

Explore the Vlog News Narratology Perspective of Mainstream Media in the Social Liquid Environment

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Abstract: Since the beginning of the new century, the development of mobile Internet and digital media technologies has become increasingly rapid, and the liquefaction of society has become increasingly prominent. And the mainstream media standing in the liquid society is also undergoing changes in the flowing modern field - a profound transformation from traditional TV discourse to personalized communication. Against this backdrop, Video Blogging (Vlog), as an emerging form of video communication, has gained widespread attention among the younger generation thanks to its first-person perspective, life-like scenarios, and emotional storytelling. As a result, it has been embraced by China's news media as an innovative practice in news reporting. In recent years, it has become increasingly common for mainstream news media to adopt vlog-style storytelling in news communication. This approach can expand the communication channels of authoritative media and further reshape the influence advantages of mainstream media. Taking vlog news distributed by domestic mainstream media on new media platforms such as Weibo and Bilibili as examples, this paper analyzes the narrative characteristics of vlog news reporting and explores the innovative aspects of mainstream media's vlog news narration in the context of a liquid society.

Keywords: News Narrative; Mainstream Media; Video Blog; Social Liquefaction

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1. Introduction

Vlog originated from YouTube and is a new form of communication that uses images to record life and thoughts. As a new form of video communication, vlog is loved and popular by young people in the new era of social liquefaction, who not only watch vlogs on various platforms, actively interact with bloggers and up owners, but also many young people also publish their own vlogs to show their lives as the vloggers of the protagonists of the video. Vlog's content presentation is easier to achieve completeness, breaking the limitations of short videos characterized by fragmented narratives, and presenting the audience with a complete story or presentation system concept. The editing process of the vlog video is also smooth and flexible, coupled with lively and vivid subtitles, and trendy background music, giving the audience a strong viewing experience.

Vlog is a kind of narrative and even emotional expression from the first perspective, which mainly shows the producer's own personal aesthetic quality and personal three views. Its value lies in catering to the pursuit of personalized IP by audiences with different characteristics. This trendy narrative method of focusing on me caters to the preferences of young people living in a liquid society, so it has become a new trend for many young people to record their daily lives.

For a long time, the mainstream media has shouldered the propaganda responsibility of the party and the state, is the mouthpiece of the party and the government, and represents the voice of authority. However, the discourse of “the height of the temple” is difficult to penetrate into all circles, especially young people (Zhan & Li, 2020). The emerging vlog news model breaks the narrative mode of traditional news in people’s perception, enhances social attributes, and makes up for the shortcomings of traditional news.

The mainstream media began to create “vlog news”, a form of news dissemination, in 2019. At that time, the “Kanghui Vlog” and “Two Sessions Vlog” with the theme of “the front line of major country diplomacy” became popular. In recent years, various mainstream media have continued to make efforts on the Vlog of the two sessions, and national authoritative media such as People’s Daily, Xinhua News Agency and CCTV have taken the initiative to deploy “Vlog+News”, focusing on integrating the national image and serious political information they want to express into the daily vlogs of hosts and reporters. For example, during the two sessions in 2025, the vlog “Zi Shuo: Why the Private Economy Has Great Potential” interviewed Liu Yonghao, Liu Shangxi, Jiang Ying and other members of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, showing the good prospects for the development of the private economy. vlog “UBM: Can the Suggestions of Deputies and Members Be Adopted” and “Hui Qen: How Grassroots Voices Move from Alleys to the Great Hall”, following the footsteps of reporters inside and outside the venue, showing how the public opinion and public opinion of China’s grassroots frontline entered the Great Hall of the People.

2.Literature Review and Theoretical Basis at Home and Abroad

2.1 A review of the literature at home and abroad

In China, most scholars use classical narrative theory to analyze the structural characteristics of video news. It is generally believed that the narrative innovation of vlog is reflected in three dimensions: perspective transformation, symbol fusion, and emotional connection. For example, Luo (2022) used 177 vlogs such as CCTV News and People’s Daily as samples in his master’s thesis to construct an analytical framework from the three dimensions of narrative stories, discourse, and behavior. He believes that the identity of the storyteller of vlog news has shifted “from hidden authority” to “open guide”, and reporters appear as vloggers to convey “backstage truth” through “frontstage performances”. Zhou (2022) of South China University of Technology found in 2022 that the communication effect of CCTV vlogs is actually affected by multiple factors, among which the personal charm of vloggers, such as the affinity of reporters Wang Bingbing and Zou Yun, is a key variable.

