

Construction and Research of Virtual Network Language from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics: A Case Study of TikTok Comment Section

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Abstract:

With the popularization of the Internet, the Internet has become a part of people's lives, and network language has emerged as a new language pattern with people's Internet use. This paper selects three directions from TikTok's popular categories, collects samples from the comment section of each category, and adopts the CAS to discuss how popular and minority views construct specific language forms through language interaction and fusion in virtual networks. Therefore, it can be concluded that the popular view is classified by different video content. Each category has its same discourse comment system. In contrast, the minority view describes a phenomenon or a certain state of mind according to the content behind the buzzwords or the reasons for their formation, takes the content of the hot words as a classification, and forms a specific discourse comment system under each type. Popular and minority views take different classification modes as the starting point of dissemination, and they jointly promote their respective discourse comment systems, turn them into Internet hot words, and promote the construction and development of Internet language.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics; Virtual Network Language, TikTok.

1. Introduction

With the popularization of the Internet, virtual networks have become a vital part of people's lives, and network language has emerged as a new speech mode. Network language is not only frequently used in network chat, but also gradually penetrated

into daily life, becoming an essential part of social language. Network language is a unique form of language, which is electronic, global, and phatic, and is widely used in email, chat groups, and the virtual world [1]. More than just a means of communication, social media also serves as a hub for forming social networks, influencing public opinion, and creating

cultural trends. Social media users can quickly respond to current events, create global discussions, and accelerate the spread of information. Thus, social media is not only a reflection of language change but also an active agent in shaping and disseminating the evolution of language in society more quickly and openly [2]. Therefore, this paper chooses the current popular social media software TikTok for research, in which the comment section of the short video platform TikTok is where people focus on communication. In this paper, comments are divided into two types according to how difficult it is for the public to understand: public opinion and minority opinion. Therefore, what is popular opinion and minority opinion? How are popular views and minority views formed? How do popular views and minority views promote the construction of network language? The study aims to supplement the existing research on the construction and development of network language, help to improve the public's understanding of network language, and promote the standardized use of it. To solve these problems, this paper will use a case study (CAS) to reveal how the public and minority views in virtual networks construct specific language forms through language interaction and fusion. This will assist language researchers in gaining a better understanding of the language dynamics within the TikTok comment section. Furthermore, it will aid TikTok policymakers in implementing effective language regulations and contribute a new perspective to broader social media language research.

2. Literature Review

Dai Manchu pointed out that language life in the digital age is undergoing significant changes, and digital language has an immeasurable impact on language use, development, and standardization. However, issues such as the ambiguous nature of digital language have not been thoroughly explored. The study of digital language is an extension of traditional language. It should fully demonstrate the characteristics of the language in virtual space while revealing group differences between digital and non-digital language [3].

Wang pointed out that with the progress of Internet information technology, social media has comprehensively and deeply penetrated People's Daily life. Cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy influence information transmission, emotional expression, and social relations in social media language. However, the differences in cognition and influence of metaphor and metonymy on different types of social media platforms, as well as the similarities and differences in the understanding and application of metaphor and metonymy by different social

media user groups, have not been thoroughly analyzed. The influence of different social media user groups on network language will further enrich our understanding of the cognitive mechanism and influence of social media language and guide the application and development of social media language [4].

Song and Feng proposed that with the increasing popularity of social media, netizens often use ideographic resources such as different languages and language variants, emojis, and memes to be involved in constructing various types of network communities. This paper uses network ethnography as a research method and tracks the interaction between the Posting and comment sections of the Weibo homepage of BYM(Blow Your Mind (BYM) is a road podcast created in 2016 that covers topics such as psychology, women, careers, and literacy. It has more than 10,000 subscribers on several major audio apps). Network podcasts' promoters, and analyzes the construction process, strategies, and characteristics of BYM microblog language communities based on sociolinguistic theories of social media network communities. However, the research on the topic of community only stays in the „minority“ groups rather than the various groups of the whole society. While paying attention to the text features of the comprehensive use of language resources, it should also pay attention to the different subjects of the society to which language communities are oriented [5].

