

# Change and Reconstruction: The Difficulties and Countermeasures of Improving the Affinity and Favorability of Sports Commentary in the Internet Age——Thinking from the Perspective of Audience Orientation

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**Abstract:** Under the guidance of the media ecology school represented by McLuhan and Postman, media technology has become an important perspective of current communication studies. By combing through the changes brought by the development of sports media technology, it is found that in the Internet era, the teaching method of sports interpretation art has shifted from "communication-oriented" to "recipient-oriented". Based on the audience oriented perspective, the expression of sports interpretation art rich in affinity and favor is helpful to enhance user experience and strengthen the audience's communication and participation. By using the method of literature and logical analysis, this paper explores the necessity of improving the affinity and liking of sports commentary art in the Internet era, and puts forward innovative ways to improve the affinity and liking of sports commentary from three aspects: "rigid thinking", "self-expression" and "hollow words".

**Keywords:** Internet; Sports Commentary; Affinity; Audience-Oriented

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## 1. Introduction

Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian scholar, once proposed that "media is the message and the extension of people". As the most direct and rapid way to obtain information, media occupies an important part of people's lives. In the past hundred years, the continuous evolution of digital technology has promoted the evolution and development of the original media ecosystem. In this process, the Chinese media system has completed the transformation from radio and television to the Internet, and has entered the "handheld era". Under the background of new media, the way of program production is represented by the emergence of UGC (User Generated Content). It overturns the traditional communication mode that PGC (Professional Generated Content) spreaders dominate the audience, and transforms the relationship between the two teaching parties from the original one-to-many "controlled information input" to the many-to-many "shared information dissemination". It can be said that the mode of communication in the Internet era has shifted from "transmitter-oriented" to "receiver oriented".

From the perspective of sports communication, sports information, with its unique active factors, occupies an increasingly important position in the Internet information communication. In 2015, the number of Internet sports users reached 290 million. By the end of 2016, the number of sports users exceeded 350 million. It is expected to reach 520 million by 2018. The audience's attention to sports events has also become the driving force of sports communication. According to the official announcement of FIFA for the 2018 Russia World Cup, China is the country with the largest audience for the World Cup, up to 655.7 million people, accounting for 18.4% of the total.<sup>[1]</sup>The large number of sports users indicates a good prospect of sports communication, among which any sports event cannot be separated from the participation of sports commentary art. It can be said that sports commentary art, as the accompanying

text of sports events broadcast, supplements and cannot be separated from sports events. In the present media revolution, sports commentary art has also changed from the "passive" transformation style in the period of radio to television media transformation to the current "active" transformation style. The reason is nothing more than to explore the communication form that can meet the audience's psychology under the background of Internet information hybridity. In the Internet era, it is of certain significance to put information communication in the audience oriented perspective, take the audience as the center, and formulate the orientation and principles of media communication for effective information communication.

## **2. It is difficult to improve the affinity and favorability of Chinese sports commentator from the perspective of audience standard**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory divides human needs into physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, respect needs and self-actualization needs. The first four types be defective needs (D needs), and the highest level is growth needs (B needs). From this perspective, it can be seen that human needs have a development process from low level to a high level, that is to say, after satisfying the basic physiological needs, humans will search for emotion, respect, self-actualization and other high level needs. As a kind of spiritual production, sports interpretation art needs to transform its interpretation style and language into emotional "affinity" language, so as to meet the emotional needs of the audience. Affinity is mainly reflected as "the closeness, intimacy, trust, interactivity, attention and acceptance between the report and the audience"<sup>[2]</sup> The affinity of sports commentary language is based on :the relationship construction of the audience as the main body. On the basis of insight into the psychology of the audience, the interpretation language should be adjusted constantly, the distance between the audience and the audience should be shortened, and the audience's identification and resonance should be enhanced. To enhance the affinity of sports commentary art, we should first recognize the difficulties in the composition of today's commentary, and on this basis keep the right innovation.

