

Analysis of Online Tweets by Form and Content

-- Li Jinglei Incident as a Case Study

Yunzhuo Li*

The Experimental High School Attached to Beijing Normal University, Beijing, 100124, China

ABSTRACT: In this age of social media, people want to be famous and get more attention. However, some people put their hope in social media to solve their problems by using the characteristics of social media to speak out for themselves or their groups. In this paper, we use Roland Barthes' theory of situation and content to analyze the case of Li Jinglei. This research would be helpful for people to understand how the articles, in this case, attracted readers' attention from the perspective of form and content. This paper found that by using Roland Barthes' theory to analyse online tweets can help people find universal laws on how to get people attention and speak for themselves.

1 Introduction

We live in an era where technological productivity and culture are changing rapidly. Emerging technologies and new media are merging to develop new social software to attract people's attention, such as Weibo and Tiktok. These social and entertainment apps are rapidly filling people's lives and depriving them of most of their energy. Therefore, having traffic on social media platforms means having more likes and comments under the tweets, which means people will have more say and attention. Once a discussion about a socially sensitive topic is posted, people will follow the event on the internet in large numbers. Sending long posts on social media seems to be an easier and faster way to get people's attention and support than the old propaganda method of placing billboards on the roadside to attract people's attention and also a way for capital to manipulate the public opinion. More and more people suffering from persecution or injustice choose to be brave and speak out on social media platforms, using capital and platform traffic to get people's support to get through the difficult times. Posting messages on social media will undoubtedly make people care more about society and those around them. However, at the same time, people may use it to disadvantage the concerned people.

Because of the two-sided nature of the internet, people cannot fully trust the information and evidence on the internet or simple statements, so those who speak out are subject to questioning and abuse, even rising to mental attacks. Therefore, mastering the art of writing articles or understanding the psychology of the public can help them gain much exposure in a short period. Good articles and words can cause readers to empathize with them and thus gain more support. Therefore, people need to learn how to use contemporary technology or the power of words to get

through difficult times. How to get people's attention in the first place on social media platforms and solve the next series of controversies becomes the first concern of the victims.

The famous French semiotician Roland Barthes said, "there is no such thing as an unmarked written language" [1]. He believed that writing is not merely a symbolic arrangement of signs or an accumulation of ideas but that it is linked to the times and deep history. The functional character of words allows events, situations, and ideas to flow along historical time. The homogeneity of bourgeois ideology, for example, gives rise to distinctive writing. Therefore, we cannot refuse to discuss the contribution of formal elements to the written word, and we cannot neglect to analyze contemporary writing in terms of form and content. The book *Myth* was released in 1999 and caused a frenzy of discussion about form and content. In the book, Roland Barthes analyzes the form and content of advertising, film, and images [2]. Not only can advertising and other images be analyzed in terms of form and content, but the text can also be analyzed in terms of form and content. Roland Barthes' book mentions the concepts of capitalist writing, Marxist writing, writer's writing, etc. He suggests that different aspects of language structure, style, writing, etc., construct the final text and bring different calls to the audience. These imparities refer to a notion called "death of the author," which emphasizes the importance of text rather than process [3]. In these discussions of creative forms, Roland Barthes has adapted his discussions and theories to the nature of his time. However, nearly twenty years later, in an era of rapid technological and creative development, it seems that Roland Barthes' theories are gradually being forgotten. People no longer think about form and content and do not know whether this theory is still current in the present time, in the face of modern social media and technological tools.

*Corresponding author. Email: 2021002500@poers.edu.pl

Therefore, this article aims to experiment with whether Roland Barthes' theory is also relevant to the current social situation and solves the problems we face.

The structure of this article will start with an introduction to Roland Barthes' theory in *The Zero Degrees of Writing* and explain step by step the form of words in Roland Barthes' mind and the distinction between them and their content [1]. At the same time, the article posted by Li Jinglei on Weibo in December last year will be used as a typical case for profound analysis, thus giving advice and inspiration to the readers.

There has been a proliferation of articles examining this issue over the years. However, most of them have been in the form of social media and online communication and marketing methods. Although this is a discussion about the social media space, very few articles come out with a textual perspective, using form versus content to analyze. The perspective of the victim or the voice is missing. Thus, the question of this research is to focus on form and content, using Roland Barthes's theory of zero degrees of writing to analyze the tweets posted by Li Jinglei last December. The significance of this research is that the passage provides readers with another perspective that will help them better understand the general success of the article and the reasons for the public's support.