The popular view can be called the mainstream cultural view, and the minority view can also be called the non-mainstream cultural view. They are two relative forms of language and culture. Firstly, from the popular view, Bao Xuesong pointed out that mass culture operates according to the law of the commodity market, using mass media to enable many ordinary citizens to obtain a daily cultural form of emotional pleasure [6]. Secondly, from the perspective of minority culture, Duan Hui believes that individuals or social organizations with similar interests or interests converge through various media channels, forming a niche communication pattern with their characteristics on the mass media and creating a diversified niche cultural community [7].

Therefore, in this paper, 'minority views' refer to comments whose literal meanings are obscure or abstract, requiring systematic search and learning to understand their thoughtful significance. Public opinion is defined as comments familiar to the public, which can be understood straightly, and only readers can know through common sense what is called public opinion.

3. Methodology

This paper adopts qualitative research, selects cases from

the three areas selected by TikTok for research, and adopts the CAS. The qualitative method is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions. It generates non-numerical data. Integrating qualitative research into intervention studies is a research strategy that is gaining increased attention across disciplines [8]. Although once viewed as philosophically incongruent with experimental research, qualitative research is now recognized for adding a new dimension to interventional studies that cannot be obtained through the measurement of variables alone [9]. Because different comment subjects are influenced by their own growth experience or the outside world when they put forward their opinions, this paper investigates and analyzes the reasons why they propose their opinions and analyzes the content of the views put forward by the main body of the comment section, to find out how the public opinions and minority opinions promote the construction of network language.

TikTok contains a wide range of content, and this paper randomly selects the following categories as its core research object: Social Daily Life, Film and Television Commentary, and Science Popularization. Based on the short video comment area with the above-labeled content, the comments are selected as the research object to explore the causes.

3.1 Social Daily Life

3.1.1 "Anyone who has seen..." —from Huanyishifuhua

This comment was taken from "memories hidden in old mobile phones" and belongs to the public comment. Most people use this mode to comment, such as: "How old when you see this?" and "Anyone who has seen this is a mom or dad.?" and attach pictures of their old mobile phones to interact with other users. By asking questions about age and expressing their identity changes, netizens expressed the long distance between the photos in those old mobile phones and us, causing everyone to recall and miss the old time. Most netizens will use this mode of network language to trigger memories of their childhood or vital moments, so most of the life memory videos will appear in this mode of comments, which forms a network language system of reminiscence-type comments.

3.1.2 "I can't read that tang (means foolish) saying without using insulin." —from Zeze

This comment is more abstract and represents a minority comment. Insulin is an essential drug for diabetic patients. „Tang“ is a homonymous stem of „sugar“ in Chinese. „Tang“ represents stupidity and folly in Internet language,

so this comment satirizes the phenomenon conveyed to the public by this video. Most people will not understand the literal meaning of this comment, and they need to consult relevant science popularization videos to change their thinking and understand the deeper meaning of this comment. At the same time, with the spread of the Internet, the meaning of the word "Tang" has become familiar to more and more people, and similar comment patterns have gradually spread. When the public watches video content they consider lacking in substance, they often use a specific word to comment on the video, thus creating a term. The jargon is used to make communication easier for one another to grasp, and it is also used to invite other social media users to use the jargon. They typically employ that lingo when creating video material to garner a large number of likes [10]. To sum up, this phenomenon has gradually formed a network satire term system for people to satirize some sensationalist social phenomena.

3.1.3 "More than 30 years old, I now feel strong. I do not feel guilty about my family. I will love myself forever!" — from Jingling

This comment is from "people who can walk out their family of origin" and belongs to the public comment. The family of origin refers to the family in which one is born and raised. The atmosphere and traditional habits in the family are the objects for children to learn and emulate in the family role, and affect their future performance in getting along with others and in the new family. People with unhappy families will also be adversely affected later in life. The comment is the netizen's statement. He was from a native family of miserable people, and finally, he came out. He used his own experience to encourage everyone. He hopes when people have the same dilemma, they need to put themselves first and pay attention to their ideas, and then get out of the depressed family of origin. In public comment, most people are willing to use encouraging words to pass on experience and energy to others, forming an encouraging public comment.

3.2 Film and Television Commentary

3.2.1 „What a great film, teaching people to face death, and be optimistic to walk the final road.“ — from E

This comment belongs to the popular comment. In the comment section of film commentary, most netizens will post concluding remarks after watching the blogger's overall commentary, such as the overall feeling of the film and the inspiration it brings us. These are the most common comment modes in the comment section so that other netizens can not only understand the film through the blogger's commentary but also learn about the film.

