

Differences in BBC and CCTV Coverage

- An Applied Validation of Cultivation Theory

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Abstract: Every country in the world has its own media organization, so why is there a difference in perspective and content between media organizations around the world? This paper will use the BBC and CCTV as examples to try to explain the reasons for the differences between the different media and further explain the underlying principles behind the variation in media coverage in the context of cultivation theory. People can see that the factors contributing to this difference are complex and may include the nature of the media itself, the collective interests it represents, and the significance of the events it covers for the media. At the same time, the laws of media operation also play an important role behind the scenes, leading to all these differences, and the different reports may also be due to the application of different media theories. This paper will elaborate on the above factors.

Keywords: news media, cultivation theory, comparison

1. Introduction

In any country in the world, the media plays the role of a purveyor of information. But just as there are not two identical leaves worldwide, media coverage of the same event may also differ for various reasons [1]. This article would like to analyze the reasons for these differences based on the differences between BBC and CCTV's coverage of the 2023 Beijing floods.

Background of the incident: On July 21, 2023, Super Typhoon Dusuari was generated in the ocean east of the Philippines. It then moved in a northwesterly direction and continued to gain strength. In the following month, the typhoon wreaked havoc on the countries and regions it passed through along its path, including heavy rainfall and windy weather. Due to the enormous impact of the typhoon, great attention was paid to the disaster worldwide. China's capital city, Beijing, was also severely damaged by the typhoon, with most of the city flooded and the entire city suffering huge losses. In the aftermath of the disaster, the BBC and CCTV media reported on the natural disaster and the measures taken by the Chinese government and gave different attitudes towards the government's handling of the disaster, so let's take a look at the two media reports to see where the differences are.

2. Similarities between the two

This paper will first describe the similarities between the BBC and CCTV's coverage of the Beijing floods. For example, both follow the characteristics of truthfulness, accuracy, and effectiveness in their news reporting; secondly, both reflect their professionalism as news organizations and so on. Then, the cultivation theory is cited further to explain the reasons for the differences between the two. For example, they have different stances and report different contents for different purposes.

There is a lot of literature that discusses and examines nurture theory extensively. The Nurture Process discusses in detail the roots and development of nurture theory. They point out that people's perceptions and ideas are shaped by television over a long period of exposure to the medium, leading them to have an understanding of the natural world that deviates from the real [2]. They noted that despite the many studies conducted on nurturing theories, some controversies and uncertainties remain [3]. Their study found that how information is processed while watching television leads viewers to align their perceptions of the natural world with those presented on television [4]. Some found that the type and style of news coverage significantly affected viewers' political knowledge and opinions, thus further reinforcing the effect of nurture [5]. Overall, nurture theory continues to profoundly impact today's media as a framework for explaining television's impact on viewers' perceptions and ideas. These studies have important implications for our understanding of the media's shaping of viewers' attitudes and perspectives and the interaction between individuals and the media. This paper will analyze the similarities and differences between the two media based on cultivation theory

CCTV and BBC had several things in common in their coverage of the Beijing flood event. Firstly, both news organizations reported the Beijing flood incident in a timely and accurate manner, including the time and place of the flood incident and other relevant information. Second, both news organizations demonstrated a high degree of professionalism, and both reported in a professional manner and method. This includes interviewing relevant people, collecting information, and reporting objectively and comprehensively. Meanwhile, as mainstream media, both news organizations have certain influence. Their reports will attract public attention and have a certain impact on public opinion. People put the two reports together, it is not difficult to find that the BBC and CCTV for this flood disaster victims of the extent of the report are very similar, and in some of the affected areas of the specific circumstances of the performance of the same description, which can be fully demonstrated that the two media for the objective impact of the event has produced a very practical documentary reporting. Therefore, they need to be responsible for their reports and ensure the authenticity and objectivity of the information [6]. Lastly, and most importantly, the two news organizations are concerned about the affected people's situation and use it to convey relevant information to the public, such as interviewing the affected people and shooting relief videos.

3. Differences between the two

In addition, in the reports of these two media, people can also observe some details that have been deliberately ignored. Both media have partially reported the incident. Such selective coverage may involve political factors and ideological influences. For different purposes and directions, the media may choose to report and emphasize what is in line with their own positions and political interests, while ignoring some aspects that may negatively affect their positions.[7].

