(Anti-) Nationalist discourses as the primary traffic source for foreign Wanghongs on social media

With an increasingly competitive vlogging market on social media on a global scale, there have been more diversified groups of foreign vloggers who make a living by creating bilingual contents about China. Some recent studies have discussed how foreign vloggers help promote the nationalist discourse of China on Chinese social media. YouTube as a social media platform which is officially blocked in China provides a more diversified media landscape for exploring the other side of nationalist discourse – anti-nationalist discourse contributed by foreign vloggers. This study takes the discourses of the YouTube channel @LeLeFarley (lele-fali)) as an example to see how a foreign YouTuber self-consciously and creatively use anti-nationalistic discourses about China and Chinese politics as the primary traffic source to do self-branding and convert fans' attention into purchasing behaviors and monetize the traffic in the attention economy. As of the audiences of this channel are largely Chinese, LeleFarley's media activities will be considered both in the framework of western social media entertainment (SME) industries and China's Wanghong (Internet celebrities) economy. Multimodal discourse analysis will be adopted to analyze the channel's content curation, rhetoric styles, and presentation styles (interview/talking-head videos), all of which as its media and discursive strategies to drive traffic. Whether one can show sense of humor in a local language is often seen as an important constituent of the authenticity of one's understanding of a foreign culture. This study finds that mediated through humor and sarcasm, this channel achieves attention largely on the content of the negativity of China's political cultures including China's nationalism, the top leader and the party-state system. It argues that "affective polarization" has been strategically and effectively used by foreign vloggers on YouTube to produce anti-nationalist discourses about China. This study will also contribute to the studies of the role of affect and humor in the attention economy.

Keywords: anti-nationalism, vlogger, humor, attention economy, SME, Wanghong economy, multimodal discourse analysis

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