2 Case Study

2.1. Case Description

On December 23, 2021, Ms. Li Jinglei, Wang Lihong's ex-wife, was overwhelmed by the stress and distress in her life and posted a thousand-word essay on social media platforms [4]. This passage revealed the true nature of her

life, hoping to regain custody of her children and receive her fair share of compensation in the divorce. Wang Lihong is a famous Chinese singer born in 1976 and attended the prestigious Williams College and Berklee College of Music. After graduation, he returned to China to become a singer, and with his several self-composed songs, he became famous all over China and won all the famous music awards at home and abroad when he was less than 20 years old. Because of his high education and his musical genius persona, coupled with the absence of scandals and scandals for nearly decades, Wang Lihong has become a representative of hard work and dedication in the eyes of fans and passers-by. In 2016, he made public his marriage to Ms. Li Jinglei on Weibo, which stirred up the entire social media. Nearly the entire Chinese entertainment industry offered their blessings, as Ms. Li Jinglei is a vegetarian and highly educated woman who has lived in a happy family since childhood. At that time, she was even listed as the "golden girl" in the Chinese entertainment industry. The publicity so loud and boisterous at the time was met with even more substantial backlash six years later. When Li Jinglei published a lengthy article on social media, fans and passersby did not want to believe that their virtuous and noble man had cheated on his wife, taken drugs, and done everything illegal. So this continued for over a decade of hard work, family-oriented, loving wife, and so on. The image of the significant collapse caused hundreds of millions of people's attention. People are saddened by a relationship that seems "golden, but not in it," but also deeply moved by this small essay of thousands of words. The writing of this essay has aroused the empathy of most people, especially women. Posting the passage helped Li Jinglei get much attention and sympathy when the bill was decided, winning the top spot. The whole courses can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The whold courses of Li Jinglei incident [5]

Time	Focus
2021.12.15 7AM	The media released news about Lihong Wang and Jinglei Li divorced.
2021.12.15 2PM	Lihong Wang posted a tweet verified this new.
2021.12.15-16.	One after another news release Lihong Wang cheated on a popular female artist
2021.12.16	Lihong Wang came out to clarify that all the news about cheating is false
2021.12.17	Jinglei Li released thousands of words long article to reveal the truth about divorce and scold Lihong Wang
2021.12.17-29	The two sides faced off in a dozens-day-long media war

2.2. Case Analysis

Before we analyze this article, let us think about what writing is. In *The Zero Degrees of Writing*, Roland Barthes divides form into three concepts: linguistic structure, style, and writing. Regarding linguistic structure, Roland Barthes says: "Linguistic structure is a "nature" that pervades the writer's speech in its entirety, yet does not give any form to the latter, nor does it even contain the form [1]." The structure of language contains everything about the creation of literature. "It is like the sky, the earth, the line where heaven and earth meet." The linguistic

structure amounts to the same as constructing a familiar ecology for people in the literary field, clarifying the scope of the author's activity as well as the boundaries of the text.

Suppose this is reflected in Li's essay, the linguistic structure at the elevated level. In that case, the entire essay abandons traditional characters familiar to her growing up in the environment and instead uses simplified characters to complete the essay, to construct a "linguistic environment" that belongs exclusively to this essay [6]. Because Li grew up in Taiwan, Japan, and the United States, therefore, traditional Chinese should be one of the languages she is most familiar with. However, to make the

passage easier for readers of all ages to pick up the information, she changed to simplified characters to standardize the format of the entire article. The boundaries of the ideas expressed in the text are clearly defined: the Chinese language allows all Chinese people and those who know Chinese to understand more deeply the feelings she wants to express.

Secondly, in her essays, Li does not use out-of-the-ordinary characters, or advanced words to show the depth and breadth of her knowledge but rather uses everyday language throughout the essay, such as to bring a down-to-earth, friendly feeling. For example, she will expand her case to the group, not only from her perspective but also from the perspective of society and the characteristics of the times to arouse the audience's empathy. For example, she mentioned the contrast between modern women and women of the past "Modern women have the opportunity to receive higher education, have the opportunity to see, and have can a living [4]. Even though women in the past or modern times choose to be housewives, the roles of family members are essentially distributed differently. (e.g. nanny/teacher/cleaning auntie/seasonal/manager-in-chief/companion/special helper, etc.) There should be a reward for women's efforts, not a gift or a handout." In this passage, Li Jinglei expands her situation to discuss the situation of the times. Whether a housewife or a woman in the above professions, she must be paid commensurate with their efforts and dedication.

Thus Roland Barthes also claims that "the structure of language is a site of action, full of the certainty and expectation of possibility [1]." In the book, Roland Barthes gives the example of Camus and Queneau. Because they live in the same era, they do not use ancient and future forms of language to write and express themselves. Instead, they use what applies to this era because the environment of the time or the social factors constantly influence them. The writer's language is bounded by language structure, just as Li Jinglei's essay is a third perspective, analyzing the generality of the times from a macro point of view, looking for faults and criticizing them boldly to gain the support of the majority of people. Thus, language structure is also within the literature, and the social environment limits the text.

