soft power. Li pointed out that in order to improve the effectiveness of international news, strategies such as optimizing the narrative perspective, shifting the "focus" point, engaging in equal dialogue with the audience and diversifying the language and genre of the work can be adopted [7]. In Traversing the "Twittersphere", scholars Bloom et al point out that social media resources are currently being used more for publicity and audience tracking purposes than for news gathering [8]. Based on the widespread use of mobile internet and social media software, these studies analyze the new changes brought about by the new media to guide public opinion in international communication.

However, for various reasons, little research has been done on international news opinion on Chinese social media platforms. It can be seen from a review of existing studies that most of the research on public opinion in international communication is focused on public opinion guidance and communication strategies, while there is still a gap in the research on the relationship between public opinion and news narratives in new media platforms. As China's leading Short Video Platform, Tik Tok can effectively and intuitively reflect public opinion, and Tik Tok comments are of great value in the study of public opinion in international news, so this study decided to use the

attitudes reflected in Tik Tok comments as the dependent variable in this study. However, this study found that most of the studies on Tik Tok comments were based on text analysis with data crawling, and this method could not accurately distinguish the subtle changes in mood and tone in the comments.

This study hopes to provide more information on the dissemination of international news in new media platforms and help internet users avoid the negative consequences of "Internet populism" and the "amplification effect" of negative news. To put into practice what this study hopes to achieve, this study collected more than two thousand comments under the short video related to the assassination of Shinzo Abe on the Tik Tok platform, and screened these primary data and conducted precise content analysis manually, so as to effectively correlate news narratives in international communication with the effect of public opinion in new media platforms, in the hope of exploring the relationship between changes in Chinese netizens' opinion on the assassination of Shinzo Abe and the way news narratives are presented.

3. Methodology: Class Construction and Coding

Using the keyword "assassination of Shinzo Abe", this study searched the Tik Tok platform and collected the 100 most popular short videos within five days from July 8, 2022 and selected the 20 most liked comments below each video for a total of 2,000 comments. The videos were classified according to five independent variables: video length, release time, presentation format, narrative mode and soundtrack style, and the comments were classified according to three dependent variables: relevance, emotional expression and textual tone.

The dependent variable is judged by how relevant the comment is to the video: (relevant) strongly related to the news event itself, (irrelevant) not related to the news event itself. Emotional expression: (positive) positive internal emotions, (neutral) neutral internal emotions, (negative) negative internal emotions. Comment on the tone of the text: (happy) the text itself presents pleasure and joy, (plain) the text itself has no obvious expressive bias, (sorry) expresses regret about the news event, (excited) expresses excitement about the news event.

4. Results

4.1. Video Length

Analysis of the video length data shows that the number of short videos within 60 seconds accounts for 88%, while short videos of one to five minutes in length account for 11%. The number of short videos within 60 seconds is preponderant. By statistically analyzing the correlation of video comments of different lengths and their subcategories this study found that video length was negatively correlated with the number of related comments, and when the video length increased, the number of related comments decreased instead [9]. The statistics of text tone and its subcategories of different length video comments show that the number of comments with flat tone is the highest under both short videos of less than sixty seconds and one to five minutes, and there is a more obvious data advantage.

4.2. Release Time

The data analysis of video release time shows that the number of videos released on the day of the event on July 8, 2022, accounted for 80%, and the number of videos released on July 9, 2022 and later accounted for 20%, and the number of videos released on the day of the event had a more obvious advantage. After statistical analysis of the relevance of comments and their subcategories under different posting time videos, this article found that the number of relevant comments

accounted for 68.5% on the day of the event. The number of news-related comments on videos posted the day after the event or later was 47.3%, and the later the posting time, the less relevant the comments were to the news.

Statistics on the emotional expressions of comments and their subcategories under videos of different posting times show that on the day of the event, the number of comments expressing negative emotions accounted for 53.3%, the number expressing neutral emotions accounted for 40.1%, and the number expressing positive emotions accounted for 6.6%.On the other hand, on the next day of the event and after, the percentage of different emotions showed a significant difference, with the number of comments expressing negative emotions accounting for 31.7%, the number of comments expressing neutral emotions accounting for 47.5%, and the number of comments expressing positive emotions accounting for 20.8%.

Statistical analysis of the textual tone of comments and their subcategories under videos at different posting times shows that the number of comments with a flat tone increased by 24.9% in the period after the event, while the percentage of comments with an excited tone and those with a regretful tone remained low and the percentage of comments with a happy tone decreased significantly.

