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Cover Page Footnote

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Intercultural Content Reuse and Social Justice: Comparing Chinese and U.S. Media Coverage of Anti-Asian Racism During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 as a global pandemic has brought human society tremendous pressure and significant changes. Asian Americans suffered from both the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian racism. Organizations were established to fight against anti-Asian hate and related crimes. An organization named Stop AAPI Hate publishes yearly reports regarding anti-Asian hate, and the content is reused by mass and social media worldwide. This study adopts theories of content reuse, intercultural communication, immaterial labor, and social justice to conduct a qualitative content analysis of the content reused by mass and social media in China and the United States. The results show that Chinese and U.S. media have different content reuse strategies. The pattern of content reuse between mass and social media also differs. The findings indicate that the technical communicators need to take the culture and dynamic rhetorical ecology of social media into consideration when adapting content from one culture to another.

Keywords: intercultural communication; social justice; immaterial labor; content reuse

Introduction

Along with the rampaging pandemic, the fast-spreading rumor that coronavirus was leaked from a Chinese laboratory fueled waves of racist attitudes and even hate crimes against people of Asian origin (Vazquez, 2020). Although the World Health Organization (WHO) named this novel virus “COVID-19” on February 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020a) and its Health Emergencies Programme Executive Director, Dr. Michael Ryan, confirmed that the coronavirus was of natural origin rather than a laboratory leak, this rumor continued to spread (WHO, 2020b).

The incorrect and racist terms *Wuhan Virus*, *China Virus*, and *Kung Flu* still spread in the United States (Chandra, 2020; Vazquez, 2020). Even some U.S. politicians aggravated the defamation by using these false and xenophobic terms, which exacerbated the hatred shown toward Asian people (Vazquez, 2020). For instance, Donald Trump, former President of the United States, referred to the coronavirus as the “Chinese Virus” several times, ignoring the criticism that the term was racist (Kurtzman, 2021). Hswen et al. (2021) discovered that Donald Trump’s use of the phrase *Chinese Virus* in his tweets led to an increase in the use of anti-Asian hate hashtags on Twitter. Such hatred eventually led to hate crimes against Asian Americans (Reny & Barreto, 2020). According to data released by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism (CSUSB) at California State University, the number of anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 169% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020 (Levin, 2021).

The worsened situation and increased number of crimes stimulated the establishment of many organizations to stop anti-Asian hate. Stop AAPI Hate, which was established in 2020, is one of the most influential organizations reporting anti-Asian crimes during the COVID-19 pandemic (Takasaki, 2020). Because of the pandemic, the activities of the organization were mainly carried out online. Through online tracking and reporting of hate crime incidents, Stop AAPI Hate published online reports with first-hand details to build a channel through which the crimes and risks faced by Asian Americans could be conveyed to the public to urge that anti-Asian hate should end and to call for social justice. The content in these reports has been extensively referred to and reused by mass and social media in China and the United States.

Because the “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021) included first-hand data on anti-Asian hate crimes, news media around the world referred to the content in it. By referring to various content genres in the report and reusing the content in different ways, news media worldwide spread awareness of the risks Asian American people encounter in the United States. For instance, the news media *Xinhua* from China and *NBC News* from the United States reused some content from this report to publish news articles about anti-Asian hate. *Xinhua* (2021) published a news article entitled “Asian Americans in U.S. Report Nearly 3,800 Hate-Related Incidents Within a Year: Report” on March 17, 2021. *NBC News* published a news article entitled “Anti-Asian Hate Incident Reports Nearly Doubled in March, New Data Says” on May 11, 2021 (Yam, 2021). Because these two media have different audiences, they reused different content in varying ways to inform Chinese and U.S. readers about the COVID-19–related racial risks met by Asian Americans during the pandemic. Such content reuse not only appeared in mass media but also showed up in social media posts regarding anti-Asian hate. Hence, the current study investigates the following two questions: First, how these mass media articles and social media posts reused content from the “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021); and second, whether there were any differences between the content reuse strategies adopted by Chinese and U.S. mass and social media. To answer these questions and help fight anti-Asian hate, this research employs the theories of content reuse, intercultural communication, immaterial labor, and

social justice to conduct a content analysis of mass media articles and social media posts in China and the United States. The research investigates the different content reuse strategies employed by mass and social media and the influence of culture in shaping their content reuse strategies.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First, it reviews previous research on content reuse, intercultural communication, immaterial labor, and social justice in the context of risk communication related to anti-Asian hate against Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, it introduces the selection process of news articles and social media posts, before explaining the research method applied to the content analysis. Third, it presents the case study results of the intercultural content reuse of the “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021). Finally, the study discusses the rhetorical analysis of the results and the implications for technical communicators.

