

Research on the Production Practice of Women's Online Gender Discourse in the Media Field: A Case Study of Douban Community "Woman in Lit Female Literary creators' Room"

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore how contemporary women use new words to construct and deconstruct gender discourse in the field of social media. In traditional media, women have been suppressed by patriarchal ideology for a long time, which leads to female images being obscured and "otherized". With the development of modern electronic media, the new media network has become an important carrier of information dissemination. The emergence of social media provides a new discourse space for women, so that women can carry out self-expression and resistance through the interaction and communication of online communities. Taking the Douban female community "Woman in Lit" as an example, this paper analyzes the formation mechanism of the current female community and how female creators compete with the existing discourse system through a series of online discourse production actions combined with the interactive ritual chain theory. Social media provides a new women express channel, also prompted women through collective action challenge gender inequality. However, the cyberspace is not completely neutral. The exclusivity of the community and the cocoon room of information also bring challenges to the construction of women's discourse. Women's discourse practice in social media not only reflects the potential of media empowerment, but also exposes the limitations of cyberspace. Therefore, the empowerment of women in virtual communities requires the rational application of women groups, and the joint efforts of both internal and external groups to place them in the overall social structure for cognitive improvement.

KEYWORDS

Female community; Gender discourse; Social media; Virtual community communication; Discourse change

1 Introduction

With the advent of the era of mechanical reproduction, people are no longer limited to the traditional word of mouth, but gradually get used to and rely on the mass media for information. However, mass media is not an objective and neutral media. It often sets issues based on its own interest considerations and audience expectations, and assigns specific emotional orientation and value preference to communication content. In the patriarchal public discourse system, women have not been given the right to fair media representation. With the development of the mass media, the concealment and "other" of women by the mass media have been naturalized in the process of media discourse production. These obstacles appear in many forms, such as discourse and images, and impose new types of gender discrimination and oppression on women.

Appeared in recent years, social media discourse about women's issues, accompanied by the formation of these words, part of the stopping with small discussion and controversy, and another is obtained by continuous gender discourse writing widely spread, make online discourse as a kind of "fighting mode", evolution of feminist discourse. Douban group "Woman in Lit" was founded on May 5, 2022, and has gathered nearly 40,000 users so far. "Why is creation so important to us? Because it's about freedom of expression, and any text that is consciously biased is doomed to die." Controversial in media discourse rhetoric, team "Woman in Lit" creator created a Shared identity and experience for women, writing and to express themselves the empowerment of the imagination, provides Woolf's "a belong to his own room. By launching a series of online discourse production and action, female creators complete the expression of women's perspective, voice and power as a new attempt to experience women's personal life.

Language is the frontier of the modern gender equality movement, and online discourse, relying on the potential of media technology to give women "liberation", makes the language revolution into a real form of feminist discourse activism, showing women's new roles as language commentators, norm breakers and norm makers. Female creators compete with the existing discourse system by creating a wealth of alternative discourses. By creating "sacred symbols", they form sisterhood, realize a community of imagination and action based on "empathy", and fight against gender inequality with collective power.

2 The aphasia and representation of women in mass media

In the patriarchal public discourse system, women have not been able to get fair media representation rights. With the

development of mass media, the concealment and "otherization" of women by mass media has been naturalized in the process of media discourse production, and the language of degrading women often appears in the construction of media language. The so-called gender equality is only a kind of "mirror escape". Under the mirror image of superficial equality, the deep-rooted phenomenon of gender inequality still reflects ^[1]. Through sorting out the key social news reports in recent years, several typical gender discrimination in current media reports are summarized.