In the global context, foreign research does not directly focus on the concept of mainstream media Vlog news with Chinese characteristics, but it provides rich reference in cross-media narrative theory, digital journalism innovation and practical case analysis. For example, Transmedial Narratology proposed by Austrian scholar Werner Wolf provides core support for vlog research. This theory believes that narrative is a cognitive framework that can cross media. This theory believes that narrative is a cognitive framework that can cross media. As a multimodal text, Vlog is a medium with high narrative potential that integrates spoken language, video, music and text, and its success depends on the depth of symbol synergy and audience participation (Li, 2019).

To sum up, the research on vlog journalism from the perspective of narrative reveals the innovative path of mainstream media to reconstruct the right to speak in the era of media integration. Domestic research focuses on the localization of narrative strategies, from perspective transformation, symbol fusion to emotional connection, and explores a characteristic path of hard news soft communication, while foreign research provides reference in cross-media narrative theory and digital technology innovation. Although there are many types of research now, in the dual context of rapid technological iteration and mutual learning among civilizations, how to promote Vlog journalism from form innovation to narrative paradigm revolution is still an academic bonanza full of potential.

2.2 Theoretical basis

The famous British sociologist Zygmunt Bowman believes that the original strong, heavy, and clearly shaped pyramidal society is changing into a turbulent and fluid liquid society, and the mobility of the mode of production, the fragmentation of the way of thinking, and the sharpening of the way of behavior are the main characteristics of the liquid society. Liquid society becomes a new symbol of power by shaking a single, solid central authority, time and speed, ending the meaning

of geography and space (Luo, 2014). Nowadays, the communication mode has changed rapidly, network technology has developed rapidly, the world has entered a liquefied state, and people's original ideological concepts and organizational models have dissolved and reconstructed. Thus, the term "liquid journalism" appeared. The term was proposed by the Dutch scholar Duz by drawing on the sociologist Baumann's view on fluid modernity, showing the changes in journalism in postmodern society. However, in the supplementary discussions of later scholars such as Cantura, Koyoning, and others, this interpretation deviated from the earlier relevant discussions. They emphasize that the change from solid to liquid news is not a linear evolution, nor does it represent the demise of the original solid-state journalism (Guo, 2023). In our country, the emerging vlog relying on network technology, as a relatively advanced media technology and communication platform, is becoming a kind of social solvent in contemporary journalism.

Classical narrative often focuses on the internal structure of the text and provides a basic analysis model for Vlog journalism. Story in narrative refers to the original time sequence, that is, the thing itself, and discourse refers to the way the narrative is presented. In vlog news, reporters reconstruct the timing of events from a first-person perspective, such as flashbacks to the two sessions to prepare for the venue, forming a discursive narrative.

3.Current Situation

3.1 The narrative characteristics of Vlog news

3.1.1 "I" is the main thing

In vlogs, viewers follow the creators of the Vlogs for a first-person immersive experience. CCTV's hosts and reporters are outstanding with their professional quality and personality charm, and they mainly focus on "me" in the narrative, pay attention to personal expression and emotions, show "people-oriented", and drive users to bring into it (Hu & Xia, 2020). Take Wang Bingbing's 2023 Vlog "I Lived in a Nursing Home for a Week" as an example. Wang Bingbing participated in the night shift as a temporary caregiver and helped the elderly take a bath. Her camera trembled and recorded helping the elderly to go to the toilet at 2 a.m., and said that this is how the dark circles under the eyes of the night shift nurse came from...This vlog news promoted the policy discussion on how to solve the difficulty of visiting relatives in nursing homes that year, and the official Weibo of the Ministry of Civil Affairs quoted this vlog to launch a pilot of the family visit points system. This type of narrative method uses the five senses of vlogger to convey content and share experience, giving the audience an immersive sense of experience, and also giving the news more pyrotechnics and human touch (Hu, 2022).

Wang Bingbing's Vlog "I Stayed in a Nursing Home for a Week" ended with a monologue that Grandma Zhang said that her daughter hadn't come to see her for three years, and I held her hand and promised to bring dumplings next time. This is not a reporting task, it is my new concern. As the main reporter of CCTV, she proceeds from her real experience and emotional needs to narrate, changing the serious stereotype of mainstream media practitioners in the past, and carrying out benign communication in equal interaction.

3.1.2 Rich scenes

The narrative scenes of vlog News are diverse, which can show rich communication content, and can be combined with the surrounding environment in the narrative process to achieve multi-dimensional and three-dimensional reporting of news. When Kang Hui's first vlog showed the main station, the barrage was frantically brushing "the original head of the main station is like this", "the main station is so simple", "I thought the main station was resplendent", etc. Wang Bingbing's [Worthy of Me] series of vlogs on Station B, in which Wang Bingbing went to try to learn to skate and ski, intuitively presenting the colleagues at the Winter Olympics competition venue, and also showing the athletes' hard training in front of and behind the scenes. Familiarity with the scene can enhance audience empathy, and the unknown scenes that appear in vlog news reports push the audience to the forefront, thereby arousing the audience's curiosity and capturing the audience's attention. In 2025, CCTV launched "48 Hours of AI Reporter Xiao C", which tried AI as the main body of the narrative for the first time, exploring the "human-machine symbiosis" reporting model in refreshing scenes, and the number of barrage interactions in a single period exceeded 100,000.