Literature Review

Content Reuse

The development of content reuse is tightly intertwined with the evolution of material and social infrastructures, which contain agency, and is invisible and relational in its nature (Frith, 2020). In the pre-computer era, a carbon copy was used by people as a simple, steady, yet inflexible way to make copies of a given text for different audiences. As infrastructure developed and computers emerged, people were able to edit, copy, and paste chunks of data, expanding the ways in which content could be reused. Since the appearance of the Internet, people have been able to easily and quickly distribute content and data around the globe. Today, given their access to myriad social media, the speed of the Internet, and countless smart devices, it has never been easier for people to share, repost, and adapt content to the entire world (Shin, 2016). In the current Internet era, the World Wide Web is an infrastructure of network-enabled content of different genres that circulates as digital data, which can be easily recycled, modified, and reused (Adami & Jewitt, 2016). As the material infrastructure gradually evolved, the patterns and ecology of content reuse also became more complicated.

Content reuse, as an increasingly heated topic, has been studied by scholars in technical communication for decades, and multiple theories in relation to the topic have been developed. Content reuse means not only writing content once and simply copying and pasting it to another document (Rockley, 2001) but also sophisticated rhetorical action that relocates the content to fit a new rhetorical situation (Harris, 2006; Palermo, 2017; Spinuzzi et al., 2015; Swarts, 2010; Wall & Spinuzzi, 2018). With infrastructural and theoretical developments, content reuse started to appear in increasingly diverse writing environments, where writers need to tailor content to serve new audiences in a more sophisticated rhetorical ecology (Harris, 2006; Palermo, 2017).

With the expansion of theoretical frameworks regarding content reuse, technical communication scholars have explored content reuse strategies from different theoretical perspectives. Drawing on Latour’s (1996) actor–network theory, Swarts (2010) perceived content reuse as an act of establishing actor networks “of articulating social, technological, and cognitive infrastructures to support distributed work” (p.129). Because “fractional texts” (Law, 2004) can be treated as actor networks, reused content chunks can “keep voices mobile and stable and combinable with other chunks” (Swarts, 2010, pp. 131–132). In this way, Swarts (2010) argued that an actor network “stands in as the infrastructure across which work can be both distributed and coordi-

nated” and interpreted the activity of reuse as “the recycling of materials to allow one context of activity to mediate another” (Swarts, 2010, p. 132). Departing from genre theory, Spinuzzi et al. (2015) proposed that “genres represent points of uptake, often manifesting as reuse” (p. 49). Perceiving documentation cycling as “genre assemblages” (Spinuzzi, 2010, p. 367), Spinuzzi et al. (2015) classified content reuse into two categories: verbatim reuse and transformational reuse. While verbatim reuse refers to copying and pasting identical content from the original to the target document without changing the meaning, transformational reuse means modifying the content during the reuse process (Spinuzzi, 2015). Both types of reuse involve rhetorical activities by “borrowing the authority of the original author” (Spinuzzi et al., 2015, p. 49) and incorporate multiple actors’ rhetorical choices of content relocation (Spinuzzi, 2010; Swarts, 2010). Yet content reuse has limitations. Sometimes, writers deliberately reuse content to fit their purposes, ignoring the original context, which may subvert the original meaning (Wright, 2018).

Alongside the infrastructural development of communicative technologies, especially the Internet and social media, the range of content reuse has also expanded from a single or a few closely related authors (Carter, 2003; Hart-Davidson et al., 2008; Robidoux, 2008; Sapienza, 2007) to authors around the entire world, which inevitably brings into question the influence of culture.

