

Research on the new media communication channels of the intangible cultural heritage "Puppet Show"

Wenbo Ge

Liaoning Communication University (LNCU), Shenyang ,110000 Liaoning, China

742787632@qq.com

Abstract. Puppetry, an intangible cultural heritage with profound cultural significance, has experienced film and media innovations in the 20th century by Taiwan's Perak Puppetry Company and attempted to break through the barriers of communication. However, it has not fundamentally changed its niche communication status, still being limited to circulation within specific circles. This reflects the challenges that intangible cultural heritage faces in the new media era: relying solely on film and TV transformation is not enough to rejuvenate, and deeper strategic exploration and practical innovation are required. In the context of the new media era, the rapid development of the wireless communication technology has led society into a fast-paced lifestyle, and the communication methods of traditional intangible cultural heritage have encountered unprecedented bottlenecks. In response to this situation, this article aims to explore new directions for the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage by analyzing the intangible cultural heritage represented by puppetry and exploring how to effectively utilize the broad reach and instant interaction characteristics of new media. Overcoming communication barriers can make this precious cultural wealth accumulated in history shine once more, attract the attention of more modern audiences, and promote its inheritance and promotion in contemporary society.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage; "Puppet Show"; New media communication channels.

1. The History and Inheritance Value of Puppet Opera Culture

Puppet Opera, an ancient and vivid performing art, has many theories about its origin, but it is generally believed to be closely related to the Fujian area, especially the legendary stories of Quanzhou and Longxi County. Traditional puppetry is famous for its exquisite performances on stage, while modern puppetry has achieved significant development through film and TV, such as Taiwan's Pili puppetry, Jinguang puppetry, and has become a part of pop-culture.

The traditional puppet show began as a simple sacrificial performance and gradually evolved into a complex historical drama. While emphasizing martial arts, each character's four-word dialogue, a poetic self-introduction, has become its iconic artistic feature. This form not only highlights the identity and personality of the characters but also embodies the unique language charm and literary heritage of puppetry. In contrast, modern puppetry, on the basis of inheriting the essence of martial arts, pays more attention to the delicate depiction of literary opera and innovatively constructs an imaginary historical background. The integration of music and Mr. Huang Wenze's dubbing skills, playing multiple roles, jointly promotes the popularity of puppetry. The innovative opera art style makes it a unique cultural expression.

The heritage value of puppetry is far-reaching and diverse. From a historical perspective, its long history of spread has witnessed the continuity and influence of Chinese culture. It not only has deep roots in China but also sows the seeds of cultural exchanges overseas. At the cultural level, as a symbol of southern Fujian culture, it deepens the cultural connection between Taiwan and the mainland and plays an immeasurable role in promoting the understanding and integration of cross-strait cultures. Academically, the unique art form and puppet design of puppetry provide valuable information for the study of puppetry art in China and around the world, enriching the academic research field of puppetry. In terms of communication value, puppetry is a medium for cultural export. Successful cases such as the cross-border cooperation of "Journey to the East" demonstrate its cross-



border appeal and promote the international dissemination and recognition of China's traditional culture.

Therefore, puppetry not only carries rich historical and cultural information but is also a living cultural heritage. Its vitality, constantly displayed in inheritance and innovation strengthens the sense of cultural identity, and enhances cultural exchanges in a global context. It provides vivid cases that demonstrate the profound cultural confidence, openness, and inclusiveness of the Chinese nation.

2. The Development Status of Puppet Show

Puppetry, a traditional art treasure rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, has encountered complex and ever-changing challenges in its long history. Although the innovation of Taiwan's puppet show has injected new vitality into this art form and significantly increased its popularity and appeal, from the perspective of academic research, attention to puppet shows has grown slowly. In 2006, relevant research documents numbered only more than 70 articles with 48 core results, with Taiwanese puppetry occupying the research focus. By 2023, the total number of related papers had climbed to 544, yet there were still only 112 core studies, and discussions on the innovation of puppetry had only gradually increased since 2019, showing its audience expansion and academic development on the road to revival.

Looking back at the early days of puppet opera, it originated in Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, Fujian, and then moved to Taiwan, gradually forming two schools with completely different styles, the Northern and Southern Guan. [1]The Nanguan puppet show features soft, delicate singing and literati operas such as "The Romance of the West Chamber" and "The Peony Pavilion," emphasizing the elegance of poetry recitation. In contrast, the Beiguan puppet show features bold gong and drum music and historical themes such as "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" and "The Romance of the Sui and Tang Dynasties," which are closer to folk aesthetics. With the changes of the times, puppetry has evolved from a seated performance to a standing performance. The increase in the size of the puppets and the changes in performance forms have ultimately made Taiwanese puppetry well-known today.