### **2.1 Rigid thinking patterns**

In traditional media dominated by radio and television, due to the characteristics of linear information transmission, even if the audience is dissatisfied with the information received, they often can only take the lagged way such as telephone and letter to feedback information. The high feedback cost makes the audience's enthusiasm for feedback information is poor, and the commentators in the past hardly bear the pressure of public opinion. In the long run, the narrator has formed the inherent thinking of "I say you listen", "love to talk but not to listen" and "love to listen but not to listen". With the advent of the "handheld era", the audience can give real-time feedback to the received information through social platforms and short video platforms. The form of feedback is not only extremely convenient and fast, but also eliminates the time difference of information exchange, and the feedback cost becomes low. From this perspective, the time of "saying one's word" has gone forever. However, due to the influence of habitual thinking and lazy thinking, there are still a lot of commentators with rigid thinking patterns, keeping the interpretation thinking of "love listening but don't listen". For example, in table tennis at Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, commentator CAI Meng made several mistakes in his "basic knowledge". He not only said that the final match held the next day was two days later, but also said that Wang Manyu was Maggie Cheung. The embarrassing scenes reflected CAI Meng's lack of knowledge about the games and the athletes' data. In the Internet era, the audience can choose more to watch the event, and the way of "one trick to eat all the world" cannot make the audience buy.

### **2.2 Personal cognitive impairment**

In addition to rigid thinking set, many commentators also have personal cognitive disorders, that is, commentators themselves are too arrogant, self-centered, and ignore the audience's thoughts and feelings. For example, commentator Yang Ying is often commented by netizens that "she is so excited that the audience is confused", because Yang Ying always imposes her own subjective consciousness on the audience in her narration. For example, in the women's singles quarterfinals of China Open in 2017, Yang Ying commented on Sun Yingsha, "Sun Yingsha's playing style can be said to be 'quick and crisp', as well as her fighting in the front three boards, and her judgment and shooting of half-serving balls, including her speed and sensitivity in the rallies." "Sun Yingsha strengthened the rotation of her curve ball in the rallies. As a retired table tennis player, Yang Ying has her own unique advantages in the interpretation of sports skills. However, the use of a large number of professional words in the interpretation language, such as "half table tennis" and "curveball", will make part of the audience who does not know table tennis "confused", and greatly reduce the audience's "user

experience". If the audience cannot understand the game, The aesthetic experience obtained from sports interpretation art will be greatly reduced.

### **2.3 Lack of theoretical support**

Today's sports commentators need to understand and learn the theories of explaining sports events. For example, many commentators only introduce athletes and describe the game scene, but do not understand why athletes do this action. According to the theory of sports training "wrist joint" and "elbow joint", we can clearly understand the reason why table tennis players swing the racket with their bare hands. Only by mastering the relevant theoretical knowledge can we make the most accurate and detailed explanation of the athlete's movements. When Wang Meng, a retired athlete, and Huang Jianxiang was broadcasting short track speed skating at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, they immediately reacted to the situation by saying, "He kicked the knife." After the referee announced that he kicked the knife, netizens said, "What a professional!" Huang Jianxiang left CCTV for many years but still loved by the public, the reason is also that he "understands the ball", the rules of the game have a detailed understanding, many netizens said "if you don't understand the situation of the game, look at Huang Jianxiang's commentary will understand." That is to say, sports commentators in the Internet era need to know how to write a book, but also need theoretical support.

## **3. The countermeasures to improve the affinity and favorability of Chinese sports commentators from the audience standard perspective**

Qi Yue, the founder of New China's broadcasting industry, once proposed "three precepts of broadcasting" :one precept of self-expression, two precepts of following one's heart, and three precepts of sameness. In the discipline of sports interpretation, "Three commandments of interpretation" can also be put forward as countermeasures and suggestions to improve the affinity and favorability of sports commentators.