Intercultural Communication and Tradition of Thinking

“Heuristic approaches” (Hunsinger, 2006) are often used by intercultural communication scholars to explore cultural differences based on a belief in the stability of culture (Ding & Savage, 2013). Hall’s (1989) classification of low-context and high-context cultures is among representative theories. Low-context cultures emphasize the provision of detailed information in communication (Dong, 2007), while high-context cultures “find the majority of the information in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message” (Hall, 1989, p. 91). The high-context communication style in Chinese culture is derived from the Chinese dialectical thinking tradition (Yama & Zakaria, 2019). Dialectical thinkers tend to have “greater expectation of change in tasks related to explanation and prediction and greater tolerance of contradiction in tasks involving the reconciliation of contradictory information” (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010, p. 296). Chinese people’s dialectical thinking tradition is rooted in traditional Chinese philosophies, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (Nisbett, 2004; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). With the influence of the dialectical thinking tradition, Chinese people prefer indirect and implicit information in communication (Yama & Zakaria, 2019). Therefore, they assume that the audience is “already ‘contextualized’ and so does not need to be given much background information” (Hall & Hall, 1990, p. 184). In contrast, influenced by Aristotle’s formal logic (Lewin, 1951), people in the United States tend to think linearly, which requires explicit and direct information (Yama & Zakaria, 2019).

Appadurai first proposed that culture should be perceived as fluid rather than static (Ding & Savage, 2013). In other words, Appadurai (1996) perceives cultural material as able to “move across national boundaries” (pp. 45–46). Based on the fluidity of culture, he further developed the theory of global cultural flows, in which he perceived culturalism to be “the conscious mobilization of cultural differences” and as “frequently associated with extraterritorial histories and memories, sometimes with refugee status and exile, and almost always with struggles for stronger recognition from existing nation-states or various transnational bodies” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 15). To categorize and highlight “different cultural streams or flows” (p. 45–46), Appadurai (1996) coined five terms: “(a) ethnoscaples, (b) mediascaples, (c) technoscaples, (d) financescaples, and (e)

ideoscapes” (p. 33). Among these terms, mediascape represents the infrastructure through which culture flows transnationally (Jeon, 2021).

As Appadurai (1996) described, a mediascape usually consists of “image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality” (p. 35) that come in the form of “distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information” (mainly referring to mass media when Appadurai published the work) and “images of the world created by these media” (p. 35). As Appadurai (1996) mentioned on the eve of the Internet explosion (Coffman & Odlyzko, 2002), the mediascape had been circulating and distributing information through conventional mass media to “a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). When the Internet became readily accessible throughout the world and technologies evolved to the stage at which smart devices were affordable for a vast majority, social media proliferated (Gürsimsek, 2016). Such infrastructural development extended the bandwidth and complexity of mediascape significantly (Jeon, 2021). With smart devices in hand, people can easily access countless websites and social media platforms on which millions of people actively create, edit, and reuse content in the form of texts, audio, pictures, and videos (Adami & Jewitt, 2016).

The entire world has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in early 2020 (Srinivasan, 2021). People have been forced to change their ways of living to forestall the spread of the pandemic. As a result, more and more people have switched to remote working, and their daily interactions have migrated from the physical world to online spaces (Farboodi et al., 2021). The mediascape has thus assumed a more important role as the predominant infrastructure through which information exchange, communication, and culture flow occur. To fulfill these critical tasks, rapid infrastructural development has taken place in the mediascape. Stimulated by the pandemic, people’s online interactions have become unprecedentedly active and created significantly more content (Jeon, 2021), which has been recycled and reused across multiple platforms.

Labor, Immaterial Labor, and Social Justice

Labor was conceptualized by Marx as “activity through which human beings give form to materials and thus objectify themselves in the world” (Sayers, 2007, p. 432). With the development of the technology, new forms of labor that could not fall into Marx’s definition of labor appeared (Sayers, 2007). Hardt and Negri (2000) defined these forms of labor as “immaterial labor,” which “produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication” (p. 290). Successive studies have examined the immaterial labor from the perspectives of affective labor (Martens, 2011), communicative labor (Ding, 2020), intellectual labor (Kong, 2021), reproductive labor (Jarrett, 2014), and cultural labor (Nakamura, 2014).

