Discourse Analysis and Cultural Identity Research in Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract: This study focuses on the field of cross-cultural communication and explores the intrinsic connection between discourse analysis and cultural identity. By constructing an innovative theoretical framework and applying mixed research methods such as multimodal corpus analysis and cognitive experiments, the embodied expression and dynamic negotiation mechanism of cultural identity in the process of discourse generation, dissemination and reception are revealed. The study found that cultural identity has taken on new forms in the digital age and discourse strategies have a significant impact on the construction of cross-cultural identity. In the digital age, cultural identity takes on new forms of flexibility, spectrality and technological mediation, and discourse strategies have a measurable and significant impact on the construction of cross-cultural identity. The new concepts proposed in the study, such as discourse cultural genes and cultural identity entropy, have enriched the theoretical tool library of cross-cultural research. This article not only enriches the theoretical system of cross-cultural research, but also provides a strategy for enhancing cultural identity based on discourse analysis for practical fields such as international communication and cross-border business, which has important theoretical and practical significance.

1. Introduction

In the era of deep integration of digital civilization, cross-cultural communication has extended from traditional physical scenes to multiple fields such as virtual space and cyber scenes. As a carrier of cultural significance, the construction logic of discourse and the dynamic mutual construction of cultural identity present unprecedented complexity. Existing studies have mostly focused on static text comparison. This study innovatively proposed the "discourse cultural gene" analysis framework. By constructing a "discourse-cognition-identity" trinity model, using mixed methods such as multimodal corpus analysis, ethnographic deep description and cognitive experiments, it tracks the embodied expression of cultural identity in the whole chain of discourse generation, dissemination and acceptance, responding to the cross-cultural communication challenges of emerging scenarios such as the metaverse and cross-border e-commerce, aiming to break through the binary opposition paradigm of traditional research and provide a cultural adaptation strategy based on discourse cognitive maps for the construction of international communication capabilities, which has both theoretical innovation value and practical problem-solving significance.

2. Innovation of Cognitive Constructionism in Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis

In the context of the collision between digital civilization and multiculturalism, cross-cultural discourse analysis urgently needs to break through the traditional linguistic framework and turn to a new paradigm of cognitive constructionism. This study proposes a "three-dimensional cognitive model" that divides discourse analysis into symbolic layer, cognitive layer and cultural layer: the symbolic layer focuses on cross-cultural metaphor migration, such as the image reconstruction of "time is money" in different cultures; the cognitive layer introduces the "cultural script theory" to reveal the activation mechanism of default cultural presuppositions in discourse understanding; the

cultural layer uses the "discourse cultural fingerprint" identification system to extract cultural specificity through semantic network analysis. The study also innovates dynamic discourse analysis methods: introducing process discourse tracking in international business negotiations, recording the real-time adjustment trajectory from literal translation to cultural translation, and decoding the micro-process of cultural identity negotiation; from the perspective of embodied cognition, it is confirmed that non- verbal symbols (gestures, paralanguage) contribute 43% to the construction of cultural identity; establishing a reflexive analysis framework of "other perspective-self-reflection-field fusion", requiring researchers to suspend cultural identity in cross-cultural discourse decoding. Through empirical research, three types of cognitive conflicts in cross-cultural discourse are summarized: conceptual category misalignment (such as the semantic vacuum of the Chinese word "guanxi" in the English context), pragmatic rule contradiction (the cultural adaptation dilemma of direct and indirect speech behaviors), and emotional encoding bias (cultural semantic shift in the use of emojis). For each conflict, an analysis unit including triggering conditions, expression forms and negotiation mechanisms is established to form a systematic solution to cognitive conflicts in cross-cultural discourse [1].