When reporting on the flood disaster, CCTV may not emphasize too much on the government's responsibilities and shortcomings in this incident. This is because CCTV represents the voice of the Chinese government and party to a certain extent, and the direction and content of its coverage may be somewhat restricted. At the same time, CCTV's reports paid more attention to the government's efforts to fight the flood and the people's solidarity and cooperation. They emphasized the

government's leading role and showed the active participation of government departments and rescuers in flood-fighting operations. CCTV also invited experts to advise on how to save themselves and cope with floods, aiming to raise public awareness and preparedness. This kind of coverage intends to convey a positive message and enhance public confidence in the government. Through critical thinking and extensive reading, people can better understand the complete picture of events and recognize bias and selective reporting. In contrast, BBC's reports focus more on factual presentation and multiple viewpoints. They showed the flood damage and interviewed some directly affected residents to show the impact of the flood on individuals. In addition, they also questioned and criticized the government's performance in flood response. These views and criticisms in the BBC report focused on provoking public thinking and discussion. From each side's point of view, the other side's reports are biased. Still, suppose people put their reports in a neutral position. In that case, people can find that their reports, although very different in the specific areas of concern, are both out of their interests and resort to their requirements, so people cannot simply because of the difference between the two reports of a particular place to determine whose reports are correct and whose statements are wrong.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Gerbner, an American communication scholar, proposed the cultivation theory through a series of studies on violent content on television. Cultivation theory advocates the convergence of public opinion through the influence of television as a mass media that represents and guides mainstream social opinion [8]. The BBC and CCTV coverage of the event also diverged in large part because of the role of cultivation theory. CCTV is the official media representative that fully utilizes the cultivation theory. It is easy to find that CCTV's coverage of the flood disaster mainly publicized the official data and selected some typical public representatives as the interviewees for broadcasting in terms of disaster statistics. To a certain extent, this spread the signal to the people that the disaster was not as severe as imagined so that people could believe that the government could handle the incident well, at the same time, CCTV also vigorously publicized the anti-flooding initiatives, which could help people cope with the dangers to a certain extent. The BBC's report on the flooding was more inclined to tell the public about the process of the disaster and its subsequent consequences, as well as about the impact of the disaster. The BBC's coverage of the flood was more oriented towards telling the public about the process of the tragedy and the subsequent damages caused, and the BBC reported on the incident from the perspective of a bystander, which was not as much of a guide as CCTV's coverage. In proposing the theory of "cultivation", Gerbner makes a central point. Media propaganda creates a new "worldview" for the public, one that may even run counter to the real world. Here, people can see this through different media's propaganda treatments at the time of the disaster; CCTV created a message for the Chinese people that "our country is capable of dealing with this disaster and protecting people's lives and health as much as possible." At the same time, the BBC conveyed a message to the world's people that "Beijing, China, is facing a serious natural disaster, and how the Chinese government is going to deal with this disaster effectively, people will wait and see," people can find that their focuses differ.

4. Conclusion

To summarize, first of all, both BBC and CCTV's reports on the Beijing floods showed the damage to the city and the people's living conditions from a professional point of view, both had similar affirmations of the damage caused by the floods, and both investigated and understood the whole process of the matter through similar means. Secondly, the two obviously disagree on the focus of the coverage of the event. Due to the cultivation theory, CCTV focuses more on the positive aspects of the event, which can not only increase people's confidence in fighting against the disaster, but also help the government to work better and stabilize the public opinion, while BBC prefers to show the impact of the event from multiple angles, such as the people's suffering and the destruction of the city,

in order to let people understand the whole picture of the event better.[9].When people are exposed to different media reports, people should ask ourselves some key questions: Does the report provide multiple viewpoints? Are different economic, social and political factors covered? Is there missing or exaggerated information? Instead of believing one side of different reports and refuting the other without thinking, people need to look at different news reports dialectically, taking into account the background of the time and the positions of both sides. This will also enable us to recognize the facts more clearly, just like an old Chinese saying: "Listening to both sides is good for you, while believing in one side is bad for you".

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