Technical communication scholars have also conducted research to associate immaterial labor with social justice. Ding (2020) proposed a materialist–social-justice approach to explain how communicative and affective labor can promote procedural and interactional justice (Jost & Kay, 2010) based on a case study of Zika outbreaks in Latin American countries. Kong (2021) further developed Ding’s (2020) approach by incorporating corrective justice, which focuses on “fairness in the way punishments for lawbreaking are assigned and damages inflicted on individuals and communities are addressed” (Kuehn, 2000, p. 10693), in her extended materialist social justice framework.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has been prolonged, with new virus variants emerging, online

communication may still be the mainstream, and anti-Asian attitudes may continue to exist. Mediascape-based intercultural content reuse has become a growing field that can promote social justice. Though various studies have explored social justice from the perspectives of intercultural communication (Ding et al., 2016) and immaterial labor (Ding, 2020; Kong, 2021), limited research has focused on the role that content reuse can play in intercultural communication to promote social justice in the context of anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this study conducted a content analysis of content reuse strategies used by Chinese and U.S. mass and social media in reporting anti-Asian racism in the United States. Specifically, it focuses on addressing the following research questions:

- 1) What content reuse strategies are used by Chinese and U.S. mass media and social media in reporting anti-Asian racism in the United States?
- 2) What are the differences in content reuse between Chinese and U.S. mass and social media regarding anti-Asian racism?

Methods

Data Collection

The Stop AAPI Hate published the “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021) on March 16, 2021. Because this report includes first-hand data, such as the types and locations of attack incidents related to anti-Asian hate, its content has been widely reused in articles and posts on mass and social media in China and the United States. This study collected and examined data from both Chinese and U.S. mass and social media to explore how such media have reused content to promote the social justice of Asian Americans. The study collected mass media articles and social media posts by conducting a Google search. The search keywords were “anti-Asian hate” for U.S. mass and social media and “反亚裔仇恨” (the Chinese term for *anti-Asian hate*) for their counterparts in China. The study used the first 10 result pages for each keyword. Excluding irrelevant articles and posts and those without content reused from the “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021), this study collected 14 publications from Chinese media (10 news articles and four social media posts from organizational social media accounts) and 12 publications from U.S. media (10 news articles from mass media and two videos from organizational social media accounts) (see Table 1).

Content Analysis

Data Preparation

Because the collected materials included content from multiple genres, this study employed Saldaña’s (2013) “stanzas” to segment the materials into texts, screenshots of videos, figures, and infographics. A stanza was initially defined as a unit break of a poetic-like verse in a poem (Gee et al., 1992). Saldaña (2013) further employed the concept of the stanza to define a unit of analysis in qualitative coding. Multimodal content can be divided into “units or stanzas when a topic or subtopic shift occurs” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 18). By comparing the original “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Jeung et al., 2021) and news reports/social media posts, I generated 113 stanzas of content reuse in total, comprising 55 stanzas from Chinese media and 58 stanzas from U.S. media (see Table 1). In terms of media platform, 77 stanzas were collected from mass media, and 36 were collected from social media.

Table 1. Media Information Stanza

Country	Media Category	Media	Number of News Reports/ Social Media Posts	Number of Stanzas
China	Mass Media	<i>People's Daily, China News Service, China Youth Daily, Global Times, XinHua, The Paper</i>	10	30
	Social Media	CCTV Tencent social media official account, CCTV App, Shobserver, Alfred_Lab WeChat official account	4	25
United States	Mass Media	<i>NBC News, The Harvard Gazette, BuzzFeed News, CBS News, CNBC, AXIOS News, Nebraska Today</i>	10	47
	Social Media	WRTV Facebook channel, NBC News NOW YouTube channel	2	11

Coding Scheme

To detect the different patterns of content reuse strategies used by Chinese and U.S. media on different platforms, I conducted a content analysis of the 113 stanzas collected based on Spinuzzi et al.'s (2015) and Swarts' (2010) coding schemes. Because these coding schemes were used in the different rhetorical contexts of pitch deck revision and single-sourcing writing, I used the grounded theory method (Frith, 2020) to generalize new categories of content reuse strategies in the context of cross-cultural communication by conducting open coding of the collected data. I then discovered a new code, "compression," that cannot be categorized within existing codes. Unlike "paraphrase," which reorganizes content without discarding information, "compression" refers to content reuse that compresses a lengthy piece of content into a more concise one with less important information pruned. Finally, I adopted three types of content reuse from Spinuzzi et al.'s (2015) coding scheme ("verbatim," "paraphrase," and "extension"), one type from Swarts' (2010) study ("genre"), and a new category based on observation ("compression"). The operational definitions of these codes are displayed in Table 2. Examples of different content reuse strategies are also given in Table 2, with underlines representing content being reused.

