



Analysis of TikTok's Popular Videos from a Semiotic Perspective

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Abstract. As a social media application, TikTok has developed a unique combination of visuals and visual symbols, which has had an inevitable impact on the way young people communicate. The application combines visual and visual elements to build a diverse and dynamic environment. However, by encouraging users to adopt specific types of audio and video notation, this may limit the creative potential of the platform, rendering the content somewhat homogeneous. change. This paper aims to deeply explore the impact of TikTok on the way TikTok affects communication from a semiotic perspective, and proposes effective management strategies to maximize its creative potential.

Keywords: TikTok; social media application; semiotic;

1 Introduction

Tik Tok is a unique platform that combines audio and visual symbols to create a highly expressive multimodal world. Launched in 2016, Tik Tok APP is a popular platform for users of all ages, providing users with a simple way to create and share unique content [1]. By using various functions, such as sound editing, filters and editing tools, users can create interesting and attractive videos. From the launch of "letting worship from here" to March 19, 2018, TikTok's slogan was changed to "record a good life" [2]. The app encourages users to express themselves through creative combinations of music, video, images and text. With its interactive and user-friendly interface, it continues to be a popular choice for users to express ideas and connect with others. TikTok has created a multimodal world of audio and visual symbols, but there is also a trend of homogenization of expression.

2 Signifier-Connotation Interactions

In the context of popular TikTok videos, signifier-connotation interactions can be used to study the various emotions and thoughts these videos evoke in viewers. Signifier-connotation interaction is an important concept in semiotic analysis because it examines the relationship between signifiers and their connotations. Signifier is the visual

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or auditory representation of an object, while its connotation is the emotion or idea associated with it. Symbolic connotation interactions can be seen in various visual and audio elements of popular TikTok videos. For example, a bright, vibrant color palette may imply happiness and optimism, while a darker palette may suggest more serious tones. Similarly, the background music of a video can affect the viewer's perception of the overall mood of the video. On TikTok, a popular video with the theme of "Retro Dance Challenge" has visual elements including retro-style clothing, music, dance moves, etc., which constitutes a symbol system. These symbols are not just external manifestations, they also carry rich connotations. For example, retro-style clothing may symbolize nostalgia, youth, or the fashion of a specific cultural period; while retro music may inspire the audience's memories or emotional resonance of a bygone era. In addition, the dance movement itself, as a symbol, may also convey connotations such as energy, joy, or unity. By in-depth analysis of the interaction between these symbols and connotations, we can further understand the emotional resonance and ideological inspiration this video arouses in the audience. Specifically, viewers may associate these symbols with memories of their youth, identification with a specific culture, or reflections on current social trends. At the same time, these symbols may also inspire the audience's enthusiasm for participation, prompting them to imitate and share their own "Retro Dance Challenge" videos, thus further expanding the scope and influence of this theme. By studying the signifier-connotation interactions of popular TikTok videos, one can better understand the emotions and ideas these videos are conveying to the audience.

3 Visual, Audio, Text Elements

3.1 Audio-visual elements

The visual and audio elements in popular TikTok videos are deeply embedded in the platform's cultural context. For example, certain symbols and sounds may evoke feelings of joy, nostalgia, or comedy. Additionally, many videos use sound effects, music, and other audio elements to create a specific emotional impact or express a specific emotion. Through these elements, users can convey information or create a different narrative than the actual content of the video. It is worth mentioning that it has divided its content categories around music as its core, and has further enhanced the user experience by introducing the "Dance Dance Machine", which is powered by its proprietary "Human Key Detection Technology" [3]. This technology permits users to create and share content in novel and engaging ways. This means that when the video text is represented and received, the codes of the musical and visual symbols will correspond to those evoked in the recipient's mind. People will naturally associate the brisk melody and beating hands with sunshine and fireworks, and the excitement will surge accordingly. In contrast, expressive "images" are more likely to be associated with the loneliness brought on by a breeze, freezing rain, slow, mournful melodies, and gentle hand movements. This ritual gathering is the result of the act of creating a sense of identity and security with the help of short video frames, and becomes part of the

"imaginary community" of artistic symbols. TikTok has changed the way many people present themselves, creating a lively community.

3.2 Text Element

The ubiquity of accompanying text in many TikTok videos has created a unique linguistic phenomenon in which words and phrases have become increasingly popular in a relatively short period of time. This trend has been observed across various social media platforms, but it seems to be particularly pronounced on TikTok. Users often use creative and humorous language to interact with audiences [4]. This phenomenon reflects the ever-evolving ways in which digital communication evolves, demonstrating the dynamic nature of online discourse. The language in many short videos is fragmented, incomplete, and unorganized. They do not necessarily fully comply with the grammatical logic norms, giving people a fragmented feeling.

