

How Rustic Videos Influence Youth's Linguistic Expression: An Analysis Based on Semiotics, Meme Theory and Media Spectacle Theory

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Abstract

The surge in popularity of rustic videos has spawned a great number of Internet memes, such as Internet trendy words growing from dialects and strange pronunciations, picture memes made from video screenshots, and mesmerizing music with a vernacular flavor. Due to their reproducibility, social interaction, and involvement, these rustic videos adhere to the fundamental logic of the propagation of online memes. Rustic videos are widely disseminated as online memes on TikTok (the Chinese version), are often reproduced and used by young people in social contact, and have become a unique linguistic symbol in modern internet culture. As a symbolic carrier that transports the consciousness of the video creator and viewer, it is widely employed in the communication and engagement of young people on a regular basis, progressively altering their linguistic expression. This specific semiotic interaction has deconstructed and recreated the conventional media culture spectacle. This research examines the influence of rustic videos on TikTok on the linguistic expressions of modern youth from the perspectives of meme theory and semiotics, as well as the impact of rustic videos on the media spectacle from the standpoint of media spectacle theory. It also examines in depth the effects of the popularity of rustic videos on China's economy and culture.

Keywords

Rustic Videos, Linguistic Expression, Semiotics, Meme, Media Spectacle

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The dissemination mechanisms and interaction rules of short videos have bro-

ken the traditional spatiotemporal structure of video culture, aligning with the current aesthetic trends of diversity and deconstruction in society. New media empowerment has allowed a vast number of rural internet users to regain the power of visibility, transforming rural areas into new content production scenes through media representation.

In this context, short video content creators representing rural netizens have gained significant attention. Their “rustic videos” have quickly gained popularity, becoming culturally engaging and participating in the construction of urban-rural discourse systems. This has greatly enhanced the “visibility” of rural life scenes, increasing the interaction between urban and rural cultural spaces, and leading to the widespread phenomenon of “rustic culture.”

Network slang, emoticons, and catchy music derived from rustic videos spread through social and emotional bonds, and through everyday communication channels such as TikTok. These elements have become tools for everyday communication among internet users, even altering the language expressions of young people. Rustic videos have become a medium for transmitting cultural information between people, gradually expanding into a shared social phenomenon. The spread of rustic videos aligns with the true “key logic” of internet culture: sociability, replicability, and participation. According to Claudia Leigh, memes utilize the participatory potential of the internet and represent modern popular culture. In this sense, rustic videos can be defined as internet memes [1].

On the other hand, since rustic videos often depict rural life scenes with exaggerated and humorous styles, sometimes mixed with regional dialects and Mandarin or English, they present a unique “local landscape” of small towns. These videos are labeled with the symbolic tag of “rustic” [2]. “Rustic” first appeared in 2017, initially representing the urban-rural dichotomy as a significant social and cultural content, where rural culture was overshadowed by urban popular culture [3]. This situation faced the risk of being assimilated by mainstream culture and dissolved by commercial discourse [4].

Some scholars believe that the development of consumer society leads to “self-alienation” among marginalized farmers, causing value loss, behavioral deviance, and overconsumption in today’s empowered internet age [5]. The author thinks that rustic videos attract wide attention partly because they form a reference system for the aesthetic psychological contrast between urban and rural residents, where more people regard “rustic” as a new trend and measure “rustic culture” as an aesthetic standard. Additionally, the contrasting emotions of escape and longing between urban noise and rural tranquility make the countryside a new cultural scene that urban people yearn for to relieve stress and relax. It represents a deconstruction and reconstruction of the traditional media cultural landscape.

1.2. Purpose

To summarise and assess the influence of rustic videos on TikTok on the language of today’s youth and the significance of this phenomenon in the social context, a comprehensive investigation of how TikTok influences our language

in a manner distinct from other social media [6].

1.3. Research Question

This research will examine how rustic videos on TikTok influence the linguistic expressions of modern youth from the perspectives of meme theory and semiotics, and the effect of the changing linguistic expressions of youth on the media spectacle from the standpoint of media spectacle theory.