The musical art of puppetry continues to develop through inheritance and innovation. Traditionally, the music of Nanguan and Beiguan have their own merits. Nanguan is deeply influenced by Quanzhou String Guan, while Beiguan emphasizes the combination of vocal music and instrumental music. Entering the modern era, puppetry music skillfully combines tradition and modernity. [2]Tracks such as "Withered Leaves" and "Lighting the World" are performed with modern instruments, and traditional instruments such as flutes, flutes, and guzhengs are gradually introduced, supplemented by drums, guitars, etc. The modern elements realize the fusion of ancient and modern music styles, which not only attracts young audiences but also helps puppet show music occupy a place in the field of ancient music.

As an intangible cultural heritage, the film and TV exploration of puppetry in Taiwan marks an important milestone in its modernization process. The use of film and media has allowed the puppet show to break through the limitations of theaters. Through the innovation of film and TV works, such as the comprehensive innovation of plot and music, it has successfully attracted a new generation of audiences and continued the glory of traditional culture. At the same time, traditional puppetry, such as Shaw Brothers puppetry, has also been protected and passed on, being listed as a national intangible cultural heritage, ensuring the continued inheritance of this cultural wealth.

To sum up, in the face of challenges, puppetry has not only consolidated its cultural status in modern society through continuous innovation and adaptation but has also become a cultural messenger connecting history and the future, allowing more people to appreciate the beauty of this ancient art. The charm indicates the bright future of puppet theater.

3. Communication Challenges and Contradiction of Puppet Show Culture in the New Media Era

3.1. Digital Dilemmas and Innovative Strategies for Dialect Communication

Puppet Opera has built a profound cultural heritage with its unique charm of Minnan and other dialects, but this has also become a major obstacle to its cross-regional communication. In a media environment dominated by Mandarin, how to provide barrier-free viewing for non-dialect-speaking audiences has become a primary problem. The solution lies in the use of modern technology, such as subtitle translation, dubbing multi-version production, and the development of intelligent voice conversion technology, which not only retains the charm of the original dialect but also breaks down language barriers. At the same time, leveraging new media platforms, such as social media, online live broadcasts, and on-demand services, to carry out dialect cultural education and interaction can enhance the public's understanding and acceptance of dialect culture and promote the coexistence of cultural diversity. [3]

3.2. Integration of Content Innovation and Short Video Era

Facing the fast-paced life and the rise of short videos, the traditional long-form drama model of puppet shows needs to transform into "short, flat, and fast" content. This requires creators to streamline plots, enhance visual impact while maintaining artistic depth, and create exciting clips or series of short plays suitable for dissemination on short video platforms. Digital editing technology can be used to reorganize classic scenes and introduce character introductions, highlight moments, behind-the-scenes reveals, and other content to meet the instant entertainment needs of modern audiences. At the same time, cooperating with popular short video platforms to attract more young users through challenges, topical activities, etc., can broaden the audience base and keep the puppet show culture alive in the fragmented information age.

3.3. Inheritance and Modernization of Martial Arts Culture

In the context of the declining popularity of martial arts culture, puppet theater needs to explore modern expressions of martial arts elements to adapt to the aesthetic preferences of a new generation of audiences. Combining fantasy, science fiction, and other trendy elements, we can creatively adapt traditional martial arts stories to create a new martial arts image that has both classical charm and modernity. Utilizing the interactive features of new media, such as AR and VR technologies, to create an immersive martial arts experience can enhance the audience's sense of participation and immersion. At the same time, discovering and cultivating a new generation of martial arts cultural idols through cross-border cooperation and IP linkage can revitalize martial arts culture among young people and promote the deep integration of puppet show culture and contemporary popular culture.

In short, the promotion of puppet show culture needs to keep up with the pace of the new media era. It must not only maintain the essence of traditional culture but also be motivated in innovation, flexibly use modern technological means and communication strategies, cross the boundaries of language and culture, and attract a wider audience, allowing this ancient art form to shine in the new cultural ecology.

4. Suggestions for optimizing the intangible cultural heritage puppet show in the new media era

4.1. How to solve the language problem of puppetry

Cross-border cooperation and language adaptability are the keys to solving this problem. Past attempts, such as the use of Mandarin dubbing in the "Thunderbolt Heroes" series, have not achieved the expected results. The crux of the issue is not that Mandarin itself is not accepted, but that the dubbing quality is not comparable to the original version, resulting in a damaged audience experience.

Therefore, future cooperation should focus on improving the production level of Mandarin dubbing, ensuring the professionalism and emotional fit of each character's dubbing, and avoiding technical defects that affect cultural communication. Although attempts at cooperation between Shanghai and Taiwan in puppetry were not completely successful, they still showed a positive willingness and potential for both parties to cooperate. If high-quality Mandarin dubbing and content production can be ensured, puppet theater will have great potential to expand in the mainland market.