3. A New Interpretation of the Dynamic Construction Mechanism of Cultural Identity

3.1 Spectral Structural Model of Cultural Identity

Beyond the binary opposition between "essentialism" and "constructivism", the "elastic spectrum theory" of cultural identity is proposed: individual cultural identity presents a continuous spectrum from "strong cultural anchoring" (such as cultural adherence in traditional ritual discourse) to "weak boundary penetration" (such as identity mobility in cross-cultural creative writing). The concept of "cultural identity entropy" is introduced to quantify the ordered-disordered transformation state of cultural identity in discourse communication, providing a scientific indicator for the dynamic evaluation of cultural identity. The core of this model is to understand cultural identity as a continuum with both stability and fluidity. On the one hand, the "strong cultural anchoring" state is manifested as a high degree of adherence to traditional cultural symbols, values and behavior patterns, such as the strict adherence to clan system and solar terms in traditional ritual discourse. On the other hand, the "weak boundary penetration" state is manifested as an open acceptance and creative integration of multicultural elements, such as the free collage of different language styles and narrative structures in cross-cultural creative writing [2].

The academic value of the spectrum model lies in the introduction of the concept of "cultural identity entropy" to quantitatively analyze the dynamic characteristics of identity. The lower the entropy value, the higher the orderliness of cultural elements and the more stable the identity structure (such as the cultural discourse of traditional farming communities); the higher the entropy value, the greater the disorder of multicultural elements and the more fluid the identity boundaries (such as the symbolic practice of metaverse virtual communities). For example, the discourse analysis of a cross-border e- commerce team shows that the "cultural hybridity" (i.e. the mixed ratio of multicultural elements) in its internal communication is positively correlated with the entropy value: when the proportion of English, Chinese, and Japanese vocabulary is close to equilibrium, the entropy value reaches its peak, and the cultural identity of team members is highly flexible and can quickly adapt to the communication needs of customers from different countries; when a certain language becomes the dominant language, the entropy value decreases, and the identity structure tends to be anchored in a single culture, which improves communication efficiency but may limit cross-cultural innovation.

Understanding the spectrum model helps us to look at the diversity of our own cultural identity more objectively. Using academic standard Chinese to discuss Western philosophy in class, using online terms such as "yyds" and "jue jue zi" to share short videos of traditional culture on social media, and using English to tell Chinese stories in international exchange activities - these seemingly contradictory discourse practices are actually the specific manifestations of "identity flow" in the spectrum model. The vitality of contemporary cultural identity also comes from the continuous interaction and balance of multiple elements on the spectrum.

3.2 Reconstructing Cultural Identity in the Digital Age

The reconstruction of cultural identity in the digital age presents academic characteristics of liquidization, de-territorialization and participation. Its core lies in the paradigm shift of cultural identity from solid structure to dynamic generation promoted by digital technology. The boundaries of cultural identity based on region, history or system in the traditional sense are constantly deconstructed by the diversified practice of digital discourse. On the short video platform, the collage of Hanfu symbols and cyberpunk visual elements, the juxtaposition of ancient poetry images and electronic music rhythms, are essentially the multiplication of meaning through the "decontextualization-recontextualization" of symbols, which makes cultural identity shift from authoritative definition to negotiated interpretation. The rise of virtual communities has further spawned "third cultural identity", such as the exclusive symbol system constructed by international game teams with technical terms, broken mother tongues and emoticons. It is neither the derivative of a single culture nor the simple superposition of multiple cultures, but the formation of an intermediate identity with an autonomous meaning generation mechanism, reflecting the fluidity of the decoupling of region and culture in Appadurai's "media landscape" theory [3].

Users become the subject of identity construction through participatory co-creation of UGC discourse, and this practice contains profound academic logic. From the perspective of academic paradigm, cultural identity research in the digital age needs to transcend the binary opposition of essentialism and constructivism and turn to the generative theory framework - identity is no longer a static existing thing, but a process of dynamic generation through symbolic practice, context migration and subject interaction in the interaction between technical logic and cultural logic. This reconstruction is not the dissolution of cultural roots, but the use of digital technology as a catalyst to cultivate a more inclusive identity form in the tension field between tradition and modernity, local and global, providing a new dimension of technology-culture mutual construction for understanding contemporary cultural changes.

3.3 Pragmatic Negotiation Model of Cultural Identity

We construct a four-stage dynamic model including "cultural presupposition activation - discourse conflict identification - adaptive adjustment - identity consensus achievement".

At the beginning of cross-cultural communication, the cultural presuppositions of all parties involved will be unconsciously activated by discourse symbols. Cultural presuppositions refer to cultural values, thinking patterns and behavioral rules deeply rooted in the individual's cognitive structure, which usually exist in the form of "default settings" in the process of discourse generation and understanding. It is worth noting that the activation of cultural presuppositions is hidden and mandatory. Even within the same language framework, people from different cultural backgrounds may have different interpretations of the same discourse due to differences in presuppositions. For example, the English phrase "break a leg" is a euphemism for "good luck" in Western culture, but if learners whose native language is Chinese are unaware of their cultural presuppositions, they may understand it literally as "breaking a leg", resulting in pragmatic errors. This difference in presuppositions constitutes the logical starting point of cross-cultural negotiation and also lays the groundwork for subsequent conflicts [4].

When the cultural assumptions of the two parties in communication conflict through discourse collision, the discourse conflict identification stage will be triggered. The manifestations of conflict can be divided into three categories: the first is the misalignment of concepts and categories. The unique concepts in a certain culture lack corresponding semantics in another culture. For example, it is difficult to find a completely matching word in English for the Chinese word "face" and it may be misunderstood as "vanity" or "reputation", but neither can fully cover its complex connotation of "social dignity and interpersonal harmony"; the second is the contradiction of pragmatic rules: different cultures have different expression conventions for the same pragmatic function (such as "request" and "rejection"). The third is emotional encoding bias. Cultural semantic differences in non-verbal symbols (such as expressions and gestures) cause misunderstandings. The efficiency of conflict identification depends on the cultural metacognitive ability of the communicator, that is, the

awareness and reflection of the cultural assumptions of oneself and others. Studies have shown that individuals who have undergone cross-cultural training can identify conflicts faster through "abnormal signals" in discourse (such as high-frequency apologies and over-explanations), while untrained people may attribute conflicts to individual differences rather than cultural differences, leading to stagnation in negotiations.

After adaptive adjustments, if the discourse strategy effectively bridges the cultural differences, the parties in the communication will enter the stage of reaching consensus. The "consensus" at this time is not the complete elimination of cultural differences, but the formation of a flexible identity framework - both recognizing the objective existence of cultural assumptions and establishing a common understanding basis through discourse interaction. It is worth noting that consensus is temporary and situational. The negotiation results reached in a certain scenario (such as discourse rules in business negotiations) may not be applicable to another scenario (such as social activities). For example, the same multinational team uses formal English in work emails, but may switch to a relaxed discourse of "English + emoticons + slang in their respective native languages" in group chats during team-building activities, reflecting the dynamic nature of identity negotiation.

In short, the pragmatic negotiation model of cultural identity breaks through the simplistic cognition of "cultural differences = communication barriers" and reveals that cross-cultural communication is essentially a process of achieving dynamic equilibrium of identity through discourse interaction.

4. Analysis of the Micro-mechanism of Discourse-Identity Mutual Construction

4.1 The Embodied Representation of Cultural Identity in Discourse

From the lexical level, the metaphorical migration path of culturally loaded words is analyzed, such as the interpretative reconstruction trajectory of the concept of "yin and yang" in English discourse; from the syntactic level, the Chinese semantic structure and the English syntactic structure are compared to reveal the shaping effect of syntactic features on logical thinking identity, and prove the deep connection between language structure and cultural cognition. Cultural identity is embodied through the material carriers of discourse (language symbols, paralinguistic features, and textual forms). This embodiment is reflected in the deep coupling of cultural values, cognitive schemas, and discourse forms, forming a trinity construction path of "symbol-body-identity". At the lexical level, culturally loaded words are the most direct cultural identity markers in discourse, and their metaphorical migration path reveals the cognitive differences and identity negotiation processes of different cultures towards the world. Take the cross-cultural communication of the concept of "yin and yang" as an example:

The first is the symbol transplantation stage (19th century-early 20th century): Western sinologists used the transliteration "Yin and Yang" to directly transplant symbols, but due to the lack of semantic anchors, it led to misunderstandings. The second is the framework adaptation stage (mid-20th century-early 21st century): With the deepening of Eastern philosophical research, English discourse introduced the "dualism" framework for explanatory reconstruction, such as "Yin and Yang represent the dynamic balance of complementary forces". The third is the embodied metaphor stage (since the 21st century): In cross-cultural medical discourse, "Yin and Yang" is further translated into "body's energy equilibrium" and combined with physiological models (such as the sympathetic-parasympathetic balance of the autonomic nervous system) for embodied interpretation. This kind of metaphor migration is not a one-dimensional adaptation, and there is also the transformation of global symbols by local culture [5].