### **3.1 A stop thinking rigid, enhance language affinity**

Affinity is a new "trump card" played by many media in recent years to compete for market share and attract readers' attention.<sup>[3]</sup> In the field of sports commentary, affinity can not only enhance the personal charm of the commentator, but also ensure the broadcast quality and win the recognition of the audience. However, the types of the audience are diverse, it can be said that everyone is difficult to tune. "The service principle of sports commentary, from the perspective of the commentator, can be briefly summarized as: audience satisfaction first, distinguished guests second, self-performance third."<sup>[4]</sup> It can be concluded that audience satisfaction should be put in the first place to meet the audience's psychological needs to know the purpose of audience watching the game. Based on the audience's psychological requirements, "dignified" commentary is bound to fail to meet the audience's needs. "In the emerging media field, a new voice is emerging in the official social accounts of traditional or mainstream media or in the media itself. In the early "voice revolution" from traditional media to new media, "down-to-earth" is the mainstream trend. "Down to earth" language is undoubtedly one of the sports commentator affinity. Wang Meng, the commentator of the Beijing Winter Olympics who became famous through "chatty" commentary, can be regarded as a typical example of "down-to-earth" commentary. During the Winter Olympics, the survey data captured 1.99 billion page views, 394,000 discussions, and Wang Meng's golden sentences were played more than 25 million times on Weibo under the hashtag Wang Meng Commentary. Wang Meng's commentary is a typical case that Chinese sports commentary art is paid attention to by the audience. To explore the reasons for the popularity of Wang Meng, it is undoubtedly because it breaks the preaching style in the original interpretation mode and caters to the audience's interesting psychological characteristics through the "down-to-earth" language.

### **3.2 The second precepts self-expression, change personal perspective**

Aesthetician Issel once put forward the concept of "implied readers". According to this theory, any artist will explicitly or implicitly consider the potential audience when engaging in artistic activities. That is to say, no artistic activity can abandon the existence of the audience. Audiences in different regions, occupations and ages have different requirements for watching events. Even audiences in the same region, occupation and age have very different demands for watching events. This point is consistent with the view put forward by audience 3S theory, that is, in the process of audience's attitude towards receiving and processing information,

Selective Attention, Selective Understanding and Selective Memory are three interlocking key links. Audiences are in different environments, have different personal experiences, and prefer different interpretation methods. For example, in the opening ceremony of the Guangzhou Asian Games, there was a performance of "Red Cotton". In the commentary of the CCTV sports channel, adjectives such as "Honghuohuo" and "delicate and beautiful" were used to show the beauty of the live performance. The same performance Bai Yansong is using "vernacular" style interpretation. "In Guangzhou, it is not only the city flower, some people also affectionately call it the hero flower, or call kapok tree hero tree. In this regard, the city of Guangzhou can also be called the Hero City."<sup>[5]</sup> In the face of the same scene, the "ornate" commentary of the sports channel commentator is in sharp contrast to the "plain" commentary of Bai Yansong. One is like "the wrong color is engraved with gold, the carved achievements are full of eyes", and the other is like "the departure of hibiscus, natural and lovely". In order to meet the audience's different selection needs and aesthetic purport, when facing the same event, different commentators will often have different interpretation methods. As the saying goes, "A thousand actors have a thousand Hamlets", in the field of interpretation, this saying can be understood as "a thousand commentators have a thousand interpretation methods".

To improve the affinity and favorability of sports commentary language, it is also necessary to adopt different interpretation methods according to different contexts. For example, at the awarding ceremony of the women's singles table tennis final of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, the commentator Han Gao mentions Liu Shiwen, who withdrew from the match due to injury: "There were a lot of tears behind this gold medal, including Liu Shiwen, who did not play because of injury, but also worked hard for this event until the last second, and this gold medal is also due to her." Later, the People's Daily also published a related report to pay tribute to Liu Shiwen with the title "Liu Shiwen is the champion of the National Female Table Tennis Team". When Cohen changes the focus of the competition from the winners to the Olympic veterans, it may not be the usual commentary perspective, but it represents the traditional Chinese culture of "success does not depend on me" ethic. It reflects the human perspective of the arena and enhances the Olympic spirit of "it is not only important to win, but also to do one's best". It's an expression of Chinese affinity beyond winning gold MEDALS.