Secondly, learn from successful cases to guide the transformation path. Take "Thunderbolt Heroes: Legend of the Sword" as an example. As a carefully remade classic, this work has not only achieved significant improvements in dubbing quality but also in visual effects, music production, plot arrangement, and puppet design. All aspects showed high standards, successfully attracted new audience groups, and verified the market potential of the Mandarin version. This provides valuable experience for mainland companies that want to get involved in this field in the future: in-depth analysis of the success factors of "Legend of the Sword," such as high-standard dubbing production and excellent content reconstruction, should be used as a template for creation and adaptation. This will effectively promote the smooth transformation of puppet opera into a new media environment and further expand its cultural influence.

4.2. Innovation strategies for intangible cultural heritage under new media platforms

In the new media era, the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage should make full use of its timeliness and extensive communication characteristics, and innovate promotion methods through digital platforms. Building an exclusive digital protection zone for intangible cultural heritage and using new media to make it a "living" memory is essential. Not only professionals should participate in content creation, but ordinary audiences and even teenagers should be encouraged to actively participate through comments, sharing, etc., to create a mass communication effect. Platforms such as WeChat official accounts, Weibo, Zhihu, Tik tok, and Kuaishou can be used to hold online activities such as the "My Story with Intangible Cultural Heritage" essay competition, supplemented by a reward mechanism to stimulate public interest. Focus on interactivity and use pictures, articles, and videos to enrich the display format, shorten the distance between intangible cultural heritage and the public, and enhance its affinity and appeal.

At the same time, efforts should be increased to develop creative derivatives of intangible cultural heritage, integrating traditional skills and modern aesthetics, paying attention to copyright protection, promoting intangible cultural heritage through high-quality products, creating a model production base, and promoting the sustainable development of the intangible heritage industry. In terms of content output, adapt flexibly to the short video trend, produce short, humorous puppet show clips, cater to fast-paced viewing habits, use the short video platform to accumulate a fan base, and form a virtuous cycle of content output and economic benefits. This will create a solid foundation for puppetry and other intangible cultural heritage arts to gain new vitality.

Additionally, "living inheritance" is encouraged, using new media forms such as live broadcasts and short videos to allow intangible cultural inheritors to gain economic benefits and simultaneously feel the respect and recognition of their skills from society, thereby stimulating inheritance motivation. Scholars from Tsinghua University pointed out that the one-way communication of traditional media limits the vitality of intangible cultural heritage, while the interactivity of new media has opened up a new situation for its communication. Economic incentive mechanisms such as live streaming rewards have greatly promoted the spread of intangible cultural heritage. By collecting and appropriately using fan-created works, it can not only reduce official creation pressure but also directly respond to fan preferences, enhance fan participation and sense of belonging, and provide more accurate guidance for content innovation based on fan feedback using big data. This will promote the prosperity and development of a culture co-created by officials and fans.

4.3. Analyze specific characters and highlight the martial arts image in puppetry

The plot and character design of early puppetry were deeply influenced by history and traditional literature, such as the northern puppetry's interpretation of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" and the common characters in southern puppetry. Although these characters are classic, they gradually become stylized and cannot meet the ever-increasing diverse needs of the audience. The turning point came with the innovation of modern puppetry, especially Pili puppetry, which pioneered the creation of a series of characters with deep personalities and complex emotions such as Shi Yanwen, Su Huanzhen, and Yip Shu. Take Shi Yanwen as an example. His image is derived from "The Words of the Wild Old Man." He is gorgeous in appearance and elegant in temperament, a typical incarnation of righteous martial arts. His character setting and clothing details are deeply imprinted with the "Confucian-xia" spirit, strengthening the early spirit of martial arts and the image of chivalry and righteousness in the puppet show. However, while these characters are iconic, they still do not step outside the traditional box.

Entering the stage of golden light and modern Pili puppetry, significant innovations have been achieved in character design and plot construction. While inheriting the classic role of Shi Yanwen, Jinguang Puppet Show cleverly transforms it, using Shi Yanwen's son Qiao Rulai as the new protagonist, changing the previous overly idealistic heroic image and instead emphasizing intellectual strategy and moral complexity. Qiao Rulai is not only a leader with superior intelligence but also a complex character who has the courage to make difficult choices in the face of righteousness. This setting, which dares to show heroic sacrifice and moral dilemmas, contrasts sharply with the past puppet shows that tended to have perfect heroic images. It is more in line with the aesthetics and depth of thinking of modern audiences and has won a large number of followers.