Style, on the other hand, is all outside of literature; all descriptions of images, narratives, and use of vocabulary emerge from the body and experience of the writer, as Roland Barthes mentions. One develops a self-contained linguistic system in the name of style [6].

This linguistic system is saturated with the private part of the author's literary habits. It is a language that emerges from one's seclusion and solitude, not from the appreciation and creation of a literary work.

Roland Barthes contrasts speech with style to better explain the concept of style. Every word we normally utter has a horizontal structure because everything implied in speech needs to be understood by the listener, so everything in speech is presented and exhausted. Nevertheless, style is a form of aimlessness, not directed at the reader, always hidden in the text in the form of allusion. Style is, therefore, a vertical surface, which, in a geometric sense, contains the closed recollection of the

individual and the opinion formed about something [7].

Therefore, if we analyze why this essay has been welcomed and supported from a stylistic approach, then Li's experience of studying abroad in Colombia and her accumulation in the later years helped shape the style of this essay. Making it becomes easy to understand but full of strong emotions, disappointment, and love.

For example, the essay says, "I have no regrets because our three children are all I have, and they are the greatest grace of God[4]." Despite all the scandals she revealed about Wang Lihong, she chose to forgive and be grateful for the three children she now has. The lines do not reveal the true hate but still carry her attitude toward the present life and the expectation and love for the future. Thus leaving major netizens moved by the generosity of heart as they read. "I will not carry your cross for you anymore." The cross here represents the sentence of sin on Wang Lihong. At the same time, Li Jinglei uses a vivid metaphor and a light phrase but consigns the bitterness behind her desire to escape the misery of marriage and run to the freedom that belongs to her. "Everything is traceable; only I am blind to it." Because, blindly covering Wang Lihong's crimes and ugly mouth, the middle contains how much helplessness and regret, only now Li Jinglei uses this article as a wedge to reveal all that she once tolerated because of love.

Even if the style is outside literature, it does not mean it will not be known. "The suggestive efficacy of style is a density phenomenon." Even though it is a reality outside of language and does not contain the meaning of language, much dense text can suggest to readers the writer's style. Thus, style can also connect writers to society outside of words by expressing social events through their style [8].

Some netizens once commented under this article that no word of such a long article is nonsense, but it can bring the readers the feeling of depression in their hearts as if their chests are blocked. The knowledge she accumulated in the early stage of her schooling, plus the compassion she had after becoming a wife and mother over the years, helped her to be able to add a personal touch on top of the flat-tod detailed description. This passage touched thousands of readers to become a backing for her. Those experiences and genuine emotional impact have shaped the present as gentle and resolute, full of strength, and emotions flowing with the words, forming a unique style to tell the social events, thus gaining more people's attention and support.

The form of the text is divided into the horizontal structure of the language and the verticality of the style described above [1]. The language structure in the text plays a negative role, limiting the possibilities so that the creation does not exceed the rules. By following the rules of language structure to create the intimacy of simplified characters that are exclusively Chinese, readers can better understand the meaning of the words. Moreover, style is a necessity. A writer's stylistic preferences are tied to the structure of language. The linguistic structure brings historical familiarity to the audience. The style brings the familiarity of one's own experience, such as the gentle, introverted, but resilient character developed through decades of life, the loving heart possessed by becoming a

mother, the higher education received, and other experiences that have shaped her unique writing style.

All forms are values, so in the middle of linguistic structure and style, there exists the ground of formal reality - writing. Combining the first two, whether social acquaintance or personal experience, the writer can clearly express her personality. As Roland Barthes states, linguistic structure and biology are natural products of the individual, but writing is a human choice of behavior, a specific affirmation of the good. Writing is a relationship between creativity and society; it is a choice of place (are social). Apart from the revolution, writing develops from the roots of speech, from the writer's contact with society, because history does not provide the writer with the voice he wishes to have. Hence, the writer himself emits a language that wishes to be freely disseminated. Thus each choice of writing represents a choice of timing for the times behind it. While enjoying the freedom of expression, the writer also assumes the responsibility of expression.

In this day and age, women's consciousness is gradually awakening. Many issues not seen by society are gaining attention - underage girls being molested, stigmatized images of women in advertisements, etc. Therefore, Li Jinglei takes advantage of the characteristics of this era, as well as the large flow of social media platforms, which allow for free expression. The story is based on her own story. In addition to recounting her own story, her words also take on a responsibility to call attention to women's rights. Because history or reality does not provide the voice she needs, she bravely stands up against the tide of the times. She speaks out for millions of women who have been despised by men or do not enjoy their rights.

For example, in the opening paragraph of this essay, "I want to let you know first," "Maybe for you", "We can only have", "we," "you," and other pronouns of a collective nature appear several times. She starts by expressing her gratitude to all the passersby who clicked on the article or cared about her, making the article somewhat pleasing to the audience and drawing their interest in what she will tell next about the most challenging time in his life [9].

