

Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies of Japanese Anime--Taking “Demon Slayer: Blade” as an Example

Shiyuan Wang

College of Humanities, Jiangnan University, Wuhan, Hubei, 430000, China
wangshiyuan48@gmail.com

Abstract:

The development of technology has promoted cultural exchange, and cultures of different countries also learn from each other through communication. But for China, the development and dissemination of Chinese comics are relatively backward. Although the overall trend of the development of Chinese animation is good, there are still problems such as slow dissemination and a shortage of high-quality anime. This article takes “*Demon Slayer: Blade*” as an example to analyze the dissemination strategy of Japanese anime in China. This article analyzes how ‘*Demon Slayer Blade*’ integrates visual symbols such as a kimono with universal emotions such as family, achieves cultural symbol reconstruction, and triggers global resonance. With the cooperation of platforms such as Tencent Video and Bilibili, as well as cross-media linkage and secondary creative incentives, it has successfully broken through the circle. Exquisite animation production and cross-border IP linkage, building a cultural consumption ecology that is deeply rooted in daily life. This article proposes the following suggestions for the Chinese animation industry: strengthen the content foundation and integrate local culture with universal emotions. Innovate the digital communication matrix and user co-creation mechanism to further expand the influence of animation. Build a full chain IP development and operation system, and strive to create an international IP.

Keywords: *Demon Slayer Blade*; IP; semiology

1. Introduction

In recent years, the cross-cultural dissemination of Japanese anime in China has become a hot topic, and its successful path stems from the adaptability of

cultural dissemination strategies, as well as mature industrial ecology and innovative marketing models. Japanese anime has achieved deep penetration into the Chinese market through precise marketing strategies and multicultural integration, forming a vast sur-

rounding economic ecosystem centered around IP. In the current era of digital media development, ‘Demon Slayer’ has adopted various dissemination strategies in China.

Currently, research is exploring the successful experience of Japanese anime from multiple dimensions, such as cultural strategy, semiotics, and industrial mechanisms. Japan and China both belong to the East Asian region, and there are relatively few cultural exchange barriers between the two countries. Therefore, the dissemination of Japanese anime in China itself has certain advantages. Some studies suggest that Japanese anime achieves cross-cultural adaptation through the diverse fusion of cultural symbols. Taking “Dragon Ball” as an example, this anime absorbs the core values of Chinese and American cultures, adopts a decentralized strategy, and constructs a common meaning space of high context culture [1]. Zeng Yuxuan analyzed “The *Demon Slayer Blade*” based on semiotic theory, emphasizing the role of symbols such as characters, costumes, and scenes in conveying the aesthetics of “material sorrow” and the spirit of martial arts. She proposed that the balance between “locality” and “worldliness” is the key to cultural identity. Japanese anime has a mature industry chain and dissemination strategy [2]. Huang Jianna proposed the “four-dimensional driving mechanism” and pointed out that digital technology empowers content production, platformized communication networks, and the feedback of the production economy to form a group environment [3]. Yan Daocheng used the example of Xinhai-cheng Animation to explore how fan economy and traffic logic can promote the transformation of niche culture to mass communication in the new media environment, and believed that social media and big data technology have reconstructed cross-cultural communication paths [4]. Although many studies have focused on excellent communication strategies, there has been relatively little discussion among audiences.

This article will take the phenomenal work “*Demon Slayer Blade*” as the starting point, analyze its communication strategy from three dimensions: cultural symbols, innovative communication channels, and industrial ecology construction, and explore the reconstruction of communication paths by emerging elements such as virtual idols and user co creation, providing a mirror for the internationalization of domestic animation.

2. Case Analysis

2.1 Cross-Cultural Export Process of the Japanese Anime Industry

The global influence of Japanese anime has not been achieved overnight, and its cross-cultural output has also

undergone significant changes. At first, the world’s earliest animation appeared in the United States, and Japan, influenced by American animation, began to accept and develop this new form of entertainment. The earliest TV anime in Japan, “Astro Boy”, received high ratings immediately after its broadcast in Japan, and was quickly released overseas [5]. Due to the 1960s being a period when television was popular in the United States, watching television became a common way for people to entertain and relax, laying a certain foundation for the dissemination of Japanese anime in the future. A large number of Japanese animations from the same period also appeared on children’s channels in France, the UK, and other regions, promoting cultural exports to Europe.