### **3.3 Three precepts of hollow words without evidence, increase the theoretical support**

The way ahead is so long without ending, yet high and low I'll search with my will unbending. In any field, theory is the basis of practice, as Li Yu, a playwright in the Qing Dynasty, put it. From the perspective of academic field, "the exchanges between Chinese sports and foreign countries are mostly in the fields of sports psychology, sports medicine and other natural science research. The exchanges between sports humanities and social disciplines are increasing, but there is still considerable room for improvement. In the fields of sports international communication, sports diplomacy and other research fields, there is almost no voice. In order to truly enhance the international communication influence of Chinese sports, we also need to take the Chinese theory as the leading role and really spread our voice"<sup>[6]</sup> Sports interpretation art is a kind of oral communication behavior, the commentator not only needs sufficient theoretical support, but also needs to sublimate the theory through language expression.

On the basic level of theoretical support, "the commentator's cognition and understanding of the game will directly affect the level of interpretation, so the commentator needs to have professional cognitive ability for the sports he explains."<sup>[7]</sup> Since sports commentary art is characterized by the segmentation of sports events, sports commentators need to have a deep understanding of the theories related to the events they are narrating. This is also the reason why retired athletes who become commentators are popular among the audiences. However, the current form of sports commentary talent training is not optimistic. "Xi 'a University of Sport was the first in China to open sports program broadcasting and hosting (referred to as sports presenter major) in 2006. In 2008, Guangzhou University of Sport, Wuhan University of Sport and Shandong University of Sport was the second batch of public sports universities to successfully apply for this major" At present, in the known colleges and universities that offer sports explanation course, the theory of sports training is still unknown. The reason is that in general concept, people still habitually ascribe "sports commentary" to the mother discipline of broadcasting and hosting, and do not see the crossover between sports commentary art and sports discipline.

From the perspective of theoretical sublimation, sports commentary art is an excellent platform for constructing national image." Among them is the word "affinity". As an excellent platform to show the national image, sports commentary art is of great significance

to improve the affinity and favorable degree of commentary discourse for building the "amiable, respectable and lovely" image of a great country. As the corpus collection and distribution center of sports arena, the presentation of affinity discourse is particularly important in the Olympic Games and other major events. "This moment, we forget about the results, we just focus on Zhang Kexin's physical condition." Under the unprecedented changes in a century, sports commentary art may not be able to eliminate the existing inequities such as hegemonism and unilateralism. However, under the guidance of the Olympic spirit, Chinese sports commentators have always taken the consciousness of a community with a shared future for mankind as the keynote of their commentary texts, which is consistent with the theme of "peace and development" of The Times.

## 4. Conclusion

In the Internet era, to improve the affinity and favor of sports commentary art, not only lies in voice reform, but also lies in breaking through rigid thinking, really putting the audience into the heart, and achieving "thinking of the audience, thinking of the audience". Behind the favorable and warm interpretation language, it is the commentator's understanding and consideration of the audience's psychology in the new era, the effective integration of the new communication ecological environment, and the construction of a point-to-point relationship of mutual respect and equal communication with users, truly following the new communication law of mutual benefit, mutual transmission and mutual acceptance. In the Internet era, sports commentators, as the main body of the event communication, should break the rigid thinking, deeply understand and investigate the characteristics of the current network culture and the inner needs of the audience, innovate the form of communication, improve the quality of the content, and realize the effective communication of the information on the field through their own "second creation". This is an effective way for sports interpretation art to enhance affinity, communication and guidance.

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