In addition, short video users have formed their own internal language system. They are used to communicating by buzzwords, key words or an emoji, which contain minimal language resources. Short video text, as it proceeds, also becomes a sign and a space of perception for expression and identity building [5]. The emotions they show are two-sided. On the one hand, this language feature seems to be internal, and only users who belong to the TikTok circle can understand the meaning. On the other hand, this language has become a trend language of socialization. TikTok users around the world are using this language style for storytelling.

3.3 Multimodal Symbolic Meaning

Multimodal symbolic meaning is an important concept to consider when analyzing TikTok videos. This type of analysis considers how different modes of communication, such as audio, visual, and gestural elements, combine to create shared meaning. By examining how each of these elements interact, the underlying message conveyed in the video can be revealed. For example, certain images or symbols can convey specific meanings, and specific songs can be associated with specific emotions [6]. By considering the combined elements, the meaning of the video can be determined. Furthermore, in order to fully understand the multimodal semiotic implications in TikTok videos, it is imperative to understand the context in which the videos are presented. The environment, the people in the video, and their interactions all play an important role in the interpretation of the message. All of these factors must be considered in order to correctly analyze a video semiotically. This knowledge can then be used to better understand how users use TikTok to express their thoughts, feelings and values.

4 Ideology and Culture

4.1 Pluralistic ideology

Videos on TikTok reflect a range of ideologies, from the more progressive and inclusive to the more conservative and traditional. Commodities are a way for individuals to affirm or express their self-awareness. If people regard the use of short video media as consuming a commodity, in the process, the identity constructed by the region will be broken by globalization and a new identity will be reconstructed. An example of a belief commonly expressed in TikTok videos is individualism. For instant, users create and share unique short video content through TikTok. Some users demonstrate their pursuit of individual freedom and affirmation of self-worth by sharing personal growth experiences, challenging self-limits, or showing videos of unique talents. These video contents not only reflect the user's personal identity, but also form a cultural resonance and communication with other users through social interaction mechanisms such as likes, comments, and sharing. The embodiment of individualist ideology on TikTok can be seen as a process of accumulation of cultural capital and construction of social identity. By creating and sharing video content, users not only demonstrate their personality and talents, but also gain recognition and appreciation from other users, thereby enhancing their cultural capital and social status. It is a belief that celebrates individual autonomy, freedom and self-expression [7]. It is often expressed in videos through the use of imagery and language that emphasizes the importance of the individual to the collective, and the right of the individual to pursue his own goals and aspirations. At the same time, this accumulation of cultural capital also promotes social and cultural diversity and innovation.

The ideological diversity on TikTok has an important impact on individuals' identity construction. First, individuals can strengthen their self-identity and sense of belonging by watching and sharing video content that is consistent with their own values. At the same time, individuals can also understand and accept different ideologies and values through interaction and communication with others, thereby broadening their horizons and cognition. However, ideological diversity may also lead to challenges in an individual's identity construction. When individuals are exposed to ideologies that conflict with their own values, they may feel confused and uneasy. In this case, individuals need to clarify their own values and identity through self-reflection and critical thinking. Take TikTok's videos about gender equality as an example. These videos emphasize the importance of gender equality by showing women's active role and contribution in the workplace, family and society. These videos not only inspire female users' self-identity and pride, but also encourage male users to reflect on traditional gender concepts and role positioning. In this way, TikTok has become an important platform to promote gender equality awareness and spread of values. Another belief commonly expressed in TikTok videos is that of relativism. This belief holds that there is no absolute truth and that all values and perspectives are relative and open to interpretation. It is often expressed through the use of symbols and metaphors that emphasize the importance of one's own experiences and perspectives to any external objective truth.

This relativistic belief creates a more open and accepting space for individuals to express themselves.