Table 2. Coding Scheme and Examples of Different Content Reuse Strategies

Code	Operational Definition	Example
Verbatim	Reusing identical content from the original material (Spinuzzi et al., 2015)	<p>Xinhua news article: <u>“The number of hate incidents reported to our center represent only a fraction of the number of hate incidents that actually occur, but it does show how vulnerable Asian Americans are to discrimination, and the types of discrimination they face,”</u> authors of the report noted.” (Xinhua, 2021)</p> <p>Original report: <u>“The number of hate incidents reported to our center represent only a fraction of the number of hate incidents that actually occur, but it does show how vulnerable Asian Americans are to discrimination, and the types of discrimination they face”</u> (Jeung et al., 2021).</p>
Paraphrase	Reusing content by restructuring the expression of the original content while keeping all information intact (Spinuzzi et al., 2015)	<p>NBC News article: <u>“Verbal harassment and shunning were the most common types of discrimination, making up 68.1 percent and 20.5 percent of the reports respectively”</u> (Yam, 2021).</p> <p>Original report: <u>“Verbal harassment (68.1%) and shunning (20.5%) (i.e., the deliberate avoidance of Asian Americans) make up the two largest proportions of the total incidents reported”</u> (Jeung et al., 2021).</p>
Extension	Reusing content from the original material and developing new claims (Spinuzzi et al., 2015)	<p>NBC News article: <u>“A further examination of the submitted reports showed that in many cases, the verbal harassment that women received reflected the very intersection of racism and sexism”</u> (Yam, 2021).</p> <p>Original report: <u>“Women report hate incidents 2.3 times as often as men”</u> (Jeung et al., 2021).</p>

Code	Operational Definition	Example
Compression	Reusing content by compressing a lengthy piece of content into a more concise one with less important information pruned	CBS News article: <u>“Physical violence accounted for 11%, with over 503 reports of violence in 2021 alone”</u> (Jones, 2021). Original report: <u>“Physical assault (11.1%) comprises the third largest category of the total incidents ... Stop AAPI Hate received reports of 503 incidents that occurred in 2021”</u> (Jeung et al., 2021).
Genre	Reusing content by changing the genre of original content (Swarts, 2010)	Shobserver: An infographic visualizes the data of types and sites of discrimination (Li & Cao, 2021). Original report: Two bar charts illustrate the data of types and sites of discrimination (Jeung et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

I used the five codes above to detect categories of content reuse in news articles/social media posts. Based on the frequency of each content reuse category, I further explored the influence of culture and audience on patterns of content reuse by comparing the results of Chinese and U.S. media and of mass and social media.

Results

Different Content Reuse Strategies in Chinese and U.S. Media

Among the results shown in Table 3, the “compression” strategy shows the largest and second-largest positive percentage difference between Chinese and U.S. mass and social media, respectively, meaning that “compression” is more frequently used by Chinese media. The strategy of “verbatim” shows the largest and the second-largest negative percentage difference between Chinese and U.S. mass and social media, respectively, showing its more frequent use by U.S. media.

The “extension” strategy is more frequently used by Chinese social media with a positive percentage difference (44%) than by U.S. social media. However, the difference is not obvious in mass media, with a small percentage difference of 1.5%. The “genre” strategy is less frequently used by Chinese social media than by their U.S. counterparts, as shown by the percentage difference of -60.7%. Moreover, the use of “genre” in the mass media of the two countries has a minimal difference, namely of 0.3%. In addition, the “paraphrase” strategy has a negative difference for mass media and a positive difference for social media.

