

Image Construction in the External Communication of Chinese Media Political Discourse: A Corpus Based Perspective

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Abstract: China has taken a unique political path different from Western capitalism, and due to differences in consciousness and cognition, native English speakers find it difficult to understand some of China's political concepts based on their own context. For a considerable period of time, the West has had a deep misunderstanding of China, promoting China's threat theory in the international community and maliciously smearing China's image - "the sick man of East Asia". In response to the misunderstanding of Western countries, China emphasizes external propaganda work and strives to tell the story of China well, which is of great significance for shaping a fair and three-dimensional image of China.

Keywords: cognition; politician; country image

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Introduction

As a country with a long history and rich culture, China has always been actively shaping its image on the international stage. However, due to the uniqueness of China's political system and its differences from Western capitalist countries, there are certain misunderstandings about China. Especially in the context and cultural cognitive differences, native English speakers find it difficult to accurately understand Chinese political concepts, leading to some profound misunderstandings.

In the international community, there has long been a profound misunderstanding of China, manifested in the spread of China threat theory and malicious smearing of China's image by Western countries. This negative political discourse has created an image of the sick man of East Asia, causing China to be unfairly treated on the international stage. In the face of this situation, China has realized the importance of external cognition, especially in the field of international communication, and has strengthened its external publicity work, committed to telling the world a true and three-dimensional story of China.

This article aims to explore in depth the construction of China's image in external communication through corpus based analysis of Chinese media political discourse. By studying the language use and discourse strategies of Chinese media, we can better understand the expression of Chinese political concepts and reveal cultural differences within them. This has positive significance in promoting a correct understanding of China by the international community, breaking down stereotypes about China. At the same time, this study will also focus on the strategies adopted by China in foreign propaganda, as well as the impact of these strategies on the international community's perception of China's image. Through this study, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for China's image construction on the international stage.

1 Literature Review

The unique political development path in China is significantly different from that of Western capitalism, and has become a focus of academic attention, especially in the fields of media and political discourse. The challenge of cross-cultural communication, especially the difficulty for native English speakers to understand Chinese political concepts, has always been an important research topic. This article provides an overview of the research field on China's image

construction in foreign media and political discourse, with a focus on corpus analysis methods.

1.1 Domestic Studies

Scholars have conducted in-depth research on the challenges brought by cross-cultural communication, emphasizing the difficulties that native English speakers face in understanding Chinese political concepts. The delicacy of Chinese political discourse is shaped by its unique historical and cultural background, and requires careful study to bridge the understanding gap. The literature highlights the historical background of deep-seated misunderstandings between China and the West. The dissemination of narratives such as the "China threat theory" and the deliberate depreciation of China's image, such as depicting it as the "sick man of East Asia," has always been an important research topic. Researchers have explored how these misleading ideas lead to biased beliefs and hinder constructive international relations. The research focuses on China actively responding to Western misunderstandings through external propaganda efforts. Emphasizing the use of stories as strategic tools to reshape a fair and comprehensive global understanding of China highlights the importance of China in shaping its image. The literature explores the methods adopted by China in constructing narratives and the effectiveness of these strategies.

1.2 Studies Abroad

The study of the political discourse of Chinese leaders aims to understand China's political system, policy direction, as well as the thoughts and intentions of leaders. This research involves multiple levels, including speeches, speeches, public statements, and policy documents by leaders. These studies aim to analyze the language usage patterns of leaders, the intentions behind their discourse, the political messages conveyed, and their associations with specific political backgrounds. Some studies focus on how leaders use political discourse to shape domestic and international public opinion, maintain political stability, and promote policy agendas, while others focus on the ideology, values, and political concepts expressed in leader discourse. Overall, studying the political discourse of Chinese leaders helps to gain a deeper understanding of the operational mechanisms of China's political system and the political strategies of its leaders.

2 Research design

2.1 research problem

What kind of ideology will Chinese media reflect when promoting Chinese politics? How will they build the national image? What changes will happen to China's image in Western media?

2.2 corpus

Another is related reports on China from abroad. By comparing relevant speeches and analyzing the text, we can analyze the changes in China's national image internationally, as well as the differences in ideology between China and the West.