4.2 Teen culture

Users tend to emphasize themselves to the outside world with a certain social type in TikTok. Tik Tok users are mainly young people under the age of 24 with high school or higher education. From the perspective of cultural studies, teenage users on the TikTok platform tend to emphasize themselves through specific social methods, which is closely connected with the core elements of youth culture. Youth culture, as a sub-cultural group of social culture, is characterized by unique expressions of clothing, language, fashion, consumption patterns, leisure pursuits, marriage and love methods, etc. With its positioning of "beautiful, fashionable and funny", the TikTok platform provides a stage for young people to display these cultural elements. Teenage users create a cultural image on TikTok that is closely related to their own identity by posting carefully crafted fashionable outfit videos, using popular languages and memes to interact, and sharing unique consumption and leisure experiences. In addition, Daniel Bell pointed out that the characteristic of popular culture is to continuously express and rebuild oneself in order to achieve self-realization and self-satisfaction. way to explore and express yourself. TikTok's short video function provides them with a low-cost and efficient self-presentation platform. They can capture videos in behind-the-scenes settings and post them with great polish, music, and editing to engage and connect with their audience. This process not only allows them to express themselves, but also to receive feedback and recognition from the audience, thereby enhancing their sense of self-identity and satisfaction.

Tik Tok has become an increasingly popular platform for teenagers in recent years. They like to present themselves in a de-scene context and post short videos after a lot of retouching, hit soundtracks and editing. A similar shooting style can be found in short videos on many different topics, whether guitar playing, cooking food, craft making, or calligraphy demonstrations. In terms of interaction, they strive to portray themselves as good friends with an intimate relationship with the viewer through visual symbols such as close-ups or close-up shots, horizontal perspectives, and eye contact. This intimate visual relationship not only enhances the audience's sense of involvement in the video, but also allows young users to feel more recognition and support. TikTok, as a social media platform, provides young users with a stage to show themselves and express their individuality. They emphasize themselves through specific social methods and are closely connected with youth culture. In this process, young users not only explore themselves, but also build an intimate relationship with the audience, thereby achieving the dual satisfaction of self-identity and social identity.

5 Consumerism Increases Homogeneity

However, because the behavior loses connection with the scene, the behavior they exhibit is not their self in a specific time and space. For example, the popular "seaweed

dance" with brainwashed music has become the object that Tik Tok users compete to imitate. These findings are closely related to related research in visual social semiotics. An important aspect in the analysis of visual sociosemiotics is the analysis of whether descriptions of people are specific or general [8]. After more than ten years of related research, this visual rule seems to have been transferred to short video social media. Especially on TikTok, the visual resource is full of consumerism.

This business practice of visual resources has been re-contextualized in the field of short video self-media, and has been adopted in a large number of short videos. In addition, the self-presentation in many popular videos is full of advertising-like styles, relying more on non-verbal symbols such as expressions and body performances. Just as the appeal in a large number of advertisements is "buying products will make you feel good", the self-presenting subjects in TikTok popular videos are conveying similar appeals: follow me, give me likes, and you will get a good mood.

When users use text to "record life", they seem to have adapted to this homogeneous and trendy multimodal language. Especially when users think that they are using short videos to show their unique self-personality, they actually do not realize that this kind of personalization has been partially lost. In this process, it actually helps the platform to spread the value and benefits of globalized enterprises. Therefore, multimodal self-presentation on the TikTok popular videos platform does not construct a complete self. The multimodal visual language and text symbols seem to meet the greatest interests of users, but in fact the biggest beneficiaries behind it are global enterprises. In addition, homogeneous multimodal language tends to convey stereotypes to the society. As a young person, especially a young girl, what she should look like outside and how she behaves will form a rather narrow impression. What should a male youth in love be like, what he should do and what he should not do [9]. These stereotypes have wide-ranging effects in society. It ignores everyone's personality and everyone's environment, thus setting up a mass social standard invisibly in order to control and dominate the public. In the era of digital communication, the integration of capital and advanced technology creates a joyful and joyful cyberspace that meets individual needs. The process by which users are dominated is more subtle, but more precise.

In order to realize TikTok's full potential in encouraging teenagers to express new ideas and perspectives, the platform needs to adopt appropriate management strategies. First, the platform should encourage users to innovate and provide more creative tools and resources to support users in creating unique and in-depth content. Secondly, platforms should strengthen the review and supervision of content to prevent the proliferation of low-quality and highly imitative content. At the same time, the platform can also establish incentive mechanisms, such as setting up creative awards and holding creative competitions, to encourage users to actively create and share high-quality content.

6 Conclusion

Through its unique combination of audio and visual symbols, TikTok has profoundly influenced the way young people communicate. The app uses a combination of audio

and visual elements to construct a distinctive, multi-faceted universe of communication. This creates a vibrant and diverse online environment, but it can lead to a homogenization of expression. By encouraging users to adopt certain types of audio and video notation, a level of uniformity may emerge that may limit the creative potential of the platform. However, if managed properly, TikTok's potential to encourage the expression of new ideas and perspectives is enormous.

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