Table 3. Content Reuse in Chinese and American Media

Category	China		United States		Percentage Difference (China-U.S.)	
	Mass Media	Social Media	Mass Media	Social Media	Mass Media	Social Media
Verbatim	8 (26.7%)	0 (0%)	22 (46.8%)	1 (9.1%)	-20.1%	-9.1%
Paraphrase	4 (13.3%)	7 (28%)	9 (19.1%)	2 (18.2%)	-5.8%	9.8%
Extension	3 (10%)	11 (44%)	4 (8.5%)	0 (0%)	1.5%	44%
Compression	13 (43.3%)	4 (16%)	9 (19.1%)	0 (0%)	24.2%	16%
Genre	2 (6.7%)	3 (12%)	3 (6.4%)	8 (72.7%)	0.3%	-60.7%

Different Content Reuse Strategies in Mass and Social Media

As Table 4 shows, of the 77 stanzas in mass media, the most commonly used content reuse strategy was “verbatim” (39.0%), followed by “compression” (28.6%), “paraphrase” (16.9%), “extension” (9.1%), and “genre” (6.5%). Regarding 36 stanzas in social media, the most common content reuse strategies were “genre” (30.6%) and “extension” (30.6%), followed by “verbatim” (19.4%), “paraphrase” (13.9%), and “compression” (5.6%) (see Table 4). According to the percentage difference shown in Table 4, the “genre” strategy has the largest negative percentage difference (-24.1%), meaning that “genre” is more used in social media than in mass media.

Table 4. Content Reuse in Mass and Social Media

Category/Media	Mass Media	Social Media	Percentage Difference (Mass Media-Social Media)
Verbatim	30 (39.0%)	7 (19.4%)	19.6%
Paraphrase	13 (16.9%)	5 (13.9%)	3%
Extension	7 (9.1%)	11 (30.6%)	-21.5%
Compression	22 (28.6%)	2 (5.6%)	23%
Genre	5 (6.5%)	11 (30.6%)	-24.1%

According to the results, the “genre” strategy was used more frequently in social media than in mass media, which can be explained by social media’s more dynamic rhetorical ecology (Matwysyn, 2012). According to Lomborg (2011), social media can be perceived as “particularly dynamic genres, subject to continuous disruption and uncertainty, owing to their deinstitutionalized and participatory character, and the shifting roles of producers and recipients in the networks and conversations that make up social media content” (p. 55). Social media blurs “the line between producers and audiences” (Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2016, p. 811), which facilitates the participatory communication of audiences. To engage a larger audience, multimodal digital content is widely used in social media production (Gürsimsek, 2016). Because “digital technologies afford text creation through ‘copy-and-paste’ across media” (Adami & Jewitt, 2016, p. 266), visual content can be easily reused across media platforms. Thus, genre changes often occur in the reuse of content from texts when transferred to multimodal content on social media. For instance, an article from Shobserver created an infographic to visualize the data of

types and sites of anti-Asian discrimination in a more engaging way than the two bar charts in the original report.

Discussion

Intercultural Content Reuse

As shown in Table 3 of the Results section, the “compression” strategy appeared more frequently in Chinese than in U.S. media, influenced by different cultural contexts. The context was defined by Hall (1992) as “information that surrounds an event” (p. 229). Hall (1992) further categorized cultures into low- and high-context according to their communication styles (Hall, 1989). U.S. culture is classified as a low-context culture (Hall & Hall, 1990), on the assumption that the audience has very little background knowledge, thus requiring a writer to provide explicit and detailed information (Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001). Therefore, U.S. mass and social media employ the “verbatim” strategy more frequently than their Chinese counterparts.

In contrast, Chinese culture can be classified as high-context (Li et al., 2020). As Hall and Hall (1990) argued, “in high-context communication, the listener is already ‘contextualized’ and so does not need to be given much background information” (p. 184). Because “interlocutors share sufficient common knowledge” in high-context cultures, “much of the meaning in communications can be inferred from the context itself” (Ou et al., 2016, p. 146). Therefore, instead of communicating “in precise detail” (Ou et al., 2016, p. 146), people tend to omit common knowledge in high-context communication (Li et al., 2020). However, it should be noted that “the degree of context considered normal and necessary” is different in “every type of discourse” (Ou et al., 2016, p. 147). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that Chinese culture is high-context-predominant (Ou et al., 2016). Thus, Chinese writers may compress the content of the original report by omitting some information that they assume the audience already knows. To make a news article more concise, Chinese journalists may also compress a range of content from the original report into one sentence in the target news report to help localize and adapt the content of a report written in a foreign language to Chinese high-context culture (Dong, 2007).