4.3. The Way of Narrative

Nearly 80% of the short videos in this study's sample took an objective narrative approach to the coverage of events, while the remaining videos used subjective commentary to explain the events. After analyzing the 20 comments with a high number of likes in the comment section below the videos of objective narrative reports, this study finds that there are 1125 highly liked comments related to the video content, occupying about 72% of the total sample, while there are only 435 comments unrelated to the video content, accounting for a relatively small percentage. In addition, under the objective narrative, the emotional expression of the comments varied widely, with 129 positive comments, occupying about 8.2% of the total sample; 626 neutral comments, occupying 40.1% of the total sample; and 805 negative comments, occupying 51.60% of the total sample. Among these comments, 405 comments were in a happy tone, 1084 were in a flat tone, and only 38 other comments showed regret for the event, while 33 showed excitement. And under the videos reported by taking subjective reviews, this article can find that 159 of them have highly praised comments related to the video content, occupying about 36% of the total sample, while 281 of them have nothing to do with the video content, occupying about 64% of the total sample. After analyzing the comments, it was found that there were 65 positive comments, accounting for 14.77% of the total sample; 199 neutral comments, accounting for 45.23% of the total sample; and 176 negative comments, accounting for 40% of the total sample. In terms of the tone of the comments, there were 89 "happy" comments, 346 "calmness" comments, and 2 and 3 "regret" and "excited" comments, respectively.

The sample data shows that 70% of the comments under the videos that take an objective narrative approach to reporting are relevant to the video content. In contrast, about 64% of the comments under the videos that took a subjective commentary approach to reporting were irrelevant.

In terms of emotional expression, although the number of comments expressing positive emotions was the lowest in both different narrative types, the percentage of comments with neutral emotions increased to some extent under the videos that took subjective reviews, exceeding the number expressing negative emotions.

In addition, the sample data show that the subjective and objective news narratives do not have a significant impact on the tone of audience comments, with a similar percentage of comments of different tones below the two types of videos.

4.4. Media Content Presentation

In terms of media content presentation, "picture and text" videos accounted for 34% of the total sample, "video and text" accounted for 37%, and "human-involved reporting" videos accounted for 29%. Among the "picture+text" videos, 480 comments were related to the videos, accounting for 68.57% of the total sample; 220 comments were unrelated to the videos, accounting for 31.43% of the total sample. In addition, there are 66 positive comments, 229 negative comments and 385 neutral comments. Among them, the comments about "happy", "calmness", "regret" and "excited" each accounted for 23.86%, 68.43%, 2% and 2.9% respectively.

In the "video + text" category, there were 550 video-related videos and 190 video-unrelated videos. Highly favorable comments indicated positive, neutral and negative sentiments of 6.1%, 48.43% and 51.14% respectively. There were 177 comments expressing "happy", 536 comments expressing "calmness", 20 comments expressing "regret", and 7 comments expressing "excited". Among the videos in the category of "someone involved in the story," 260 were related to the video and 320 were unrelated to it. Among them, 13.62%, 42.41% and 43.97% of the comments were positive, neutral and negative respectively. There were 160 comments that were "happy" about the assassination of Shinzo Abe, 408 comments that were "calmness", 5 comments that were "regret", and 7 comments that were "excited". In terms of media content presentation, the percentages of the three types of videos are relatively close, with "video + text" and "picture + text" videos having a slight numerical advantage. And nearly 70% of the comments in the "video + text" and "image + text" sections are related comments, while the number of irrelevant comments increases significantly under the videos with human involvement, exceeding the number of related comments by about 55%.

In terms of emotion expression, although all three video types have the most negative emotion expression, the difference between the number of negative and neutral emotions is the smallest among the videos with people involved in the coverage, and the percentage of positive emotions is the highest among the three video types [10].

The presentation of the video also does not have a large impact on the textual tone of the audience in the comment section, and the proportion of comments with a flat tone remains the highest.

4.5. Soundtrack Style

Data analysis of soundtrack styles shows that 62% of the total number of short videos are in the tense style, 25% of short videos without soundtrack, and the proportion of short videos in the bland and melancholy styles is relatively close. After statistical analysis of the soundtrack style and its subcategories, it can be seen that: the number of related comments is higher under the tense, bland style and short videos without soundtrack, with 67%, 69% and 58.4% respectively. Under the short videos with melancholy style soundtrack, the percentage of related comments is relatively small, 32%.

The statistical analysis of the emotional expressions and their sub-categories of comments under different soundtrack styles reveals that the emotional tendency of the comments is no longer dominated by negative emotions, but by neutral emotional expressions under the videos with melancholy soundtracks. The tone of the comments was calmer.

5. Discussion

Overall, none of the five aspects of video length, release time, narrative style, presentation, and soundtrack style had a significant impact on the tone of audience comments, which were all predominantly bland.

Combined with the dissemination characteristics of the Tik Tok platform itself, the number of short videos within 60 seconds is high. A statistical analysis of the relevance of video comments of different lengths and their sub-categories reveals that video length is negatively correlated with the number of relevant comments, and when the length of a video increases, the number of relevant comments decreases instead. Video length is inversely related to comment relevance. In today's fast-paced life, people are more conscious of the cost of time. With its "short and quick" feature, the short video has adapted to the audience's fragmented reading needs and won the popularity of the public. However, the short length of short videos also limits the amount of information that can be included in the content. Therefore, by improving the quality as much as possible while ensuring that the duration is not too long, the video can effectively capture the audience's attention and thus maximize the effectiveness of the communication.