3.2 Reporting innovation for Vlog news

3.2.1 The subject of communication is personal and sensitive

In the era of traditional media, the mainstream media has built a certain communication advantage and popularity, so that the mainstream media creates well-known anchors with personal brand effects to provide the audience with personal symbolic attributes and more humane reporting content. As of June 7, 2022, the final video of the first season of Kang Hui's Vlog has been viewed 1.777 million times, 2,823 comments, and 92,000 likes on bilibili.

With light background music and smooth screen transitions, Kang Hui introduced the ceremony venue of the 11th BRICS summit to the audience through the lens and explained the profound meaning of the meeting. At the end, he introduced the media people present one by one, and said, let us be at the forefront of major country diplomacy and praise China, which is increasingly moving towards the center of the world stage! The pictures liked by the media people at the venue were also screenshotted by netizens and made into interesting emoticons, achieving the effect of secondary communication.

In the related concepts of communication and journalism, the sensibility of reporting content and authenticity are not contradictory, on the contrary, the combination of the two can better show the humanistic care of news. In the space Vlog of "How Busy In Space, The Life Of The Core Module Is Fully Revealed", it shows the daily work and three meals of astronauts, and the trivial and extraordinary daily life of space has aroused people's emotions and empathy. Message in the comment area—— I think of Yang Liwei, not because he was the first to go to space, but because he worked alone in space, without a comrade-in-arms, I can't imagine what kind of loneliness it is in space, has been praised by many netizens.

3.2.2 The communication content focuses on micro-visualization and experience

From factual experiences to personal feelings, the micro-narrative of Vlog news presents grand themes from a personal perspective, creating a sense of immersion and reflecting the humanistic care of journalists. Many of these simple expressions avoid sensationalism, do not forcibly instill values, and leave room for the audience to think. The aforementioned reporter Wang Bingbing used the first attempt at self-skating to show the grand theme of the Winter Olympics, and Kang Hui's business trip vlog showed the forefront of great power diplomacy. In addition, Xinhua News Agency reporter Zhang Yang's vlog "drink more water? Eat dumplings ... did the astronauts have such a detailed conversation in the telephone conference?" It is from the perspective of seemingly trivial life to convey the efforts and fighting spirit of aerospace personnel to the audience. In 2024, CCTV released "Zhuang Xiaoying Vlog: How seismic is high-speed rail passing through buildings?" The topic of "Zhuang Xiaoying refutes rumors about high-speed rail passing through buildings" was sparked on Weibo, with over 200 million views. A netizen commented, "She personally acted as a human flesh sensor, which is more convincing than data reports."

3.2.3 Communication channels are becoming more youthful and nodal

"Vlog+News" is a type of communication that can be distributed to multiple platforms. Through distribution on Weibo, Station B, WeChat official account and other platforms, it transmits positive energy to more young audiences and is loved by everyone. Especially in station B, a gathering place of youth culture that embodies the characteristics of the new generation growing up in the digital wave, news vlog creatively integrates the professional endorsement of traditional media with the youthful vitality and interactive gene of new media. Take the "Kanghui Vlog" launched by CCTV "the forefront of great power diplomacy" as an example, which has received a warm response on microblogging, B station and other platforms. The data showed that the number of microblog likes exceeded 1.5 million and forwarded more than 80000 after the series was launched in just a few hours; The total number of broadcasts at the dithering and B stations also quickly exceeded 2million. Many young viewers admitted that this form significantly increased their interest in paying attention to current political news. As digital natives, millennials show a high degree of media literacy and unique aesthetic preferences in daily life. Their information screening mechanism has distinct intergenerational characteristics and shows a strong tendency of active dissemination of content that conforms to their own value identity. Although vlog news focuses on major issues, its life narrative, interesting expression and authenticity appeal accurately fit the acceptance habits of contemporary youth audiences. From the title to the content, its youth characteristics are significant. For example, it uses popular symbols such as "infrastructure madness", "little sister nurse" as the title to effectively attract the attention of the target group. The reporter constructed a participatory communication mechanism by tracking user comments and giving feedback in the follow-up content, which significantly improved users' willingness to interact and sharing motivation.

