

# Exploring the Strategy of Telling China's Story in the Perspective of Cultural Communication

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**Abstract:** *Telling the Chinese story has become one of the important ways to spread Chinese culture nowadays. Telling a good Chinese story externally is conducive to promoting the exchange and mutual appreciation of world civilizations and shaping a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive national image. However, China is still in the dilemma of inadequate communication channels, insufficient cultural brand influence, and poor foreign communication in a high-context culture. For this reason, we need to promote the "chorus" of coordinated communication of multiple subjects, improve the capacity of the international communication system of the whole media, change the way of storytelling discourse of international communication, and always uphold the concept of telling a good Chinese story and spreading the Chinese voice by adhering to the Chinese cultural position.*

**Keywords:** *International communication; Chinese story; Communication system*

## 1. Introduction

Since the 18th Party Congress, Repeatedly stressed the need to "tell a good Chinese story". "Telling a good Chinese story" is one of the important communication channels for China to shape its national image and enhance its international discourse, and it is also the main task and important mission of international communication nowadays. In the current important period of China's development, it is crucial to have a good international environment and national image, but it is unavoidable that there are large cultural differences between China and the West, and the Western media has long been in the dominant position of international discourse, which causes China's mainstream media to face a series of dilemmas in the process of foreign communication. "Telling China's story" provides new development ideas for China's foreign communication, helps build civilizational exchanges and mutual understanding between countries, promotes cross-contextual cultural cognition, presents a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive image of China to the world, guides overseas audiences to correctly understand Chinese culture and Chinese values, and builds a positive image of China's national image among overseas audiences.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 2. The value and significance of telling the Chinese story

### 2.1. Promote the exchange and mutual appreciation of world civilizations

The 20th Party Congress report states: "Strengthen international communication capacity building, comprehensively enhance the effectiveness of international communication, and form an international discourse that matches our comprehensive national power and international status. Deepen the exchange and mutual appreciation of civilizations, and promote Chinese culture to better reach the world."

In today's world pattern, telling a good Chinese story to the outside world has become an important proposition for China's current development, which is an important way for the people of the world to understand and know contemporary China more comprehensively, and an important work to promote international political, economic and cultural exchanges, which requires us to tell a good Chinese story vividly and accurately ourselves and spread a good Chinese voice. But in order to create quality communication content, we need to further understand the intrinsic value of China's stories. The new mainstream media should dig deeper into the connotation of China's stories and dig deeper into meaningful stories to disseminate materials, such as the story of the Chinese government's insistence on peaceful development, the story of the Chinese people living the "Chinese dream", the story of the

community of human destiny, and so on. And in the stories, Chinese values and Chinese ideas should be shown, reflecting the image of China as a civilized oriental power with a rich history, diversity and unity among ethnic groups, cultural prosperity, social stability and unity among people. Take "China on the Tip of the Tongue" as an example, this food and culture documentary puts more effort in the production process to explore the traditional Chinese culture embedded in food, and constantly strengthens the creativity of the new mainstream media's foreign communication discourse, showing the immortal charm of Chinese culture in a more in-depth way, allowing audiences at home and abroad to understand and accept China in depth.<sup>[2]</sup>

## ***2.2. Shaping a real, three-dimensional and comprehensive national image***

The report of the 19th Party Congress states: "Promote international communication capacity building, tell the Chinese story, show a real, three-dimensional and comprehensive China, and improve the country's cultural soft power. "Firstly, we should adhere to the principles of objectivity and truthfulness, not exaggerating or fabricating, and adopt a justified approach to foreign communication; secondly, when introducing China to the international community, we should combine points and surfaces, and change "flatness" to "three-dimensionality", so as to make China's image stand up. China is a vast country, with both economically developed coastal cities and relatively undeveloped border areas; There are both modern cosmopolitan cities and relatively backward poor mountainous areas. We adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, ultimately achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, contributing a Chinese solution and Chinese wisdom to the world, and presenting to the world the image of a pluralistic, three-dimensional and responsible great nation; Finally, we should not generalize when looking at the image of China. In the Western media, they are always used to understanding and interpreting China in a one-sided and narrow way. This is a failure to take a comprehensive view of China, and therefore to understand the full China.