1.4. Hypothesis and Theory

The transmission method and interaction rules of short videos have shattered the Spatio-temporal framework of traditional video culture, which is consistent with the current society's diversified and deconstructed aesthetic trend. The new media have enabled the majority of rural netizens to regain the ability to be seen, and the mediated presentation of space has transformed the countryside into a new site for content creation. In this context, short video content producers, represented by rural netizens from all over the world, have gradually attracted the attention of an increasing number of people. Their rustic videos have become entertaining and lifelike cultural content that participates in constructing urban and rural discourse systems, thereby significantly enhancing the visibility of rural life scenes. This has expanded the connection and trade between urban and rural cultural places, resulting in the emergence of a popular "rustic culture" in contemporary society. The Internet's trendy words, memes, and catchy music produced from rustic videos have expanded through social and emotional relationships, as well as through social media channels such as TikTok, a daily communication tool for internet users that have altered the verbal expression of young people. It has evolved into a broader societal phenomenon. According to Claudia Leigh, Memes leverage the participation capacity of the Internet and represent the mainstream of contemporary culture [1]. Internet's changing participative nature is revealed via memes [7]. Rustic videos are disseminated following the Internet's actual "key logic": sociality, reproducibility, and involvement; thus, they might be considered Internet memes.

Due to the fact that the genre of rustic videos is predominately based on rural life scenes, with exaggerated and playful styles, even in Mandarin with local dialects and English with dialect accents, presenting the distinctive characteristics of rural life is essential "This type of video depicts the "local landscape" of the countryside and has been labeled as "rustic" [2]. In 2017, the urban-rural split became a significant sociocultural expression, even as rural culture was eclipsed by metropolitan pop culture, it is in danger of being assimilated into mainstream culture and destroyed by commercial rhetoric [4]. The evolution of consumer society and new media has resulted in the "self-alienation" of impoverished peasants who participate in the formation of new life conditions [5]. On the one hand, the reference system between "rustic" and "trendy" has developed a spiritual and cultural aesthetic psychology of urban and rural dwellers, with an in-

creasing number of individuals viewing “rustic” as a new aesthetic trend. On the other hand, as an antithesis to popular society, rustic videos offer people a fresh cultural scene. Unwittingly, the subjects of these videos destroy the existing media spectacle and restructure it into a “new” universe with limitless possibilities.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Meme Theory in Digital Media

The concept of meme theory, introduced by Dawkins [8], elucidates the mechanisms by which cultural units propagate through the processes of imitation and modification. TikTok’s rustic videos serve as digital memes, utilising humour and exaggeration to generate easily reproducible and shareable material. The unique regional languages and exaggerated rustic characteristics depicted in these movies gain widespread popularity as cultural icons, promoting a feeling of camaraderie and shared amusement among viewers [9]. Shifman argues that the interactive nature of internet platforms such as TikTok contributes to the spreading and development of memes, making them even more deeply ingrained in the cultural landscape [9].

2.2. Semiotics in Short Videos

Semiotics, the discipline that examines signs and symbols, offers a structured approach to analysing the way in which rural movies communicate significance. The distinctive cultural symbols and behaviours portrayed in these videos serve as indicators that convey underlying cultural narratives. The local dialects and humour function as linguistic and comedic devices that viewers decipher in order to comprehend the writers’ viewpoints and stances about rural life [10]. This semiotic process improves the genuineness and connection of the content, hence increasing its appeal to the audience. Shifman argues that memes have a high likelihood of going viral due to their semiotic complexity, as seen by the popularity of rural videos [9].

2.3. Theory of Media Spectacle

Media spectacle theory, as described by Kellner, analyses the process by which media events gain importance as cultural phenomenon [11]. The rustic videos on Douyin generate a media spectacle through the dramatisation of rural life and the captivation of the public with their exaggerated manner. These recordings exert a significant impact on current media culture by establishing new patterns and moulding the way the public views rural life [12]. Kellner asserts that media spectacles play a dual role in both mirroring and influencing society ideals [11]. Rustic videos achieve this by accentuating the allure and wit of rural culture, thereby subverting narratives that prioritise urban perspectives.

2.4. Rustic Videos

TikTok has become a forum for daily online communication, and many teens

are among its 680 million users in China alone [13]. In recent years, a “rustic culture” trend has emerged on TikTok, with a big number of young people from rural areas producing short videos showing rural life in weird costumes, exaggerated performances, and unusual pronunciations, attracting a large audience. Funny pictures and catchphrases derived from these rustic videos have been widely distributed and repeated by TikTok users, permeating daily life and gradually influencing the language expressions of contemporary youth. How do rustic videos influence youth expressions? How about the media logic underlying them, and the media environment as a cultural phenomenon? What role does the altering media landscape play in rural China’s economic and cultural development? These are the primary themes of our study.

The author asserts that TikTok, as a social media platform, provides a venue for the broadcast of rustic videos; nevertheless, research into how rustic videos influence the language expression of contemporary youth must take into account the cultural significance inherent in rustic videos. In Chinese culture, the mass circulation of rustic videos has transformed them from a form of entertainment into a cultural phenomenon. After analysing these TikTok videos accounts, the author feels that rustic videos have become a sort of meme and unique linguistic symbols. Users of TikTok use these memes and symbols to engage in social interactions and to generate new memes and symbols with specific meanings for these social behaviours. The author will analyse, from the perspective of internet memes theory and symbolic interaction theory, how and why rustic videos influence the verbal expression of contemporary adolescents. In this analysis, the author believes that rustic films as a cultural phenomenon influence not only the linguistic expression of young people, but also the traditional media spectacle and the rural economics and aesthetics. Consequently, the author uses media spectacle theory to comment on this phenomenon.

In China, research on rustic videos has concentrated on three issues over the past five years: the cultural causes for the growth of rustic videos, the distribution mechanism of rustic videos, and the cultural compartmentalisation inherent in the videos. YangPing argues that rustic videos are a way for the underclass to gain societal attention, that they have achieved self-construction through halter native symbolic actions such as smart hiphop and Meipai Shake, and that they have used the dissemination of rustic videos to accumulate cultural capital and gain social power in order to remedy the group dissonance caused by social class and status disparity [14]. Chen Yawei believes, from the standpoint of media use, that the emergence of short videos has opened new chances for the peasant class and that the easy-to-use function of short videos has provided them with unparalleled expressive power [15]. From the perspective of cultural consumption, the division between rural youth and the culturally dominant class is spreading on the Internet in the form of a “stigmatization chain,” with the culturally dominant class adopting an attitude of rejection and disdain towards the fundi vision, and preferring to view it with an attitude of ugliness, curiosity, and playfulness, thereby obscuring the online cultural identity of rural youth. As a

result, rural youth's online cultural identity is perpetually shadowed by stereotypes, and the various cultural interests in online space even rise to the level of class conceptions [16].

The author argues that rural youth, born and raised in the countryside, are at a disadvantage compared to the urban population in terms of their social and educational backgrounds, and that the cultural habits they generate and the interests they develop are distinct from those of the urban population. Furthermore, due to their lack of cultural capital, they must rely on their unique way of creating rustic spectacles to attract social attention. They reveal their identities using TikTok and other forms of digital media. Behind these rustic videos are the producers' sentiments and values in response to the current social situation, and the construction of rustic videos images reflects the various social mindset of the group in response to the conflict between ideals and realities.

The majority of study on rustic videos has focused on analysing the phenomena from the standpoint of media communication and culture, according to a review of the relevant literature. Several Chinese researchers have also attempted to analyse the connotation and transmission process of rural videos as a meme [17]. Zhang Yudong and Lang Chao viewed short videos of rural life as a semi-otic representation of media spectacle [18]. However, the symbolic value of rustic videos and their influence on the mediated spectacle remain at the level of phenomenon description, and the research on the symbolic interactive meaning of rustic videos and the cultural significance of media spectacle is almost blank.

Moreover, as the Chinese version of TikTok is a unique social media platform, and as rustic videos are an emergent video style peculiar to Chinese culture, there are few research and analyses of rustic videos conducted outside of China. Therefore, the author can only compile and evaluate the few literature available. The author examines how rustic videos influence the linguistic expressions of young TikTok users and the impact of rustic videos on media spectacle by merging theories of memes, symbolic interaction, and media spectacle to address the gaps in existing research. It also explores the effects of the rustic videos boom on rural economic development. It is also essential to analyse if the excitement of today's young for rustic culture as depicted in rustic videos represents cultural fusion or cultural separation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Methodology

The research group spent a month observing and analysing the video accounts online in order to comprehend the type of video content and the daily shooting behaviour of rustic videos, as well as the attitude of video viewers towards rustic videos and the imitation and use of trendy words and funny pictures derived from rustic videos. This study uses participant observation to observe in-depth the selected video accounts, with number of followers, activity, and geography serving as sample selection criteria, and it selects video kinds that provide pre-

dictively informative persons, places, and circumstances.

3.2. Selection of the Platform for the Release of Local Videos

In order to obtain first-hand empirical data, we began observing and recording information related to rustic videos in September 2022. We chose the TikTok (Chinese version) short video platform because, as the most influential short video platform today, it has a large number of users, a low barrier to entry, is mature and stable, and can quickly transform ordinary people into influencers.

3.3. Sample Selection Criteria

The research group began by tracking 10 rustic video accounts through daily observation and practise, focusing on the local culture, theme style, groovy aspect of the videos, exaggerated material, characters featured in the videos, story structure, narrative form, music genre, etc. In addition, researchers focused on the fans' remarks, the important favourable or negative comments, and the emotional tendency of the most popular comments.

According on the type of video content, the ten video accounts were categorised as follows: humorous segments, nostalgic recollections, culinary production, life records, family dramas, talent displays, exaggerated performances, and grassroots stories. The video accounts must be current, have a consistent update frequency, and have a minimum amount of followers, as well as have at least one type of video topic. The research group then analysed the content of the daily videos they posted, compared the style of the videos, and compared the differences in the "local flavor" of the videos before selecting four video accounts based on their regional features and themes.

During the tracking and participant observation, we discovered that the sorts of videos, such as food production, life records, and nostalgic memories, are somewhat similar and intertwined, and that the stated themes are pretty consistent and not widely dispersed. Therefore, we selected the most representative sorts of rustic videos, such as humorous portions, over-the-topper formances, and talent shows. The study discovered that the videos contain a significant amount of local dialects and customs, and that many of the recommended videos are from the same city. These four videomakers hail from Northeast China, Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong, respectively, as shown in **Figure 1**.

3.4. Analysis Process

The collection of data occurred between 20 September 2022 and 25 October 2022. The data comprised the number of video account followers, the number of likes, comments, and retweets of popular videos, the attitude of fan comments, and the creation of videos under relevant hashtags and topic keywords. The research utilised participant observation and data analysis to collect rich empirical material, and combined data analysis platforms and specific theories to demonstrate how the trendy words and funny images generated in rustic videos influence viewers' linguistic expressions and effect the media spectacle.

| 土味视频生产者R Rustic Video Producers | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 账号Account | 编号Number | 性别Gender | 粉丝数Number of followers | 视频类型Video type | 所在地Location | 相关标签Related tags | 标签视频播放量Tagged video plays |
| 多余和毛无姐1 | 1 | 男Male | 2927.4million | 搞笑段子、男扮女装 Funny Jokes, Men dressing as Women | 贵州 Guizhou | #好嗨哦 #haohaio | 5.17 billion views |
| 云南德德德小伙 | 2 | 男Male | 13.6million | 才艺展示、夸张表演 Talent show, exaggerated performance | 云南 Yunnan | 云南山歌 #Yunnan Mountain So | 13.33 billion views |
| 五十岚上夏 | 3 | 男Male | 336.3million | 搞笑段子、男扮女装 Funny Jokes, Men dressing as Women | 上海 Shanghai | #岚语 #Lanyu | 1.41 billion views |
| Teacher Liu | 4 | 男Male | 290.9million | 才艺展示Talent show | 广西 Guangxi | #拴Q #Shuan Q | 10.13 billion views |

Figure 1. Sample information sheet for producers of rustic videos.

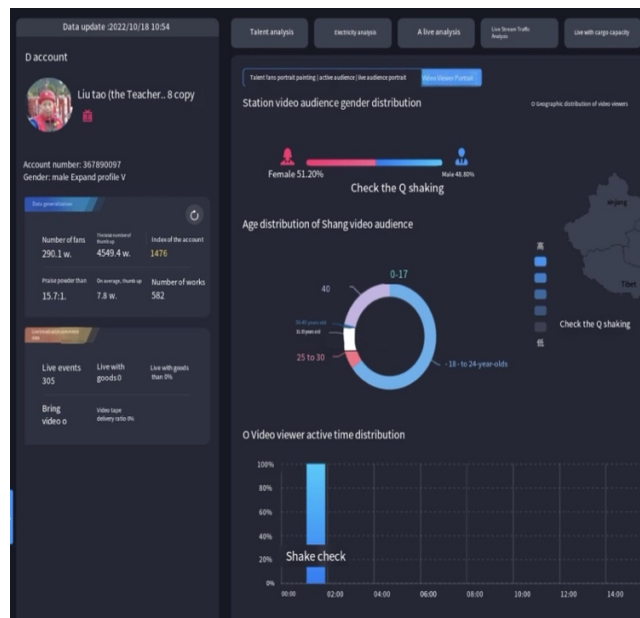


Figure 2. Overview of teacher Liu’s account.

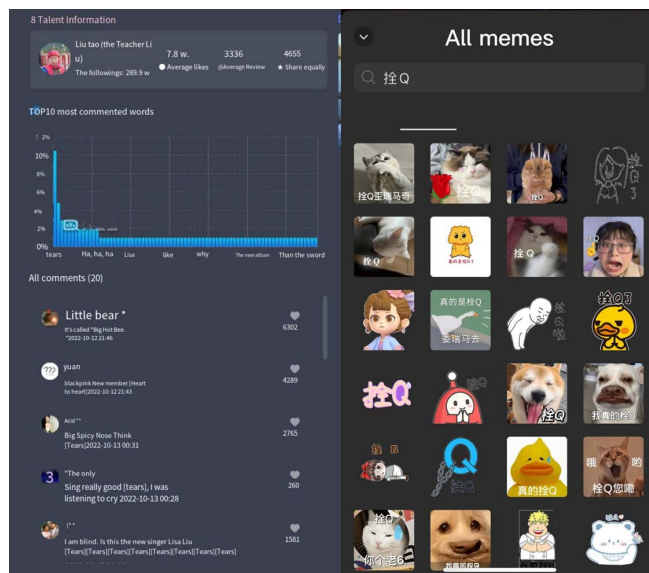


Figure 3. Top 10 comments on teacher Liu’s video (left) & “Shuan Q” memes (right).



Figure 4. TikTok trending words cloud map.



Figure 5. Influence index of Duoyu & Maomao sister.

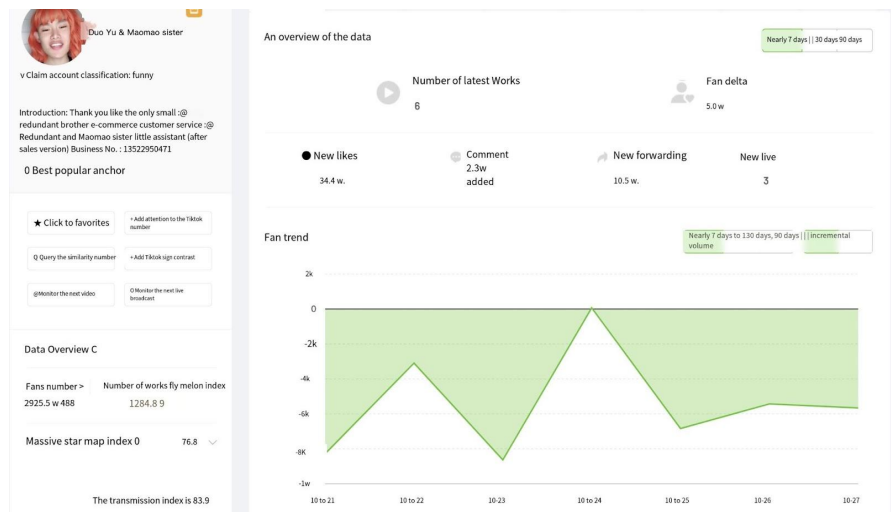


Figure 6. Overview of Duoyu & Maomao sister's account.

4. Results

4.1. Rustic Videos as Memes

In 1976, Dawkins initially suggested the concept of Meme. In his book *The Selfish Gene*, he suggested the presence of a gene-like unit in cultural evolution, the

Meme, which replicates and spreads across the brains of many hosts. The essence of a meme is imitation, in which replicating components in a given culture selectively add or delete new variables to sustain propagation during mimicry, such that replicating factors can be viewed as memes [8].

Genes support biological evolution through replication and competition, and memes also propagate through replication and imitation [17]. Teacher Liu, a rustic video creator, promotes his hometown in English with Guilin accents in his videos, and his rendition of “Row Your Boat” has become a brain washing song that is repeated by a large number of TikTok users (Figure 2). His “ShuanQ” (thank you) spoken with a Guilin accent has also become a trendy word, used to denote speechlessness and irony (Figure 3). In the process of replication and transmission, the rustic videos undergo four stages: assimilation, memorisation, expressiveness, and dissemination. Cultural memes are continuously on the lookout for “Hosts” in the population through whom they can replicate and spread. Members of subcultures have their own distinct, personal methods of participating in main stream culture, but youth alternative cultures are fundamentally geared to spotlight and express individuals [17]. The hosts of rustic videos are the new generation of young people in rural and small towns who communicate their lives and emotions using rustic language and exaggerated expressions, thus obtaining greater attention and notoriety. This attention and acceptance, according to social psychologist Cooley’s “mirror self” hypothesis, is not based on what people really say about them, but on what they expect others to say about them [19]. This is because the new generation, particularly rural youth with a rural-urban contradiction, is seeking identification in the midst of identity confusion, which is also an expression of their reflection on their own class identity. Thus, rustic videos were activated by the social requirements of the new generation, noticed, identified, chosen, and accepted by their hosts, and widely reproduced and distributed.