4. Countermeasures for Mainstream Media to Strengthen Their Influence by Using Vlog

“Social Solidization” means stability, order and clear boundaries, while social liquidization refers to the transformation process of contemporary society from solid to liquid. Its core is the enhancement of liquidity, fragmentation of identity, individualization of risk, etc. everything is flowing, and everything becomes temporary, replaceable and scalable. Therefore, some experts believe that social fluidization seems to be free and advanced, but it also hides the risk of cognitive overload, emotional suspension and meaning vacuum.

In the current situation of social fluidization, how can the Chinese press make good use of vlog, a new way of video communication, to give full play to the positive influence of the mainstream media?

4.1 Mainstream media should deal with liquid socialization with liquid thinking

In the era of traditional media, most people watch the co viewing society of the minority, which has turned to the omni viewing society in the era of social media in which most people watch the majority. Vlog records from the first perspective, dissolves the boundaries of transmission and reception, enables the audience to naturally receive information in the onlooking life, and conforms to the individual’s pursuit of visibility in a liquid society. In addition, 3-5 minutes of lightweight expression can avoid information overload. For example, vlog at the two sessions focused on small topics such as “reporters’ clothing choices” and “looking for the next Yao Ming”, lowered the acceptance threshold, and created news content loved by more young audiences.

4.2 From grand narrative to micro narrative to achieve discourse reconstruction

The vlog news report of mainstream media has realized the innovation of news report form by virtue of its personalized expression, small and large narrative way, young and perceptual content performance. For example, when reporter Xiao Peng reported on the belt and road initiative in Kazakhstan, he started with the question of whether to make money by selling Chinese snacks. Through details such as villagers’ bargaining and drivers’ feeling about China’s road construction, the policy was implemented as a life scene and the national strategy was disassembled into perceptible life fragments.

4.3 Build personalized IP, realize subject innovation, and build audience trust

At present, the mainstream media usually choose reporters and hosts with recognition, such as Kang Hui, the “CCTV national face” and Lizheng, the first person to work with a loan from CCTV, as the main body of the report, and enhance the stickiness with “people”. Sometimes, vlog narration is carried out from the perspective of ‘I’ in major theme reports to show the unique charm and humanistic care of news from a different perspective. This makes the reports of the mainstream media both tall and grounded (Wang & Yu, 2020). The friendly posture and relaxed voice in vlog draw the distance between the audience and the media. The mainstream media have also imperceptibly transferred values, enabling the younger generation to have a deeper understanding of the country’s current politics and major events.

4.4 Multi platform collaborative global communication to achieve brand precipitation

In order to make better use of the advantages of vlog news narrative, the mainstream media also adopted the strategy of multi platform distribution to strengthen the ability of global communication, and IP seriation operation to avoid a one-time attempt. Kanghui Vlog not only made a hot search on the microblog with the topic “Kanghui’s First Vlog”, but also interacted frequently with young users on station B. In addition, its central video, the media’s own platform with large traffic, has formed a greater social influence. In 2024, the series of “adventures in Africa’s infrastructure” recorded the construction of Tanzania’s central standard gauge railway and showed the process of localization of Chinese technology in Africa, taking the purchase of snail powder for African colleagues as the starting point. In addition, an interactive topic named “African brother eating snail powder challenge” was designed, with a single broadcast volume of more than 12 million.

4.5 Enabling media mobility and interactive upgrading with technology

The collaboration of the whole platform, the creation of personalized IP and the realization of vlog interactive narrative all need technical support. Today, the shooting of news videos may not be entirely dependent on heavyweight and complex professional video equipment. Lightweight equipment is a major trend in video capture today. Mobile shooting+stupid editing software, such as clip InSho. It has not only improved the individual combat ability of journalists, but also laid a technical

foundation for all media journalists. In addition, online and offline interactive design is also very important. For example, Kanghui's Vlog news exploration road also specially set up "amysterious weapon" guessing activity online, and responded in real time to users' questions about vlog pronunciation. In the report of the China Latin America forum, reporters and foreign friends sang impromptu songs and chatted about wechat fun to build emotional synchronization.

Of course, it is a good innovation for mainstream media to use the narrative characteristics of vlog for news communication. Proper entertainment can weaken the seriousness, but the mainstream media should pay attention to control, avoid the inversion of the order of the content and form of the report caused by excessive entertainment, and prevent the loss of direction due to the one-sided pursuit of heat and influence, which will lead to the weakening of the effect of public opinion guidance (Zhang et al., 2022). The news media should always keep the original intention, adhere to the quality of news production, and regard technology and form as a content booster.

5.Conclusion

In a word, the mainstream media should anchor the mainstream voice in the flowing field of public opinion and realize the positive guidance of moistening things silently. We need to integrate the public and private sectors in discourse, embrace lightweight tools in technology, and attach importance to significance in value with micro narrative.

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