China's story involves many fields such as politics, economy and culture. As China's international status is getting higher and higher, China's media should seize the opportunity to tell these Chinese stories well to the outside world, continuously strengthen the construction of foreign discourse system, broaden their own communication path, strengthen their own media image construction, and establish a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive national image among overseas people. Combined with the current developed media technology, the overseas communication matrix is formed to continuously enhance the national cultural soft power and strengthen the international discourse. At the same time, China's foreign propaganda media should tell the Chinese story and spread the Chinese voice in continuous practice and exploration, and find a way of foreign communication suitable for China's national conditions in continuous optimization, so as to broaden the road for telling the Chinese story well.

## **3. The real-life dilemma of telling the Chinese story**

### ***3.1. Dissemination channels need to be expanded***

In the integrated media environment, China's media industry has developed rapidly and various media technologies have been widely used, but in international communication, there are differences in the realities, degree of economic development, folk culture and other aspects in countries of all sizes in the world, and even in the same country, the different social classes and religious beliefs in which they are located may cause different needs of the audience. And it is difficult to attract a large audience with only one set of fixed discourse patterns, especially for overseas audiences, and a one-size-fits-all communication model will not work.

Due to the long-term development of Western media, China is in a relatively weak position in international communication due to its relative advantage in media technology, and there is a situation that "there are reasons that cannot be said, and there is no way to spread the word after saying it". There is a lack of international communication talents, and the pattern of foreign communication has not yet been formed. As a result, China's image is largely "other-shaped" rather than "self-branded". The emergence of new media is now more popular, and it has many advantages and characteristics that traditional media do not have, which requires the media industry to open up a new situation in today's changes and further expand communication channels.

### ***3.2. Insufficient cultural brand influence***

Compared with Hollywood movies, Japanese comics and Korean dramas in Europe, America and Japan, China's cultural brands are not influential enough in international communication, a strong cultural export system has not been formed, and communication activities are difficult to form hot spots, and the overall international attention is low.

Mainstream media should continue to innovate international communication methods and approaches, continue to strengthen the promotion of international communication capacity, and actively promote the linkage between domestic and foreign propaganda, "Today's world is an open world, today's China is an open China, the relationship between China and the world is undergoing historic changes, China needs to better understand the world, the world needs to better understand China." At present, the international influence of China's cultural brand does not match our comprehensive national power and international status, and the external public opinion on the development and stability of China's reform and opening up to the outside world is not optimistic. Therefore, while building the whole media, we must strengthen the linkage between internal and external propaganda, tell the Chinese story, spread the Chinese voice, and enhance the spreading power and influence of Chinese civilization.

### ***3.3. Different contexts are not easy to identify***

As a high-context country, China is more subtle in its language expressions, and it is difficult to express the deeper semantic meaning of speakers in translation, thus greatly reducing the communication effect. In low-context cultures, it is required to express the meaning straightforwardly without beating around the bush, for example, the United States is a low-context culture, while in high-context countries, it is required from childhood education to speak politely, and our country is a high-context culture with a large number of contexts. For example, in Southeast Asia, our cultural background has stronger cultural proximity to it, so we will encounter less "cultural folding" in the communication process. In contrast, the overall dissemination in some Western countries is more hindered by ideological and cultural differences, and even though there are some works with a higher degree of acceptance, it is inevitable that some gazes with orientalist overtones cannot be avoided.

In the process of international communication, China should find communication contents and methods suitable for overseas users' reading habits, choose suitable narrative subjects and communication paths, and at the same time must uphold the audience-oriented concept, explore different ways of discourse according to the audiences of different countries, and recommend accurate information contents to audiences of different countries in a segmented, differentiated and personalized way, so that China's stories can be spread more accurately, more loudly and farther, more accurate, louder and farther.

## **4. The communication strategy of "Telling the Chinese story well" is explored**

### ***4.1. Promote the "chorus" of collaborative communication of multiple subjects***

Whether the audience can be attracted to the story depends partly on the core content of the story, but it is also limited by the way the story is presented. If the story is presented in a single and boring way, it is difficult to stimulate the audience's interest in listening to the communication content of the story, so we must innovate in a big way and use short video platform, game platform, sound and image and other communication methods to bring the audience a new multi-focused listening experience, so that China's stories are more attractive and infectious. China's foreign communications should break through the hegemony of the Western media discourse, make good use of the emerging social media and self-media, and at the same time can "borrow the boat to go to sea" and strengthen cooperation with foreign media. For example, China International Television (CGTN) launched a series of videos entitled "A Foreign Commissioner Comes to the Village", including "The Mobile Court Assistant", which introduces the mobile court, a unique situation of rule of law at the grassroots level in China, from the perspective of a foreigner. