

A Study on Discourses in Kimchi-related Documentaries

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1. Introduction

Kimchi is a representative dish of Korea and a variety of social discourses about Kimchi have appeared in Korea and other countries. Starting with the great interest of Japanese in Korea's kimchi since 1980s, the diverse health benefits of kimchi have been identified in 1990s. In 2001, Korea's kimchi was approved with a unique food specification in the CODEX (international food standard commission) to surpass Japan's Gimoochi. In December, 2013, the Kimjang culture was listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. This study aims to analyze topics, types and discourse features of Kimchi-related documentaries among a variety of social discourses about kimchi to examine how the key broadcasting media of Korea describe kimchi and what contents they suggest in each period. Furthermore, another aim is to establish socio-cultural meaning of kimchi in Korea, and implications for producing kimchi-related documentaries to expand the kimchi culture world wide.

2. Method of study

2.1. Object of study

Documentary episodes about discourses of Kimchi were selected, which were less limited than other broadcasting contents, for example, news, and were aired by 3 terrestrial television stations (KBS, MBC, SBS) while delivering objective facts and specialized contents. Table 1 shows 18 selected documentary episodes in Kimchi-related documentaries for 20 years from 1994 to 2014.

2.2. Method of analysis

The analysis was carried out by author's watching 18 episodes collected by searching the keyword "Kimchi documentary" from the homepage of each broadcasting station, and in 2 major portal sites (Naver, Daum) of Korea to analyze topics, types and focuses in each period, the number of episodes produced by each broadcasting station. This aimed to examine how the topic types are classified, which discourses are found in relation to Kimchi by periods in the Kimchi-related documentaries, and the number of episodes produced in each broadcasting station.

[Table 1] Documentary list

No.	Aired date	Episode	Title	Broadcasting station
1	Dec.8,1994	Rediscovery of Korea	Kimchi, Living and Breathing	KBS
2	Jul.15,1998	What have we eaten to be alive.	Kimchi, Living and Breathing	KBS
3	Dec.15,2002	Tree with deep roots to find tradition	Kimchi by the Science of Fermentation	KBS
4	Dec.1,2003	Report on Han race	Kimchi and Umeshoshi	KBS
5	Apr.23,2004	Secret of myth creation	Korean Kimchi Sold in Japan	KBS
6	Nov.27,2007	Secret of birth, aging, illness and death	Kimchi for Healthy Diet	KBS
7	Jun.1,2008	KBS Special documentary	Sushi, Tom yum kung and Kimchi	KBS
8	Sep.13,2008	Taste of Korea	Aged Kimchi	MBC
9	Nov.22,2010	Special documentary	Mrs.Carmen's Kimchi Exploration	SBS
10	Dec.3,2010	Explore Korean cuisine	Origin of Korea Cuisine - Winter Kimchi	KBS
11	Feb.23,2011	New Year's special documentary	Kimchi Odyssey	KBS
12	Nov.24,2011	Classic Korean dishes	Fully fermented Kimchi - winter Kimchi	KBS
13	Nov.26,2011	Documentary with guests	Kimchi Gourmet Yoshida's The day	MBC
14	Jan.21,2012	Global success	Japan, Korean Cuisine Wave Pioneer, Oh Young-Suk	KBS
15	Dec.6,2012	Korean cuisine	Taste of Southern Korea - Tasty Kimchi Diary	KBS
16	Mar.7,2013	Korean cuisine	Aged Kimchi and Grandma	KBS
17	Aug.12-16, 2013	People and their story	Kimchi Mama in Tokyo 1-5	KBS
18	Mar.9,2014	Sunday's special documentary	Kimchi Road of Korea	SBS

3. Result of study

[Table 2] Classification of documentary focus

Focus	Date of airing	Broadcasting station	Title	Description
Emphasis on health benefits	Dec.8, 1994	KBS	Kimchi, Living and Breathing	Historical background of Kimchi, health benefits of Kimchi, popularity of Kimchi in Japan.
	Jul.15, 1998	KBS	Kimchi, Living and Breathing	Health benefits of Kimchi, roles of salt, chilies, fermented fish sauce, and pottery

The 18 documentary episodes produced by the 3 major terrestrial television stations were classified into 4 categories in terms of the features of topics. The first category is to emphasize health benefits of Kimchi. The second category is to emphasize the popularity of Kimchi in other countries, for example, Japan and China. The mainstream story is to tell the status of Kimchi in Japan and sellers active in the Kimchi market of Japan. The third category is to focus on the diversity of Kimchi and Kimjang as a culture proper to Korea, and the effort of the government since 2010 is contributing to airing production, aging and storage of local Kimchi of each region. The fourth category is to illustrate the meaning of Kimchi for Koreans with overseas Korean's love of Kimchi and their story, and connection between the deep taste of aged Kimchi and mothers' love of their children.

For the history of discourses in each period, the period from 1994 to 2007 had a focus on the health benefits of Kimchi, and the period after 2004 covered the popularity of Kimchi, and the success story of Kimchi sellers in other countries. The period after 2010 covers the diversity of Kimchi and Kimjang as a characteristic culture of Korea. In terms of broadcasting stations, KBS produced 14 episodes; MBC 2 episodes; and SBS 2 episodes.

of Kimchi	Dec.15, 2002	KBS	Kimchi by the Science of Fermentation	containers in fermentation. Health benefits of Kimchi, roles of salt and pottery containers in fermentation, fridge for Kimchi.
	Nov.27, 2007	KBS	Kimchi, Healthy Food Globally Loved	Health benefits of Kimchi, Kimchi as one of global top 5 healthy foods, popularity of Kimchi in other countries.
Emphasis on popularity of Kimchi in other countries	Apr.23, 2004	KBS	Korean Kimchi in Japan	Success story of Kimchi in Japan (standardization and science of production and distribution)
	Jun.1, 2008	KBS	Sushi, Tom yum kung, and Kimchi	Success story of three countries' representative dishes in other countries, and implication for globalized Kimchi.
	Nov.26, 2011	MBC	Kimchi Gourmet Yoshida' s The day	Japanese' s love of Kimchi, popularity of Kimchi in Japan.
	Jan.21, 2012	KBS	Japan, Korean Cuisine wave Pioneer, Oh Young-Suk	Kimchi seller (Oh Young-Suk)' s success story in Japan
	Aug.12-15, 2013	KBS	Kimchi Mama in Tokyo 1-5	Kimchi seller (Yoon Mi-Wol)' s success story in Japan
Emphasis on diversity of Kimchi and Kimjang culture	Nov.22, 2010	SBS	Mrs.Carmen' s Kimchi Exploration	Foreigner' s love of Kimchi, features of materials for Kimchi in each region.
	Dec.3,2010	KBS	Origin of Korean Cuisine - Winter Kimchi	Tasty Kimchi of each region, temple Kimchi, health benefits of Kimchi.
	Feb.23, 2011	KBS	Kimchi Odyssey	Diversity of Kimchi culture, and Kimchi as family heritage food.
	Nov.24, 2011	KBS	Fully Fermented Kimchi - Winter Kimchi	Features of Kimchi materials and Kimjang culture of each region.
	Dec.6, 2012	KBS	Taste of Southern Korea - Tasty Kimchi Diary	Local Kimchi made with indigenous materials of southern regions, pork Kimchi as localized island cuisine, seaweed fusiforme Kimchi.
Emphasis on meaning of Kimchi by Koreans	Mar.9, 2014	SBS	Kimchi Road of Korea	Kimchi listed as the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, local Kimchi of each region, Jonga Kimchi.
	Dec.1, 2003	KBS	Kimchi and Umeboshi	First generation Korean-Japanese' s love of Kimchi, their joys and sorrows of life.
	Sep.13, 2008	MBC	Aged Kimchi	Introduction of aged Kimchi, storage, and dishes cooked with aged Kimchi.
	Mar.7, 2013	KBS	Aged Kimchi and Grandma	Deep taste of aged Kimchi, mothers' love of children, various storage and cuisine of aged Kimchi.

4. Conclusion

Starting with the documentary, titled “Kimchi, Living and Breathing” produced by KBS in 1994, discourses of documentaries for “health benefits of Kimchi” appeared. Discourses of “popularity of Kimchi in other countries” including Japan and China appeared after that. Current key discourses include “the diversity of Kimchi and Kimjang culture”, and “features of local Kimchi”. The result of discourses contributed to examining the popularity of Kimchi and the meaning in the Korean society and economy which have changed in each period. Various topics can be selected including the anthropological and folkloric approach, the Kimchi and Kimjang culture after being listed as the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, the history of Kimchi material change and production technology, Kimchi tourism, cuisine for using Kimchi as a material, and harmony between dishes of other countries and Kimchi, which have not been included in the topic of previous discourses for producing Kimchi-related documentaries. Because documentaries have just been analyzed for this study, changes of discourses related to Kimchi in news, broadcastings and newspapers, and Kimchi-related books are not covered in this study. Therefore, there is a need of further analyzing discourses in news and newspapers, and Kimchi-related books. At this time called the age of cultural war over food, it is necessary to specify a target for each cultural region to build a strategic Kimchi image when producing Kimchi documentaries for globalizing Kimchi. A new challenge is to study more diversified strategies for the description of Kimchi in the documentaries and thus to ensure diversified description in order to find values of Kimchi as a characteristic diet culture and a cultural product.

5. References

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