Memes illustrate what communication researcher Henry Jenkins refers to as the ever-changing Internet involvement. In the same way that genes mutate when they are replicated, cultural transmissions are not the exact replication of memes from one person to another, but rather their continual modification, recombination, and reconstruction [7]. “Viral videos” are widespread phenomena on the internet; “modal videos” stimulate the participation of a wide range of creative users in the form of parodies, collages, mashups or other derivative works [20]. Rustic videos are both “viral videos” and “modal videos”. Take Teacher Liu’s “Row your boat” as an example; because to its extremely dialectal English pronunciation, it was commented on, liked, and retweeted by users and went viral on TikTok, becoming a popular video that the majority of users actively or passively viewed. The widespread propagation of “Row your boat” has led to the formation of a hashtag for its Chinese homophonic by 156,000 TikTok users. As the videos travelled, they were rebuilt in the minds of their new hosts. The low threshold of the internet has allowed more rural internet users to have

access to online discourse, and they are involved in the construction of memes based on the original cultural memes, providing them fresh content and creativity, resulting in the birth of new elements or memes.

Reproduction and distribution of the rustic videos have a social function. Individuals routinely utilize memes to interact online, and Internet users frequently use them to respond to one other on social networking sites and other online forums [21]. Because they are posted, shared, and constantly modified to generate fresh content for expressing emotions or viewpoints, rustic videos have become a common linguistic act in users' daily social interactions. For instance, the number 1 creator's catchphrase "haohaio" has been used by Internet users to convey happiness and excitement, and Teacher Liu, who pronounced "no" as "lou" because of his accent, has been imitated by TikTok users and made into memes to be used when rejecting someone or opposing something (Figure 4). According to Milner, media engagement networks use memes as multimeme artefacts (integration of pictures and files) to tell jokes, make observations, and advance arguments [22]. Rustic video is utilised as a social medium to facilitate communication between online users.

The distribution of rustic videos conforms to the fundamental logic of the replicability, participation, and sociality of online culture, as defined by Limor-Schifman as "the transmission of a textual message from one person to another, but which gradually expands into a shared social phenomenon" [23]. Through widespread reproduction and redistribution, the rustic video is not only disseminated among the new generation of young people in rural areas and small towns, but it is also gradually comprehended, accepted, and shared by society as a whole, establishing a social consensus and social identity. This social representation, in turn, influences the groups residing within it, influencing our linguistic expressions, as well as our thoughts and behaviours, through the cultural force of its society.

4.2. Unique Linguistic Symbols

Linguistic symbols are an essential means of cultural expression, and language is an act of advocacy or resistance against the dominant ideology [15]. In contrast to the top-down discursive system produced by mainstream culture, rustic videos have always been distinct from mainstream culture. Teenage TikTok users are building a new textual system and linguistic symbol for rustic videos. Language, words, sounds, objects, and situations, which all fall under the category of symbols, refer to specific things or express specific meanings [24]. The communicator uses symbols to create meaning, while the recipient interprets them to comprehend meaning. For example, Duoyu & Maomao sister formed his unique image symbols through his red wig, fans retweeted and shared his videos to express their appreciation of his video content, and fans imitated his Guizhou accented catchphrase "haohaio" to express their excitement or emotions. Eventually, "haohaio" became a linguistic symbol. The symbols made by the video publisher through the act of publishing are accepted by the viewer, who also

creates symbols to interact with the publisher, and the symbols are propagated and enriched by the interaction of many users (Figure 5). On the one hand, the creators of rustic videos employ their exaggerated system of symbols to establish a strong sense of self, achieving a cathartic release from aphasia through performance. On the other hand, viewers of rustic videos develop a rustic symbol system to express feelings or emphasise their personal uniqueness. As more users upload or view videos, they are in fact exchanging emotions or engaging in emotional experiences through the symbols they produce, thereby completing the connection. These user activities are symbolic exchanges whose symbolic significance can be interpreted.

In the virtual social scene generated by TikTok, the various types of behaviour in rustic videos are employed as cultural symbols with distinct meanings to express the content of the videos and so establish a spiritual connection with the audience. In order to affirm their existence, humans must discover the meaning of existence; hence, symbols are a necessary requirement for human existence [25]. The unique mode of symbolic interaction presented by rustic videos under the short video system of TikTok is precisely what young people are seeking in terms of existence's meaning, and in the rapidly evolving online short video market of the present day, rustic videos can attract the attention of the majority of people and resonate with them. Duoyu & Maomao sister present women's daily lives, including shopping, weight reduction, and getting along with their boyfriends, in a simple comedic format, which provides many female viewers with a strong sense of identification and empathy. This sense of empathy and identification provides creators and viewers of videos a sense of purpose. Duoyu & Maomao sisters create a symbolic meaning in the interactive act of transmitting the video's message, and the fans validate this symbol through interactive activities such as liking, commenting, retweeting, and sharing, so spreading the video's reach, as shown in Figure 6. Consequently, the Guizhou dialect and iconic catchphrases included in the videos of Duoyu & Maomao sisters are observed and mimicked by an increasing number of individuals, progressively affecting the language expression of the youth.