With the victory of the bourgeois democratic revolution and China's socialist revolution, explicit gender discrimination has gradually disappeared, but "patriarchal culture", as a social psychology and collective unconscious under the historical accumulation, has long been internalized in the social culture, and implicit gender discrimination in society is manifested as the conscious reduction of women, purposeful neutral words and the re-creation of stigmatized discourse. Take the news title modification of the official official account of "Beautiful Zhejiang" on December 4, 2024 as an example. The original title was "Little woman made an amazing discovery on Zhejiang Jiande Mountain!" "And the revised headline," Girl accidentally finds fossils while searching for ammonites in Jiande, Hangzhou." Although the degree is different, they all reflect the media's discrimination and dwarfing of women. The term "little woman" is clearly gendered and demeaning, placing women in a weaker position and weakening their professional competence. This expression is no accident. In recent years, the popularity of "husband sister" and female dehumanization language, such as "sweet and soft cupcakes" and other seemingly cute words, has unconsciously strengthened the classification and degradation of women. On the other hand, the neutral coverage of women's events in the mass media seems to protect, but in fact constructs an invisible social cage, making women passively accept the established gender role. Agenda-setting theory reveals the powerful power of the media in shaping public cognition and constructing social reality. On December 10, 2024, the official notice of the case of Shanxi Accepting female master Students described "abducted and trafficked" as "abducted and trafficked", which seriously distorted the facts, trashed the rights of the victims, covered up the nature of the crime, weakened the rights and interests of the victims, and even tacitly connived at the orientation of abduction and trafficking. At the same time, the phenomenon of consciously attacking the female group in the language system is common. From "three women a play" to "female group study", it seems to repeat the characteristics of the struggle between women. The stories of female group pictures in film and television works are often full of calculation, while the male group pictures show more hand in hand entrepreneurship. This purposeful imbalance reflects the role of the language system in promoting gender discrimination.

From the perspective of linguistics, "male" rarely appears in daily expressions in the context of patriarchy, which is essentially the male occupation of almost all semantic categories involving "neutral" or "non-sexual human". This is the core feature of patriarchal culture -- biological secondary sex tries to disguise as primary sex through cultural and linguistic penetration. Gender discrimination is evident in the evolution of Chinese characters, and many derogatory words are associated with women. According to the statistics of scholars in "Ci Hai", of the 257 Chinese characters with "female" radical, 100 have clear evaluation color, and the derogatory meaning accounts for up to 35%. All the characters related to the illicit relationship between men and women outside marriage are basically beside the female characters (such as piao, rape, prostitution, etc.), and these characters were created with patriarchal cultural prejudice and discrimination at the beginning. In the new media era, online insulting words have become a new form of gender hegemony, such as "XX yuan", "white lotus flower" and other words, which may have contained positive or neutral meanings have been diluted and forgotten. At the same time, some words depicting men, such as "super male dama", have been passed on to women, forming another kind of discrimination. These words have been embedded in the grand narrative framework and incorporated into the mainstream public consciousness by mainstream media. This kind of misogynistic language stigmatizes women on the surface, but in fact cancels or weakens women's voice in public space. Its repeated appearance in news reports essentially reflects the current situation of power struggle for gender relations in online discourse in China.

3 The rise of women's communities from the perspective of interactive ritual chains

The Internet inherits the traditional patriarchal discourse, which makes it difficult for women to strive for equal discourse power. However, the online women's community provides a relatively safe space and becomes the foundation for the construction of women's online gender discourse. Through interaction and communication, Douban community members find a group space that provides emotional energy and realizes emotional resonance. Randall Collins proposed that social interaction is the source of social dynamics in the theory of interaction ritual chain ^[2]. Douban women's communities effectively integrate and activate "shared emotions" in the network, forming an interactive ritual chain: they use the platform to establish communities, form groups and focus on common topics such as women's rights, and share common emotions or emotional experiences in interaction. It is in this process that women complete the construction and deconstruction of online discourse.

According to the theory of interactive ritual chain, Douban community has always been female-centered and focused

on women's rights and interests. The focus of attention should be strengthened through continuous interaction, the emotional interaction and group unity among members should be deepened, and the construction of online discourse should be completed. This confirms the main point of the theory that "the focus on the common topic with a common identity in the same virtual field is the basis for the generation of communities."

3.1 The common virtual field

In the digital age, the construction of virtual field has reshaped the chain of interactive rituals. Collins, though, emphasizes the need for "physical presence" and sees rituals as a process of personal experience. But the development of online technology has enabled "virtual presence", breaking the limitations of time and space and making instant interaction possible. This virtual field is not divorced from reality, but based on real life, through the digital technology to build an interactive space. Social networking platforms provide virtual gathering places for various groups, such as Douban groups. It allows people with common interests to achieve a "virtual presence" and form a network of relationships. Bourdieu defined a "field" as "a network or configuration of objective relations that exist between various locations."^[3] From the perspective of participants in ritual communication, the ritual field can be analyzed as three levels: thing-self, man-self and self. Among them, the person-self field is the key to emotional interaction, which can construct the "emotional space of common interpretation", so that members can share emotions in communication and form group identity. From the perspective of media, the utility of the field depends on whether individuals can resonate and form emotional resonance. Cyberspace has become people's "second life space", which is a "high recovery" of reality. Its utility is real, and the network environment is a copy and processing of reality, realizing "physical presence".