At the same time, you can feel different opinions based on the comments of diverse users. Therefore, summary and heuristic comments are the fundamental comments in the commentary section of film and television commentary.

3.2.2 “If happiness is a natural-looking nose, then I am Qin Xinyu.”— from Mimidong

This comment belongs to the minority comment. The source of the blogger Qin Xinyu and his „natural-looking nose“ buzzword, the cause is that he failed to have his nose repaired in a plastic surgery institution after six months of defending his rights, so he wrote the song „Return my nose“ to speak for himself, and „natural-looking nose“ refers to the blogger not only lost his original nose after the failure of plastic surgery but also the condition of the nose after plastic surgery is not good. Therefore, the network’s buzzword expresses that they should have had something, but now they do not. The netizen used a buzzword to express that after watching the movie commentary, he thought happiness had nothing to do with himself. Although most netizens do not understand when they first read it, they should consult and understand before changing their thinking. Netizens borrow this hot word image to express their feelings and often think of the word when they encounter the same mood, forming a unique comment mode.

3.3 Science Popularization

3.3.1 “Got it! I’ll mark it.”— from Xiguayulejiang

This comment belongs to the popular comment. After watching science videos, people will have a comprehensive understanding of the content of the video, or when they accidentally see that practical little knowledge and want to retain it for emergencies, most people will say a „got it“ or „mark“ in the comment, and also facilitate the future search of the video. With the spread of science videos on the Internet, the word „mark“ has become a buzzword, and the comment system of science videos has been continuously established.

3.1.2 “Not as complicated as it is in our company.”— from Angranxiaoyao

This comment belongs to the minority comment. In a Marine science video, a blogger said, „In such sea conditions, people will die if they fall accidentally and cannot be rescued at all.“ The comment seems inconsistent with the content of popular science netizens use the polysemic word „water depth“ to compare the inevitable death of falling into deep water with the elusive survival rules within the company and satirize the survival rules within the company. Although science videos aim to spread knowledge, some netizens cleverly dig out some of them

to satirize various social status quos, forming a comment system of science comments area with minority views.

4. Suggestion

4.1 Promote Positive Public Commentary

Positive words can help people eliminate negative emotions and encourage people to establish a positive attitude toward life. According to the above cases, the public comments mostly appear in the discourse mode of summary and encouragement, which helps to promote the public’s enthusiasm and give them more warmth. State media can place these comments before others to enhance their exposure and create a positive online environment for the public.

4.2 Prevent Excessive Negative Minority Comments

Most of the minority comments take hot words as the starting point. Comment publishers not only need to have a good understanding of buzzwords but also be very sensitive to the background of buzzwords and have a good understanding of them. Sometimes, people will use homophones of different languages to create them. However, these comments can also lead to parody, which results in bad online influence. As a result, official media platforms need to monitor the publication of these minority comments cautiously. Proper entertainment helps to create a relaxed and humorous network language environment. On the contrary, if improper supervision lets some bad words and excessive words fill the network world, it will lead to unimaginable consequences.

5. Conclusion

This analysis of popular and minority comments provides insight into how Internet language is rapidly evolving to adapt to and reflect the complexities of contemporary life. Popular views classify video content based on familiar speaking styles, with each category developing its own comment system. Minority views describe a phenomenon or a state of mind according to the content behind the hot words or the reasons for their formation, and most are ironic. Buzzword content is classified, creating distinct comment systems for each type. Popular and minority opinions take different classification modes as the starting point for dissemination. With the spread of network video, both of them jointly promote their respective discourse comment systems, constantly transform the discourse comment system into Internet hot words, and promote the construction and development of network language. Based

on the insights gained from the current research on Internet language, this paper also makes further suggestions to support positive public comments and regulate minority comments that make too many memes, to create a better environment for Internet communication.

There are still some shortcomings. There are not many examples in the selection of text, and no quantitative research has been formed. From the overall perspective of the study, through the study of public comments and minority comments on the promotion of network language, this paper classifies and compares comments, which provides a new perspective for the study of social media language and enriches the research value of network language.

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