4.3. Dissolution and Reconstruction of Media Spectacle

As a symbolic system, the rustic video is one of the most prominent external representations of the mediated spectacle, which is a presented visible spectacle, but also signifies a subjective, conscious performance and show [12]. Kellner defines a media spectacle as "a media culture phenomena that can represent the fundamental principles of contemporary society, guide individuals to adapt to modern lifestyles, and dramatise tensions and solutions in contemporary society" [11]. As a representative of rustic culture, rustic videos have gradually become an online place for the definition of rural identity and cultural identification in the new media environment, demolishing and reconstructing the urban-dominated traditional media spectacle. Viewers of rural rustic videos are

primarily motivated by disgusting amusement and curiosity [4]. The torn clothing, impoverished dwellings, bad performances, and crude comedic sequences depicted in the videos serve as sources of amusement for viewers. The authors of the video introduce the off-screen audience to a new, unexpected environment of daily living. The contrast between urban and rural youth becomes the centre of attention in this media extravaganza. Even while the media contact between creators and viewers of rural life videos is based on personal needs, it nonetheless dismantles the shackles of the everyday media spectacle and becomes an attempt to combat it [18]. Moreover, the rustic video achieves a revolt against the original environment by employing ideology itself in the shape of a self-referential alternative way and negating the materialized urban life [26]. This resembles an ironic parody in that it employs direct quotations or exact imitations of the original “piece” to generate a strong suggestion of irony, conveying the opposite message, subverting the original mainstream concept, and reconstructing the traditional media spectacle.

As a meeting ground for grassroots and commoner subcultural groups of the anti-elite class, the rustic environment created by the rustic videos has the appearance of alternative. The rural countryside atmosphere depicted in rustic videos is drastically dissimilar to the urban consumerism and life scenes. When such landscapes appear on the TikTok screens of urban audiences, it is in some ways a departure from the normal experience of the essentially materialized metropolitan landscape. The large geographic difference might be interpreted as a contrast between the comparable content and diverse environments of rural and urban mainstream lifestyles. Through each shot, a psychological awareness of breaking away from the current mainstream landscape is stimulated, and the concept of anti-commercialisation and anti-urbanisation, a subversion of the mainstream, is conveyed invisibly, signifying a reconfiguration of the mainstream media spectacle.

5. Discussion

5.1. Impact on Society: It Promotes Rural Economic Development

With the advent of rustic video, more and more villagers are depicting rural life and the vernacular through short videos and other kinds of new media. They supervise the development of rural culture, promote rural civilisation, and rejuvenate the sustainable growth of the rural economy via new media platforms. According to the Statistics, report on the Development Status of China’s Internet, as of June 2021, the scale of Chinese rural Internet users was 297 million, the scale of online retail of agricultural products reached 208.82 billion yuan, and the coverage rate of national township express network reached 98%, driving the development of the rural economy and consumption of agricultural products [27]. The ongoing growth of rural Internet users has infused short video platforms with a rustic culture rich in vernacular character. Farmers’ self-media, short movies, and live endorsements have transformed the Internet’s cultural

ecology into a new terrain. The rural video has effectively mobilised public memory and understanding of actual life by capturing people's homesickness and their plain, nostalgic reality [28]. The rural life captured on camera connects with modern youth and piques the interest of the next generation of TikTok users. Through data analysis, we discovered that the relationship between the distribution of rural video and the commercial mechanism converts cultural resources and output into economic capital.

The rural scenery can be exhibited to urban consumers through the influence of earthy videos, so stimulating the development of local tourism. For instance, Teacher Liu became a tourism ambassador for Guilin after his Guilin-style English attracted urban followers to go there. Therefore, he has become a new cultural monument in Guilin. Many have even sought him out to create videos. On the other hand, the rural video has become a bridge between the countryside and the city, providing easier marketing channels for local agricultural products and enhancing their market compatibility. People learn about the current state of rural areas far from the city and about local agricultural products through rustic videos, resulting in increased sales of agricultural products. When the communication factor becomes the actual product, the rustic video is incorporated into the rural industry, paving a new cultural path for assisting farmers in overcoming poverty.

5.2. Thoughts on the Popularity of Rustic Videos: Cultural Segregation or Cultural Integration?

The evolution of rustic videos has not been straightforward, and the general public has a range of perspectives towards this culture. They are sometimes characterised with negative terms such as "vulgar" and "low," yet they are also observed and imitated by youngsters, bridging rural and urban cultural sectors. The author considers whether the prevalence of rustic videos represents cultural integration or cultural divergence from the perspectives of video producers and video viewers, respectively.