Network communication can reproduce reality through visual, auditory, and text symbols, especially colloquial text symbols, which can effectively convey emotions and enhance the "sense of reality". As one of the most representative social media, the biggest feature of Douban group is that it is more interactive, and the information is more likely to not be ignored. Moreover, Douban group posts and responses are presented in a time stream order. When people read a post, they can not only see high praise comments, but also see the specific direction of the comments, which makes each person's speech meaningful and every point of view may be seen. This constant comment and like interaction together create an ideal field in line with the imagination of the group.

3.2 Common concern under the common identity

Compared with Weibo, Xiaohongshu and other platforms, Douban group community has a more rigorous review mechanism, which ensures "exclusiveness" by making strict rules for group entry. This also makes the members who enter the group have a high sense of identity and trust in the community, and they share basically the same value concept and moral judgment. Strict community rules also make them have strict interaction rituals, the most basic of which is that they must focus on a continuous and focused theme. Members of the female community are destined to focus on the topic of women's rights and interests. This common concern for women's rights on the basis of the female standard provides a realistic hotbed for the construction of women's online discourse.

The Douban female community has always been female-centered and focused on women's rights and interests. This focus has been strengthened in continuous interaction, so as to deepen the emotional interaction and group unity between members, and complete the construction of online discourse. Therefore, focusing on the common topic with a common identity in the same virtual field is the basis for the generation of the community.

4 The construction and deconstruction of gender discourse in female communities

The Douban female community realized the shared emotional energy after group gathering, eliminating the interference of outsiders, and finding the common focus of attention. Through these four links, an interactive ritual chain was formed. It was also in this process that women completed the first step of the creation of new words, that is, the construction of "sacred symbols". By creating "sacred symbols", women group condensed their emotions and formed a virtual action community based on "empathy". On this basis, they realized the reshaping and recreating of the discourse through the strategies of symbol appropriation, mirror inversion, and ridiculation of male discourse. Finally, they rebelled against gender inequality with collective power, showing the strong action and creativity within the community

4.1 Symbol creation

In Collins' theory of ritual chains of interaction, mutual attention and emotional connection construct an "instant shared reality" that forms symbols of group solidarity and identity^[4]. Collins believes that group interaction will emerge as

a symbol of the group "sacred signs", such as signs, ICONS, words or gestures, making members have a sense of collective belonging. Durkheim pointed out that emotions generated by group gatherings are fleeting, but they can be solidified if they are associated with enduring "sacred symbols". When a "sacred symbol" is activated, group members defend its symbolic meaning. Symbols often exist subconsciously in everyday life, and are only "amplified" during rituals, becoming symbols that identify group members.

"婣 Mei" and "Didi" in Douban female community are such "sacred symbols". They remove the male body parts from the symbols, and creatively integrate words originally related to female body parts into everyday language in novel and positive ways, challenging and reversing traditional gender perspectives. "婣 mei" is a homonym for "sister" and is used as a form of address between members. There are two reasons for replacing "sister" with "婣 (jie)": first, the character "婣" can be used as a general term for unmarried women; Second, the "and" in the right half of "jie" is related to male genitalia from the pictographic point of view, which is regarded as the worship of male reproduction, which conflicts with the anti-gender gaze position of the community. Although some members questioned its rationality, "婣 Mei" eventually established itself as a symbol of feminist stand expression. Another symbol, "di", is derived from the female genital organ "clitoris", which was proposed as a counterpart to the worship of male genitalia. On the Internet ^[5], "Tai Di di" is used instead of "tai di di" to express recognition. It is often used with "婣 Mei" as "婣 Mei Di di" to convey the meaning of "supporting sisters". The establishment of these "sacred symbols" enables women with the same physical composition, similar psychological characteristics, similar social circumstances and experiences to break through the platform and community, forming a potential close unity based on "sisterhood". They ^[6] are hidden in daily life, but activated in specific contexts, causing emotional resonance, converging individual strength, fighting against male-dominated social injustice, and becoming the concrete medium of female solidarity in the Internet field.