The next object, although still in the second person, changes to the person she wants to accuse, and the gentle, powerful words describe years of senseless violence, threats, and abuse from one person. It makes the reader sigh as a bystander or a witness. Therefore, the reader is more able to bring in the atrocities described in the text and feel sympathy and compassion. While methodically exposing the facts, Li does not remain in the position of a victim crying for attention. She helps but repeatedly suggests that she is brave enough to stand up for herself and defy rumors because she believes she needs to speak out on behalf of women who have been in the same situation or humiliated by men. She succeeded in establishing herself as a voice against the tide and became a representative of women's hearts. The image of a tough, brave, gentle woman who never gives up despite suffering is what people need in this era. Therefore, the timing of the release of the text is in line with the characteristics of the present society and the times, in connection with the

characteristics of the society, and in line with Roland Barthes' definition of the form and content of the text [10].

Thus, in terms of form, language structure, style, and writing, Li Jinglei showed her unique personal charm and excellent writing skills, which made millions of people break their hearts and become impassioned together with her. This text is no longer simply an accusation full of blood and tears but a diatribe and a call for equality for women in the new era.

3 Implications

So if one day we are in a similar situation or need to have a voice in the community. What should we do to get as much attention and support as Li Jinglei's case?

First, from the language structure, the first thing is to choose the language you are most familiar with to write based on your upbringing to ensure that what you write is from your heart. The second criterion is to choose the appropriate language according to the chosen social media and the possible future audience. If you want to publish on international platforms or get more international attention and support, you can use multiple languages and translate your articles into multiple versions. Suppose you need to be in academia or have a highly educated audience. In that case, you can add many specialized words to prove your professionalism. If you are involved in the appropriate subject area, you can use the appropriate amount of terminology in that area to prove your familiarity with academia. However, if you want to speak out about a private event and want people from all walks of life to pay attention to it, you should use everyday language as much as possible. Try to avoid awkward and specialized vocabulary and use everyday language that everyone can understand, so once the possibility of people thinking that the article is essentially a "show-off." At the same time, it is essential to avoid focusing on personal emotions but rather to elevate the narrative to a social perspective. Try to complain about a situation that is prevalent in society through one's situation combined with the qualities and attributes of society so that the audience can understand what happened from a third party's point of view more soberly and objectively and understand the severity of the incident. Using these methods makes the audience feel that the author is not limited to his events but has a broad and tolerant mind and analyzes the events from a macro perspective.

Although it is not something we can change or decide in a short time from Roland Barthes's point of view, it has been shown that stories described from one's own experience are more moving. Therefore, you should tell your story about the background, the events, the results, and the demand. Then the reader is clear about what the author is trying to achieve in writing the essay. Do not try to use a fake, empty, or condescending tone in your narrative. Be honest, be sincere, imply your heart in the words, and shape the words in your style. have a temperature. If the writer executes it that way, the reader will feel it between the lines and be so moved by its sincerity that they will happen for it and give it the support and attention it deserves.

Finally, from the nature of writing, the author must be clear that their choice to speak out with words on social media or any platform carries with it the responsibility of society. Every piece of writing is connected to society, so authors must write with consciousness and a mindset of speaking out for society. It is not only to describe one's situation but also to give a voice to millions of people in society, in different professions and fields, who have been in similar situations. You can use second-person pronouns such as "you" and "you guys" to help readers better relate to their stories. Writing a passage is not just a personal vendetta but a vulnerability of a social nature that needs to be saved and is close to everyone's heart. The passage is no longer an article that people click on in their leisure time but an intimate relationship with the reader from the text, prompting them to rethink and reflect on the whole incident and the social issues reflected.

4 Conclusion

Thus, analyzing Li Jinglei's essay in light of Roland Barthes' definition of textual form and content, we conclude that the form of text is divided into the horizontal nature of the linguistic structure described above and the vertical nature of the style. Linguistic structure plays a negative role in the text, limiting possibilities and keeping creation within limits. For example, it creates a sense of longevity that Chinese people exclusively feel, constructs the intimacy that comes with simplified characters, and critiques them from the perspective of the times and society. Moreover, style is a necessity. The writer's stylistic preferences are tied to the structure of the language.

While the structure of the language brings historical familiarity to the audience, the style brings the familiarity of her own experiences, such as the gentle, introspective, but the resilient character she has developed through decades of life. The loving heart of a mother, her higher education, and other experiences have shaped her unique

writing style, which will infect every reader. The final "writing" is to create a connection between her words and society so that this article is no longer an unadorned accusation but a microphone representing the rights of millions of women and their voices. The article exemplifies women's struggle for power in the new era.

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