Content Reuse, Immaterial Labor, and Social Justice

At the beginning of the pandemic, the lack of first-hand data on anti-Asian hate crimes hindered scholars from examining the severity of such crimes, which led them to look at news articles reporting anti-Asian racism to determine the degree and type of racial discrimination endured by Asian Americans in the United States (Takasaki, 2020). A group of researchers from the Stop AAPI Hate collected data from victims of anti-Asian hate crimes and compiled a report to reveal the severity of anti-Asian racism in the United States (Yam, 2021). The content of this report was extensively reused by journalists from news media to disseminate the information about anti-Asian hate crimes and call for action to promote social justice for Asian Americans.

Throughout this process, though journalists were paid to reuse content from the original report and write news reports on anti-Asian hate crimes, they also conducted unpaid affective labor (Greene, 2004) by employing emotional appeals in such reports to advocate social justice for Asian Americans. In this way, the journalists’ immaterial labor, namely reusing the content in news reports, eventually promoted informational justice.

Implications for Technical Communicators

While many technical communication scholars have proposed theoretical frameworks to address intercultural communication (Ding, 2020; Ding et al., 2016) and content reuse (Spinuzzi et al., 2015; Swarts, 2010) issues, limited research has focused on intercultural content reuse in the global context. The findings of this study reveal that culture plays a vital role in shaping writers' content reuse strategies. According to the results, Chinese journalists employed the "compression" strategy most frequently in reusing the content from the "Stop AAPI Hate National Report," while U.S. journalists most often used the "verbatim" strategy. The different types of content reuse strategies reflected the divide between low-context and high-context cultures (Li et al., 2020). Because the United States has a low-context culture (Hall, 1989), it is not surprising that U.S. journalists preferred to use the exact data given in the original report to provide sufficient information for readers without background knowledge of anti-Asian hate. In contrast, in the high-context Chinese culture (Hall & Hall, 1990), Chinese journalists frequently used the "compression" strategy in reusing content from the "Stop AAPI Hate National Report." Through "compressed" content reuse, journalists can tailor the original content into a context level that matches that of a specific audience. In this way, the information can be digested and disseminated more easily by the audience, potentially improving public awareness and facilitating the promotion of social justice. Therefore, when technical communicators adapt a piece of content to a different culture, they need to familiarize themselves with writing habits, conventions, and the level of context (i.e., low- or high-context) of the target culture (Li et al., 2020).

Another interesting finding is the high frequency of genre changes from textual content to multimodal content on social media. Because of the dynamic rhetorical ecology of social media (Lomborg, 2011), the boundary between the writer and audience on social media is blurred (Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2016). To engage audiences from diverse backgrounds, multimodal content is widely used to produce more interactive content on social media (Gürsimsek, 2016). As "'copy-and-paste' across media" became more common for digital content reuse (Adami & Jewitt, 2016, p. 266), the versatility of visual content facilitates its reuse. The high versatility of visual content ensures that it be delivered to a diverse population of users in a timely manner, possibly leading to massive public attention that may help promote social justice. Therefore, technical communicators should adopt visual content that is flexible to genre change.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has limitations regarding the scope, sample size, and methods. First, this study focused on intercultural content reuse regarding anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic and chose China and the United States as the countries of interest because of time limitations. More Asian countries can be included in future studies, and the international communication between Asian countries can be examined. Second, the sample size of this study is limited. The study collected 26 mass media articles and social media posts from the two countries of interest. The sample size can be expanded in future studies to enhance the reliability of the results. Finally, this study conducted a qualitative content analysis. Quantitative content analysis may be undertaken in future studies with more data available. In terms of research directions, as this study explores the role of intercultural content reuse as a form of communicative labor in promoting social justice, future studies can contextualize content reuse with more forms of immaterial labor, such as intellectual and affective labor, in more sophisticated global cultural flows.

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