One of the inherent characteristics of the Internet is symbolization. Under the background of power conflicts and struggles in the cultural field, women's online discourse construction often focuses on symbols and competes with men for the ownership of symbols. This process is reflected in the transformation and recovery of pejorative words. The transformation of derogatory words is an "intertextual" deconstruction strategy, which appropriates part of the original discourse to eliminate its negative meaning. A typical example is the deconstruction and reconstruction of "yuan". The present "XX apologise", such as "society", "gentle" Buddha is stigmatized symbol violence against women and girls. In response, some female Internet users have created new words "XX Olga", such as "procedural Olga" and "male Olga", and digitally rebelled through the intertextual online language production practice, and turned to attack the male group ^[7]. The recovery of derogatory words is that women use words that insult and derogate women in a positive context, subverting their original negative meanings. The term "female fist" was originally coined by men to mock feminists, and now women proudly call themselves "female fist" to affirm their own style. Words such as "Big sister" and "38" have also gradually returned to their original meanings or been redefined to give new connotations. Cao Xun symbol conflict concept, points out that conflict "symbol" refers to by making specific symbols express contrary to mainstream ideology ^[9]. Although the counterattack of female netizens on derogatory words is active, its spreading speed is often inferior to that of the derogatory language created by men, which exposes the unequal amount of gender discourse in cyberspace. This is not only a symbol carnival, but also a manifestation of the struggle against discourse hegemony and cultural leadership.

4.2 Deconstruction strategy

While constructing their own discourse system, women actively use deconstruction strategies to challenge the existing patriarchal language structure. The core of these strategies lies in revealing, subverting and even reversing the gender power inequality hidden in daily language through creative language practice, and directly confronting the male-centric expression paradigm. It is mainly embodied in two complementary ways: "mirror inversion" is to eliminate male hegemony in language by systematically replacing the gender orientation of language symbols, inverting the original structure of praise and criticism or creating gender equivalent expressions. The "mockery strategy" creates humorous and confrontational counterattack content by imitating, joking and satirizing the logic of male discourse, so as to obtain discourse pleasure and gather power while deconstructing misogynistic remarks. The following will elaborate on these two core deconstruction paths.

"Mirroring," a social psychological concept that often refers to infants unconsciously following their parents' behavior, can now also refer to imitating and borrowing strategies, symbols, slogans, images, etc., from other groups. In the Douban community, women use the "mirror" strategy, changing hate speech and derogatory words aimed at women to men to fight back against misogynies and highlight the improvement of women's subjectivity. First, change the women in the patriarchal language are words of the male attachment, creating gender equality words or using neutral ones. For example, make "bi" as the gender equivalent of "zu". The word "bibi" can be used as "mother" to express respect, praise and mourning. "Bibi" is a combination of "female" and "bi". Literally, "mother" is the combination of female and bi bi,

which is a metaphor for the parallel relationship between female groups and dissolve the vertical power structure of traditional clan lineages. Second, gender reversal or structural modification are applied to the laudatory and derogatory words in patriarchy language system to give them new connotations. Take the reform of marriage terms as an example. In ancient times, the term "marriage" was called "hun 'ao" or "hun 'in", which originated from the custom of the man marrying at dusk and the woman leaving with him. Community members used "qiaoxun" instead of "marriage", "qiaoxun" means "snatching relatives", reflecting the phenomenon that the patriarchal clan plunder women at night to breed, and revealing the underlying gender inequality and passive position of women in marriage^[8]. Thirdly, new words or phrases were created to restore the female-oriented vocabulary. Highlight the female gender identity through the subject and side, and convey the female voice. Continuing the discussion of "English and female" in the language reform movement from the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China, the current network community constructs a female-oriented value evaluation system through partial replacement, such as transforming "male" into "female" and morpheme reorganization, breaking through the dilemma of "heroine" and other adjectives, trying to get rid of the language attachment relationship with men. Referring to "excellent female heroes", the male-centered position of "good mother and good wife" is reduced, that is, "good wife and good mother are really dirty, and the excellent female heroes and women often figure out", and the purpose of women's education is to cultivate independent and self-improving female heroes and women heroes.