On the one hand, consumers of rustic videos can be split into two major groups: heterogeneous and homogenous. Heterogeneous consumers differ from rustic video makers in social standing, life experiences, and language, and are regarded primarily from the outside; homogenous consumers share the same cultural discourse system as rustic video makers [2]. These two groups interpret the verbal symbols offered by rural footage differently. The majority of rustic video viewers openly acknowledge the non-mainstream nature of rustic video, which is likewise distinct from society's dominant culture. There is a degree of interest in both urban and rural culture. When the difference is too great, it creates the aesthetic judgement of Discriminatory appreciation, hence the popularity of rustic videos is a sort of cultural divergence.

On the other hand, the production and transmission of rustic videos are results of the emotional structure of contemporary society and is unique to this era. Modern people's nostalgia, the psychology of social comparison, and the

psychology of depreciating oneself are the three most prominent features of the rural video's socioemotional structure [29]. People who departed the hometown in the early 1980s and late 1990s are disproportionately affected by nostalgia. These viewers' collective nostalgia for country life is evoked by the extravagant acts in the rustic videos. Social comparison psychology is primarily expressed in viewers who seek balance by comprehending the living conditions of rural residents. Most individuals must compare themselves to others in order to be certain of their self-evaluation. There is another sort of self-negative psychology that degrades oneself, and in this state, the content that attracts them primarily seeks their attention by demeaning themselves. The self-negative emotional structure in the transmission of rustic videos reflects the discriminatory appreciation mentality of many people [29]. From the perspective of affective structure, consumers of rustic videos watch videos to satisfy their emotional demands, not because they identify with the content.

The majority of rustic video's creators reside in third- or fourth-tier cities or rural areas. As "Internet natives," young people are profoundly influenced by Internet culture, and their style of thinking and notions represent their individualism and rebelliousness more accurately [29]. On the short video platform, they express their cultural identity among the local community through rustic videos. Based on this sense of identity, people are willing to exhibit the public their hometowns, lives, and cultures. Rustic videos shape the rural "sense of place," which is people's experience and perception of rural society, by forming the media landscape. Rustic videos are unique symbol based on emotional engagement that conveys this sense of individual identity in relation to the local environment. Although the symbolic landscapes generated by the creators of rustic videos in the vernacular sector differ greatly from the mainstream symbolic landscapes in the urban market, the evolution of media technology has steadily blurred this urban-rural border and symbolic distinctions. The evolution of society causes the urban individual's memory of the vernacular to become more disorganised and hazy, while the production, fermentation, and dissemination of rustic videos stimulate the viewer's identification with the vernacular culture.

6. Conclusion

Rustic videos have been widely shared via the internet memes to build a unique cultural system that has altered the linguistic expression of current youth, destroyed and reassembled the media spectacle through symbolic interaction. Rustic videos have become a part of people's life in 2022, and as an internet meme, they utilise the replicability, participation, and social logic of internet culture to affect the linguistic expression of users through mass replication. Through the four stages of assimilation, memorisation, expression, and dissemination, rustic videos have evolved into a unique type of linguistic symbol, generating special symbolic meanings in people's daily interactions and being used to refer to spe-

cific things, describe specific meanings, and express specific emotions and feelings. The rustic video is one of the most evident exterior systems of the media spectacle due to its unique symbolic system. As a representation of rural culture, rustic videos are an alternate kind of young subculture. By depicting aspects of rural life, it creates a cultural spectacle that is distinct from the metropolitan norm. People's long-held, ingrained ideas are shattered by the stark contrast, and the old media spectacle is progressively deconstructed and reconstructed.

The proliferation of rustic videos has fostered rural economic growth. The extensive distribution of rustic videos has enabled more people to comprehend the existing situation in rural areas, created new avenues for assisting farmers and reducing poverty, and fostered the growth of rural tourism and the selling of rural goods. Rustic videos, as a non-mainstream subculture, have broken through the public's established aesthetic tendencies, and their alternative creation has deconstructed the conventional media culture. The non-mainstream video symbols convey visual pleasure, satisfy people's curiosity, and form aesthetic discriminatory appreciation under the cultural interest segmentation, and create a peculiar media reputation under the social emotion structure, causing an increasing number of people to pay attention to rural culture through rustic videos and form individual cultural identity of the local community. Only the transmission and reception of rustic videos have been interpreted in this study. How to create a cultural form that satisfies the aesthetic interests of the public in both urban and rural areas, how to plan and develop its own communication properties, and how to utilise the symbolic value of rustic culture will be the focus of future research in the field of vernacular video.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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