At the same time, Pili Puppet Show further promotes the multi-dimensional development of characters through realistic characterization. Su Huanzhen is not only a leader with both wisdom and strength, but his multi-faceted character—sometimes gentle and gentle, sometimes witty and cunning—subverts the single setting of traditional martial arts characters and presents a more humane heroic image. This innovation not only challenges the traditional narrative model of good and evil but also adds a sense of layering and realism to the characters, reflecting the modern audience's acceptance and expectations of the complexity of heroes. Overall, Jinguang and Pili Puppetry's bold attempts in character creation not only enrich the connotation of puppetry but also promote the vigorous development of this traditional art form in the new era. [4]

4.4. New media channels have opened up a new world for the dissemination and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

Relying on digital technology and network platforms, it transcends the limitations of time and space and gives new vitality to traditional culture. First of all, it is crucial to build a multi-dimensional intangible cultural heritage dissemination ecosystem. Through media convergence strategies and interactive forms such as live streaming, the authenticity and immersion of the intangible cultural heritage experience can be enhanced. Industry elites should be invited to participate, and the celebrity effect should be used to increase public attention. At the same time, big data and artificial intelligence technologies can be used to customize personalized dissemination plans, achieve accurate content push, meet the spiritual and cultural needs of different audiences, and ensure the efficiency and pertinence of intangible cultural heritage dissemination.

Secondly, building a bridge between intangible cultural heritage and the younger generation is a key step in activating the vitality of traditional culture. Young people's interest in intangible cultural heritage is based on their recognition and respect for traditional culture. Therefore, integrating intangible cultural heritage into the education system and achieving all-round penetration in campuses, textbooks, and classrooms is an effective way to enhance the recognition of intangible cultural heritage. In the face of the limitations of traditional inheritance methods, it is particularly important to innovate teaching methods, combine modern aesthetics and interests, and stimulate young people's

enthusiasm for participation. Additionally, solving the practical problem of the economic value of intangible cultural heritage is a necessary measure to attract more attention.

Finally, the new media era has put forward new capability requirements for intangible cultural heritage inheritors. They must be proficient in traditional skills and master the use of modern communication tools and e-commerce platforms to broaden the dissemination channels and market space of intangible cultural heritage. By improving the new media literacy of the inheritor group, the audience range of intangible cultural heritage can be broadened, and the commercialization of intangible cultural heritage products can be promoted, protecting the livelihood of inheritors and solving the problem of the inheritance gap. In short, closely combining intangible cultural heritage with modern technology and market demand is the only way to achieve its sustainable development, and it is also the fundamental strategy for intangible cultural heritage to shine with new brilliance in modern society.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly studies the transformation of intangible cultural heritage using the puppet show as a case. Since most of the intangible cultural heritage is affected by the forms and channels of communication and cannot be promoted on a large scale, it is necessary to consider the film and television of intangible cultural heritage. Is transformation feasible? Through the film and television transformation of Pili Puppet Show in Taiwan, we can see that the simple film and television transformation is not a successful transformation. This transformation has achieved some results during the period of traditional television communication, but it has become more advanced. In the new media era, a situation of "acclimatization" quickly emerged. From the transformation of puppet show, we can understand that the transformation of film and television cannot fundamentally solve the problem of dissemination of intangible cultural heritage.

Due to the changes in communication platforms in the new media era and the shift of communication themes downwards, the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage such as puppetry has become more convenient, but its disadvantages are also obvious. Intangible cultural heritage has a threshold for the theme of communication, and for communication The cultural literacy requirements are very high. From the spread of Puppetry, we can understand that the disadvantages of Puppetry in the transformation of the new era are that it has limited its own communication platform like the traditional Puppetry in the past, and has not truly transformed in the new media era. , and a large part of the reason is that companies related to a specific intangible cultural heritage, such as puppetry, have not promoted in the new media era, but only let fans carry out spontaneous promotions or tidbits that span a long time and are not of very high quality. This is detrimental to the intangible cultural heritage culture itself. Intangible cultural heritage culture such as puppetry has a profound cultural heritage, so it can exist for such a long time. However, in the era of mass microphones such as new media, the limitations of communication media and communication platforms To change, intangible cultural heritage must promote itself. Problems can be overcome slowly, but what is most needed is to take the first step, let the public see it, gradually change it, and finally let our country's beautiful intangible cultural heritage rejuvenate.

References

- [1] Guan Jing. Research report on the implementation of Fujian Puppetry Successor Talent Training Plan—Protection and inheritance of Zhangzhou Bag Puppetry [J]. *Heritage and Protection Research*, 2018, 3(9):98-102.
- [2] Wang Hongfei. Research on the creative transformation and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage from the perspective of consumer culture [J]. *Creative Design Source*, 2021(1):21-27.
- [3] Shen Yiling, Wu Xinyuan. Analysis on the development strategies of Fujian and Taiwan puppet theater industries in the context of new media [J]. *Journal of Minnan Normal University: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition*, 2021, 35(3): 43-52.
- [4] Shang Changmin. Analysis of the image of martial arts in Taiwan's puppet show [J]. *Research on Fujian and Taiwan Culture*, 2021(3):89-100.