The timing of the release of the video had a degree of influence on the relevance of the comments, emotional expressions and textual tone of the Tik Tok platform users in the assassination of Shinzo Abe. Videos posted on the day of a news event often have comments that are highly relevant to the event. In the case of videos posted the day after the news event and beyond, the emotional expression and textual tone of the comments tended to be more neutral and even-handed, although their relevance declined. It shows that news timeliness and a sense of presence are still important features of short-form video works, and that quick reporting can create a sense of presence and immersion for viewers. At the same time, as the audience's attention tends to be fragmented and limited, people tend to focus on content that resonates with them emotionally in the first instance. Over time, the emotional element declines in the weight of comments, ideas and established facts become what audiences really care about, thus creating the phenomenon of a return to rationality in public opinion.

From the perspective of narrative style, most of the short videos of the assassination of Shinzo Ampere adopt an objective narrative style, which directly provides the basic information of the news event and more realistically recreates the scene of the event. News commentary has always been one of the effective ways to guide public opinion. In the new media era, short video copy has to some extent replaced the role of news commentary, fulfilling the media's function of evocative, persuasive and effective value communication. Thus, video texts with subjective commentary can serve to guide public opinion, monitor it and express it at important events, issues and points of interest. Compared to traditional media, the audience of new online media has a wider coverage and a more fragmented audience, which makes it all the more important for short video accounts with a high attention span to play the role of opinion leaders.

The number of videos with different presentation methods is more evenly distributed across the Tik Tok platform. The way in which 'people are involved in the story' is presented has a significant impact on people's perception and understanding of the objective world, influencing their opinions and guiding their emotions towards reason. Journalist presenters play an important role in news gathering, editing and broadcasting. Therefore, based on the in-depth news reporting needs to build reporter-type host role, enhance the host's own news literacy, cultural heritage and personality characteristics and other methods, can effectively improve the overall quality of news short video. In addition, the combing of the role of the hosts involved in the report and the strengthening of their comprehensive ability can effectively enhance the breadth and depth of news programs and better meet the audience's expectations for in-depth news.

Among the different soundtrack styles, 'tense' has the highest proportion, followed by 'no soundtrack', with a small number of videos using 'sad' soundtracks. A melancholic soundtrack can lead to a more diverse view of the audience and a more neutral emotional expression. Background music plays a key role in the emotional expression of short videos. The vast library of music provided by the Tik Tok platform can meet the dubbing needs of most short videos, and the

combination of the emotional rendering effect of music and the visual impact of short videos can maximize the emotional expression effect [11]. If the cultural orientation of the music space and the news space is to be consistent, the most important thing is to realize the emotional mobilization of values, thus promoting the extension of the emotional dimension of news values. If this relationship is not consistent, then short news videos may be emotionally and culturally misaligned [12]. The tense style soundtrack produced the best combination with the news of Shinzo Abe's assassination, thus mobilizing the audience's emotions and attention to the greatest extent and presenting the most singular perspective of commentary. Because of the melancholic soundtrack and the irrelevance of the event itself, audience have more room to think, resulting in a more diverse commentary that avoids the amplifying effect of negative news in the internet age. The "amplification effect" in the field of news communication refers to the multi-faceted, high frequency "news bombardment" of the same event by different media within a short period of time, with the audience being constantly stimulated by information of a certain value orientation. Most audiences, without the awareness, time and energy to find out the truth, tend to arrive at distorted interpretations and misjudgments of relevant information. In the Internet age, distorted reports and interpretations of events can be interacted with by individuals or groups in the network, resulting in a concentration of negative opinion that spreads rapidly [13-15].

6. Conclusion

In summary, the different video lengths, release times, presentation styles, narrative styles and soundtrack styles in the news narrative structure have a direct impact on the audience's comments, especially on the relevance and emotional expression of the audience's comments. Moreover, video length and release time are inversely related to the relevance of comments. It is noteworthy that the tone of the comments is mostly calm, despite the predominance of negative emotions. In recent years, the rise of new media platforms has opened up new horizons in international communication, and the reporting of major international news events has taken on a more diverse narrative. In contrast to traditional stereotypes, current audience opinion is gradually benefiting from the active guidance of communication subjects and is becoming more rational and objective. Media practitioners should further improve their news narrative strategies in international news reporting in order to create a better online ecological environment in the context of globalization. As a publisher of content on new media platforms, if audience comments are expected to be highly relevant to the content of a news story, video length should be kept as concise as possible while maintaining the integrity of the narrative and the timeliness of the video. When video publishers wish to guide audiences towards neutral expressions of emotion, more subjective commentary should be used, as the sample data from this study shows that this type of video only accounts for 20% of the top 100 most popular videos. Therefore, media publishers should focus on improving the quality and quantity of this type of video in order to achieve a better dissemination effect and thus better guide the audience to a rational opinion. Finally, as far as presentation is concerned, although all types of videos account for a similar proportion on the Jitterbug platform and there is no obvious bias in the preferences and attitudes of netizens, from the perspective of media publishers, the use of a news release format with human participation in the coverage is more conducive to guiding audience opinion, avoiding extreme emotional outbursts.

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