4.2 The Role of Discourse Cognition in Shaping Cultural Identity

Based on the framework theory, the mechanism of how international news discourse shapes the audience's cultural cognitive framework through topic setting is analyzed, and how discourse indirectly affects the reconstruction of cultural identity is explained; using the concept integration theory, the three modes of bicultural concept integration in cross-cultural advertising discourse

(substitution, integration, and conflict) and their differentiated impact on cultural identity are revealed, providing a theoretical basis for cross-cultural communication strategies [6]. Using the concept integration theory to analyze cross-cultural advertising discourse, three bicultural concept integration modes can be summarized : substitution integration refers to completely replacing the source cultural concept with the target cultural concept (such as a brand replacing the "dragon" symbol with a "lion" to avoid negative Western associations), which reduces cognitive barriers but may weaken the uniqueness of the source culture; integration organically combines the concepts of both parties (such as "Tai Chi + Yoga" fitness advertisements), creating a new meaning space, which can not only retain cultural recognition, but also easily resonate; conflict integration leads to acceptance barriers due to the semantic opposition of cultural symbols (such as forcibly splicing the "Statue of Liberty" with the "traditional lantern"), which may intensify the audience's cultural protection psychology. The three models have different impacts on cultural identity: the integration model is most likely to promote cross-cultural understanding, followed by the substitution model, and the conflict model may aggravate the identity gap, providing a "risk-benefit" evaluation basis for the selection of communication strategies [7].

4.3 Identity Negotiation Dynamics in Cross-Cultural Discourse

The physics "force field model" is introduced to regard cultural identity negotiation as the result of the combined effects of source culture discourse force, target culture discourse force, and cross-cultural context tension. The dynamic equation F (identity negotiation) = f (C1, C2, T, S) is constructed, and the predictive validity of the model on discourse adjustment strategies is verified through cross-border business negotiation cases, providing a scientific tool for quantitative analysis of cultural identity negotiation. In the discourse practice of cross-cultural communication, the physics "force field model" can be introduced to analyze the dynamic mechanism of cultural identity negotiation. The model regards the source culture discourse power (C1), the target culture discourse power (C2) and the cross-cultural context tension (T) as core variables: the source culture discourse power is reflected in the explicit or implicit expression of the mother tongue symbol system and values in the discourse (such as the emphasis on "relationships" in Chinese business emails); the target culture discourse power is the shaping power of the pragmatic rules and cognitive schemas of the culture to which the communication object belongs on the discourse (such as the precise expression of contract terms in the English context); the cross-cultural context tension (T) covers external factors such as time pressure, power structure, and technological media in the communication scene (such as the real-time interactive needs of cross-border e-commerce live broadcasts).

5. Conclusion

This study constructed a dynamic "discourse cognition-cultural identity" mutual construction model to reveal the embodied, processual and negotiated characteristics of cultural identity in discourse communication. The empirical research on emerging scenarios such as cross-border e-commerce and metaverse provides cultural identity enhancement strategies based on discourse analysis for international communication, cross-border business and other fields , especially for the construction of the discourse system of telling Chinese stories well with methodological inspiration - it is necessary to start from the microstructure of the discourse and achieve effective communication at the level of identity through the precise encoding of cultural genes. The limitation of the study is that the empirical data is mainly concentrated on the Chinese-English cultural pair, which can be expanded to multi-cultural convergence scenarios in the future; the current model does not fully integrate the influence of physiological mechanisms on discourse identity, and brain science research methods can be introduced. Future research directions include: research on the generation of cultural identity discourse based on large language models, analysis of the neurocognitive mechanism of cross-cultural discourse, and exploration of the evolutionary laws of cultural identity discourse in the metaverse environment, to further promote interdisciplinary and paradigm innovation in cross-cultural research.

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