In the 1990s, with the development of the economy, the animation industry continued to grow and expand. With the efforts of several generations, Japanese anime has gradually formed an art form with its unique style. Different types of anime emerge endlessly, such as fantasy, magic, hot-blooded, mythology, and other genres. Two world-class IPs, Pokémon and Dragon Ball, also emerged at this time. Pokémon is not only spread through anime, but also deeply integrated into people’s lives through media strategies such as console games and card games. At this time, Japan is also implementing the “Cool Japan” national strategy, incorporating anime into cultural diplomacy and helping anime spread globally [6].

Nowadays, the arrival of the streaming media era has made cultural dissemination more convenient. Famous platforms such as Netflix, iQiyi, and Bilibili have purchased different Japanese classic IPs for people to watch. Short video platforms have also helped Japanese anime to further diversify its dissemination, shifting from one-way output to global co-creation.

2.2 Practice of Cases

2.2.1 Cultural symbol strategy

The case study “The Blade of Demonic Destruction” promotes cultural dissemination and confirms Roland Barthes’ theory of symbolic hierarchy through the flexible use of cultural symbols. Cultural symbols, atmosphere, material symbols, and spiritual symbols. Material symbols refer to the tangible and tangible surface manifestations with material forms in the symbol system, and are the objective carriers of cultural meaning [7]. The material symbols in ‘*Demon Slayer Blade*’ are mainly reflected in the characters’ clothing: kimonos, clogs, samurai swords, etc. At the same time, the anime style also uses the ukiyo-e style. The preservation and application of these traditional Japanese elements leave a distinct imprint of local culture on the work, forming a unique visual aesthetic that leaves

a deep first impression on the audience.

Spiritual symbols refer to the internal values, emotions, and ideological core that a work carries and conveys. In 'Demon Slayer', this is reflected in warm subjects such as family ties, team bonds, and protection. For example, as a half ghost, your bean must suppress her blood sucking instincts, but always remember her mission to protect her brother. The power of family love transcends life and death, resists ghosts, and awakens the unconditional attachment and protective desire for family in the heart. In today's high-pressure society, people need some spiritual comfort to resist the hostility in life, and this anime encourages people to believe in the light even in dire situations, acknowledge vulnerability, but not be swallowed up. Inner strength is the true strength. The kimono patterns and ukiyo-e techniques are symbols of Japanese local culture, and the protective behavior of "Midouzi" symbolizes Confucianism's "filial piety" as a carrier of universal emotions. The synergistic cultural discount of the two echoes Hofstede's "cultural dimension theory" of collectivism [2].

2.2.2 Innovative marketing methods for new media

The successful dissemination of 'Demon Slayer' in the Chinese market is attributed to its multidimensional and localized strategic layout. Firstly, platform collaboration and content localization are the core. Tencent Video adopts a differentiated operation. As the main position of anime culture, Station B strengthens fans' stickiness through bullet screen interaction and community discussion, forming a communication loop.

Secondly, cross-media collaboration and incentives for secondary creation further expand their influence. The works produced by the secondary creation of anime IP are also called "Tongren" works. Spontaneous, non-commercial creation among fan groups due to the popularity of the original work [8]. The works stimulate the production of UGC content by encouraging users to create peer works, COSPLAY, and short video clips (such as TikTok, Kwai, and other platforms). The COS craze of domestic artists and fans for characters such as You Douzi and Yan Zhu, as well as the spread of "breathing in the whole collection" on social media, promotes the circle-breaking effect. Tiktok # You Douzi COS # topic has been played more than 200 million times, and the average number of likes of user-defined clips has reached 500000; The number of views for TikTok's "Ghostbusters" videos has exceeded 32 billion, and the number of views for Bilibili's "Ghostbusters" videos has exceeded 30.286 million. In terms of dissemination effect, the average number of views per episode of 'Demon Slayer Blade' on major video platforms exceeds 100 million, with millions of bullet comments, demon-

strating a high level of audience participation and positive feedback. On Bilibili, the discussion volume of related topics has exceeded millions of times, further proving its widespread influence.