The discourse practice of feminism can also be a kind of "activism that produces fun". Inspired by Republic of Korea's Megalion activism, female activists use the strategies of "fun creation" and "imitating male humor" to create laughable counterattack content, mocking, joking and satirizing misogyny men. They imagined the negative emotions of male netizens in the face of counterattack, attracted more female bystanders' attention and participation while obtaining pleasure, expanded the scale of the organization, and stimulated the vitality of digital feminist action. Specific strategies include: when a woman is accused of cheating, she retaliates by saying "she just made a mistake that all women make" and gets revenge pleasure; By mocking male physical features such as "beer belly" and "balding", social scrutiny of women's appearance is reversed on men, reversing the power structure of gender gaze, placing men in a position of scrutiny, and challenging gender order and male authority. This "fun-driven activism" is not simply entertainment, it enhances women's sensitivity to and coping with gender issues in real life, and is an effective practice of deconstructing women's online discourse.

Table 1 Creating alternative Discourse:Classification of common words in the community

Strategies	Categories	Examples
Symbol appropriation	Pejorative sense conversion	"名媛 Socialite", "幼儿媛 infant socialite", "地铁媛 subway socialite" -- "程序媛 Procedural newt"
Symbol appropriation	Pejorative sense recovery	"Punching" "female punch" - "sisters punching a good fist"
Mirror inversion	Gender equivalents	"师父 Shifu" - "师母 Teacher and mother"; "其他 Other" - "其他 other"
Mirror inversion	Reverse gender equivalents	"女儿 Daughter" - "男儿 boy"; "孙女 Granddaughter" - "孙南 son"
Mirror reversal	Accentuate female gender identity	Subject/partial emphasis method: "英雄 hero" - "英雌 Yingfemale"/"老子 Laozi" - "老子"
Mirror inversion	Reverse the gender order	"Male and female" - "female and male"; "Couple" - "husband and wife";
Mirror reversal	Pejorative word structure refinement	"Marriage/marriage" - "昏因/劫昏"
Mirror reversal	Feminine for positive words	"dicks" - "clitoris" (for powerful women)
Mirror reversal	Pejorative words masculine	"Bear child" - "male child"; "Fucking" - "his father's"
Taunt men	Word change to fight back	"Supporting brother demon" - "sucking sister ghost"; "Chick Movie" - "Old Den Movie"
Mocking men	Creating new words	"Beer belly" "Enoki's" "lamb's tail"

At present, women in the Douban community create rich alternative discourses by deconstructing and constructing new words, and compete with the existing power discourse system. They create "sacred symbols" with symbolic significance, establish sisterhood, form an imagination community based on "empathy", and carry out collective actions^[10]. In addition, by appropriating and mirroring linguistic symbols and satirizing the male discourse system, they strive to reshape and re-create the discourse system and fight against gender inequality with collective power. Based on the above analysis, we can see that the creation and dissemination of women's new words, on the one hand, gradually build up women's autonomous expression system, so that they can get rid of the dilemma of passive and silent, so as to give voice to women themselves; On the other hand, it also helps to break the traditional binary opposition discourse framework and advocate a more pluralistic, free and harmonious way of expression.

5 Concluding remarks

With the continuous development of the Internet, various groups have gained new space for free expression. Through the establishment of various communities, groups, super talk and other ways to gather into a whole, different communities in the virtual community for text production and exchange, with the continuous expansion of groups and the gradual improvement of community construction, different social trends of thought are formed and widely spread. The development of media technology has empowered women to break the barriers of traditional media and create new ways of discourse expression through online communities. Women in social media to create new words, innovation is not only a language, but also a cultural symbol of resistance and identity. Through these new words, women can better express their opinions and emotions and challenge the existing power structure, but it may also cause internal carnival around fixed symbols. The gathering of virtual groups will also make feminists single in thought, radical in emotion, irrational, and affect their external behavior in society. On the contrary, it will deepen the stereotype of the outside group, which is not conducive to the power struggle of the female group^[11]. In the face of possible risks brought by the community, on the one hand, the government needs to supervise and manage the community, balance the relationship between free expression and maintaining social order, and guide the group to establish correct values. On the other hand, as an individual in the community, he should rationally express his own views to avoid falling into the "spiral of silence". At the same time, he should actively read and contact with other knowledge and information, establish and improve his own personality, tree the correct three views, and form his own value judgment.

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