The corpus of Chinese media in this article is selected from digital reports by mainstream Chinese media, such as Qiushi, China Daily and the English website of Xinhua News Agency. The corpus of Western media is selected from digital reporting by mainstream media in the UK and the US, such as The Times website and The New York Times website. The unique political development path in China is significantly different from that of Western capitalism, and has become a focus of academic attention, especially in the fields of media and political discourse. The challenge of cross-cultural communication, especially the difficulty for native English speakers to understand Chinese political concepts, has always been an important research topic. This article provides an overview of the research field on China's image construction in foreign media and political discourse, with a focus on corpus analysis methods.

3 Research result

1. According to the statistics of the Chinese English parallel/analogical composite corpus of Chinese political discourse, with the narrative subject as the reference, the translation of Chinese political discourse and the target language political discourse exhibit the following characteristics. Firstly, there are similar characteristics in the political discourse narratives of

China and the United States, both of which include the following narrative modes: person relationship narratives (we, you, I), which strengthen the communication relationship between the narrative subject and the narrative audience; Discourse coherence narrative (it, they, this, that), clarifying the organizational logic of narrative events; National subject narrative (China/America, country, government/governance) emphasizes the national status and role of narrative events; The narrative of power institutions (committee, congress) highlights the authority of the narrative subject; The narrative of "people" strengthens the common interests of all parties involved in narrative communication. Secondly, the narrative characteristics of political discourse in China and the United States are different. Chinese political discourse highlights the narrative characteristics of taking the country as the main body, emphasizing national interests or collective ideas, and paying special attention to the initiatives and achievements of the CPC in party building, government management, rule of law construction, economic development and other aspects, while American political discourse narrative focuses on specific narrative themes, highlighting economic development, trade exchanges, family relations, employment environment and other themes. Finally, relatively speaking, Chinese political discourse emphasizes the narrative object and highlights the narrative object, while American political discourse emphasizes the narrative subject (first and second person) more.

(1) 我将无我，不负人民。I will fully commit to the people and never fail them. (中) Tonight I present to you comprehensive plan2to set our Nation on that new course. (美) Both the translation of Chinese political discourse and the narrative of the target language use the first person singular (I) as the narrative subject. The United States places greater emphasis on direct communication between individual government representatives and narrative audiences, attempting to bridge the communication gap and improve communication effectiveness.

(2) 广大青年要坚定理想信念,志存高远,脚踏实地,勇做时代的弄潮儿,在实现中国梦的生动实践中放飞青春梦想,在为人民利益的不懈奋斗中书写人生华章!(第三卷,p55) Using the "vast youth" as the narrative subject for third person narrative, the translation can consider converting to second person narrative, achieving direct dialogue between the implicit narrator (spokes person) and the narrative audience ("vast youth") in the original text, highlighting the spokesperson's earnest instructions and expectations for the narrative audience. 译文如下: To all our young people, you should have firm ideals and convictions, aim high, and have your feet firmly on the ground. You should ride the waves of your day; and in the course of realizing the Chinese Dream, fulfill your youthful dreams, and write a vivid chapter in your tireless endeavors to serve the interests of the people.

2.Chinese media usually reflect dominant ideologies such as socialist core values and socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics when promoting politics. This includes emphasis on social equity, economic development, national security, and cultural heritage. The media often emphasize the superiority of China's political system, the leadership of the CPC, and the unique path of Chinese socialism. At the same time, the media also tends to emphasize the development achievements and international status of the country, in order to highlight the success and sustainability of China's political system.

There are some examples:

(1) Our Party has upheld and improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, further modernized the system and capacity for governance, and formed a set of institutions that includes the fundamental, basic, and important systems for socialism with Chinese characteristics, thereby providing strong institutional guarantee for the steady progress of Chinese modernization. (Qiushi Journal, No.11.2023) This passage uses a lot of verbs, improve, modernize, form and provide, and proposes to formulate a series of systems to highlight the leadership and subjectivity of the CPC. The CPC's influence on China's modernization is demonstrated by the CPC's contribution to China's rapid development. Relatively speaking, China places more emphasis on the use of subjects in its external promotion.

(2) The main directions for Chinese media to shape the country's image through multi-dimensional reporting and publicity efforts include: firstly, emphasizing China's cultural traditions, historical heritage, and social harmony, in order to showcase the country's image of an ancient civilization. Secondly, highlight the country's economic achievements and technological progress, and emphasize the success of modernization construction. In addition, through active participation in international affairs, the concept of peaceful development, and efforts in international cooperation, it is emphasized that

China is a responsible major country. Overall, Chinese media strives to present an inclusive, stable, and rapidly developing national image, promoting a positive understanding of China by the international community.