When people engage in secondary creation, they will satisfy their own needs. For example, in anime, the ending is not good, but the author may reconstruct the story to make it the author believes a good ending. This unleashes people's subjectivity, and at the same time, the generated secondary creative videos have a profound impact on certain groups. In addition, graphic and textual products are also very popular among many people. People who engage in secondary creation not only attract other like-minded people but also deepen their understanding of this anime, so the dissemination effect is better. The dissemination path of 'Demon Slayer Blade' has shifted from one-way output to multi-dimensional interaction, providing a paradigm reference for the community-based operation of domestic anime.

2.2.3 Construction of industrial ecology

The animation production of 'Demon Slayer' is very exquisite, with many shots using 3D technology, which also brings people an ultimate audio-visual feast. The IP 'Demon Slayer' also has many peripheral derivative products, such as figurines, comic books, picture books, figurines, and so on. It is understood that the Japanese Animation Market Report 2020 shows that commercialization (that is, sales around animation), as a major means of realization in the animation industry, accounted for 25% of the total revenue in 2019, which is far higher than the revenue from TV animation, animated films, disc sales, network broadcasting, etc. Even under the influence of the COVID-19 required retail stores to close down, animated character goods achieved a market scale of 581.9 billion yen, almost the same as in 2019, relying on the amazing popularity of the "Blade of the Ghost" [9]. From core derivative products (figurines) to IP co-branding, "Ghostbusters" integrates elements with daily life, and then advances step by step to cross-border linkage (co-branded drinks, co-branded packages, etc.), appearing in people's hearts at the end of their lives. The success of "ghost extermination economics" confirms the tremendous explosive power of combining high-quality content with refined operations. It not only constructs a matrix of goods but also a cultural consumption ecology that deeply penetrates daily life.

3. Experience and Suggestions

The successful cross-cultural dissemination of 'Demon Slayer' in China and even globally provides a multidi-

mensional mirror for the international development of domestic animation. The core inspiration lies in using high-quality content as the foundation, balancing locality and universality through symbol reconstruction, constructing a multi-platform collaborative digital communication matrix, and creating an IP full chain ecosystem centered on user co-creation. Based on this, this study summarizes some successful experiences and proposes suggestions.

3.1 Integrating Local Culture with Universal Emotions to Create High-Quality Content

Universal emotions are the common spiritual bond of humanity, and even in different countries and cultural backgrounds, people can feel resonance. The work ‘Demon Slayer’ takes ‘guarding’ as the emotional pivot, elevating the ethics of the Eastern family to universal values: Tanjiro carries his ghostly sister, You Douzi, on his journey, surpassing cultural barriers and directly touching humanity’s eternal attachment to family. This creative wisdom of deconstructing national spiritual symbols into universal emotional symbols has enabled works to break through cultural barriers and trigger emotional resonance in more than 40 countries and regions, confirming that emotional resonance is an important factor in cross-cultural communication.

The success of ‘Demon Slayer’ also relies on high-quality content and the use of anime technology. The story is set during the Taisho period in Japan, when a large influx of Western culture occurred. People have become fond of wearing Western clothing, so the characters appearing in anime always appear in a unique combination of kimono and suit, which embodies rich Japanese era elements, traditional architecture, and the presentation of monster culture [10]. This local development strategy enables works to maintain cultural characteristics and evoke emotional resonance among global audiences in cross-cultural communication.

For China’s animation industry, it can learn from the experience of “Demon Slayer”, deeply explore local cultural resources, and integrate traditional costumes, myths and legends, local characteristics, and other elements into the creation of works. By developing locally, creating anime IPs with regional recognition, and enhancing the cultural connotation and market competitiveness of the works. Pursuing better audio-visual effects in technology, integrating traditional art with modern art, and further increasing the attractiveness of works.

3.2 Innovative Digital Communication Matrix and User Co-Creation

In terms of social media operations, the team of ‘Demon

Slayer Blade’ adopts a strategy of ‘layered outreach’. Station B and TikTok are more focused on high-profile clip editing, and WeChat official account is more focused on plot analysis, as well as the impact of this animation on the economy and culture. This differentiated operation not only maintains the popularity of the topic but also avoids information overload. The penetration of offline scenes is also worth learning from. The theme pop-up store in Shanghai Joy City combines anime elements with physical consumption; It has attracted a large number of fans and anime hobby groups. This work also encourages fans to engage in fan creation, cosplay, and short video co-creation by building a user co-creation platform, forming a virtuous cycle of UGC content feeding back IP. This mechanism not only activates audience engagement but also achieves viral dissemination through massive user-generated content.

In the dissemination of anime in China, it can also follow the example of “*Demon Slayer Blade*” by respecting the essence of the original work, restructuring the content presentation through media characteristics, minimizing cultural discounts, accurately reaching audiences, and enhancing the dissemination effect. In the digital media matrix, user content production promotes more forms of dissemination, and conscious guidance and encouragement of user creation can further enhance the dissemination effect. Encourage influential influencers and leverage their role as “opinion leaders” to attract more audiences. Set up challenges, mixed cutting competitions, etc., to encourage secondary creative editing and fan creation, transforming the audience from passive receivers to active co-creators.

3.3 Building the Anime IP Industry Chain

Demon Slayer showcases the paradigm of IP end-to-end development. From animation production to derivative formats such as mobile games, themed restaurants, and co-branded products, each link establishes a deep connection with users. Chinese animation companies need to break the fragmented state of each link in the industry chain and establish a closed-loop ecosystem from content creation to commercial monetization. When Chinese animation is promoted overseas, local creators’ alliances can be established, and overseas painters can be invited to participate in character redesign, which not only maintains the cultural core but also integrates local aesthetic elements to achieve participatory adaptation in cross-cultural communication. This two-way interactive mode will drive Chinese animation to shift from single-point output to ecological symbiosis.

4. Conclusion

Cross-cultural communication needs to balance the locality and universality of cultural symbols, and stimulate communication vitality through technological empowerment and user co-creation. The key to the success of 'Demon Slayer' lies in using UGC as a communication engine, strengthening symbol affinity through secondary creative reconstruction (such as # Youdouzi COS #), and feeding back IP derivative development with secondary creative traffic (such as increasing mobile game downloads), thereby promoting the breaking of niche cultures. The breakthrough path of domestic animation is not to eliminate cultural differences, but to transform differences into attractiveness through the translation of cultural symbols and the use of multiple platforms for precise operation.

References

- [1] Li W. Research on Cross-Cultural Communication of Japanese Anime: A Case Study Based on „Dragon Ball“. *News and Communication*, 2023, (05): 34-36.
- [2] Zeng Y. Research on Cross-Cultural Communication of Japanese Anime from the Perspective of Semiotics. Wuhan Textile University, 2023.
- [3] Huang J. Innovation in the Path of External Communication of Japanese Anime Culture and Industrial Implications. *Popular Literature and Art*, 2025, (08): 130-132.
- [4] Yan D, Xu R. The Mass Transformation and Cross-Cultural Communication of Anime Industry in the New Media Environment: A Case Study of Makoto Shinkai Animation in Japan. *Media Observation*, 2019, (07): 44-51.
- [5] Ni H. Analysis of the Development Path and Current Situation of the Japanese Animation Industry Model: From Osamu Tezuka and Hayao Miyazaki to „*Demon Slayer: Blade*“. *New Chu Culture*, 2024, (24): 56-59.
- [6] Li N, Wang W. Comparative Study on the Development History of Anime between China and Japan. *Chinese and Foreign Art Research*, 2021, (02): 8-16.
- [7] Li Y. (Translate). Roland Barthes' Principles of Semiotics. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2008: 1-4.
- [8] Zhang X. Breaking and Integration: Cultural Decoding of anime IP Localization. *Animation Research*, 2022, (00): 17-21.
- [9] Zhang Z. Research on the Operation of Japanese Anime IP in China. Qingdao University of Science and Technology, 2022.
- [10] Wang Y, Qu M. Research on the Historical Background of the Formation of Democratic Thought during the Taisho Period in Japan. *Science and Technology Communication*, 2020, 12 (06): 26-27.