(3)风翻白浪花千片，雁点青天字一行。原译：The wind breaks waves into thousands of flowers on the sea; flocks of swan geese fly across the blue sky with their wings spread. Although there are ready-made translations as references, as mentioned earlier, meticulous reading is still an indispensable part. The original translation of the first half of the sentence is clear and sufficient in meaning, with high quality, but the second half of the sentence is problematic. "Yan Dian Qing Tian Zi Yi Xing" does not refer to "groups of geese spreading their wings and flying in the blue sky", and "Zi Yi Xing" does not describe the appearance of geese spreading their wings. Observing, it can be seen that this poem employs a rhetorical device of contrast, with the previous sentence "a thousand flowers" contrasting with the following sentence "a line of words". Therefore, the meaning of the following sentence can be roughly understood as "a group of geese flying over the blue sky, as if writing a line of words". Meanwhile, since it is a line of the word "one", the float is clearly singular rather than plural. Tracing back to the source and context, it can be inferred that this sentence comes from a poem by Bai Juyi, describing the scenery of the Hangzhou River. From this, re examining the translation of the first half of the sentence, it is obvious that sea cannot be used to write about the scenery of Hangzhou River. Bai Shi writes about river scenery, while Xi Wen talks about lake scenery, which can be vaguely treated as water. In the finalization stage, we adopted a translation method that highlights the characteristics of traditional Chinese culture, treating "characters and lines" as a trace drawn by a brush in the sky, making the meaning smoother and easier for readers to accept.

(4)靡不有初，鲜克有终。”实现中华民族伟大复兴，需要一代又一代人为之努力。As an ancient Chinese saying goes, “After making a good start, we should ensure that the cause achieves fruition.” The great renewal of the Chinese nation requires the dedicated efforts of one generation after another. “靡不有初，鲜克有终” is a part of the Book of Songs. It means that there is nothing that cannot be well started, but unfortunately, there are very few that can end well. But if translated literally as “While many can make a good start, few can work hard enough to achieve success”, it cannot express the meaning of this allusion in a specific context, so adjustments need to be made in the translation.

3.In Western media, China's image may be influenced by different perspectives and cultural perspectives, presenting diverse changes. On the one hand, Western media may highlight the differences in China's political system and human rights issues in their reports, leading to a negative impact on China's image. On the other hand, China's economic rise and achievements in international cooperation may also receive positive attention in Western media, promoting a positive view of China's image. Therefore, China's image in Western media may be influenced by various factors such as politics, economy, and culture, presenting complex and diverse trends of change.

(1)According to Xinhua News Agency, many "dragons" are no longer translated as "dragon" but as "loong". In fact, whether the international community can understand Chinese concepts, understand Chinese culture, and understand Chinese stories largely depends on the level of translation from Chinese to foreign. Among them, the translation of key words in the fields of politics, economy, and culture is particularly important. Especially Chinese people call themselves "descendants of dragons", and dragons are also China's main symbol in the international community; However, "dragon" is often translated as "dragon" and has caused many misunderstandings internationally. Translating "dragon" as "dragon" is very wrong. In the eyes of foreigners, this is Chinese people calling themselves demons. China has overcome the situation of being beaten and starving, and is committed to solving the problem of being scolded. However, Dragon is seeking blame for itself, which provides convenience for anti China forces to demonize China, offsets some of the achievements of China's foreign publicity work, and hinders the smooth development of China's "the Belt and Road Initiative" and other foreign work.

4 Conclusion

The Chinese media will focus on using a series of vocabulary, such as the Party, the country, the people, and all humanity. It reflects the idea of harmony, harmony but difference, and places greater emphasis on the common development of all humanity, closely linking the Chinese Dream with the future and destiny of the world. It further reflects the characteristics of China's political path. Once western media vigorously promoted the theory of China's threat, and

vilifies China. Now they gradually change their attitudes. The stereotypical impression of China in the West is gradually weakening now. And more positive images appear on the Internet and are accepted by the international community.

Overall, existing literature presents a wealth of research on the challenges and response strategies faced by China's image construction in foreign media and political discourse. The use of corpus based analysis methods provides a valuable methodological perspective for in-depth exploration of language nuances and communication strategies in shaping Chinese narratives.

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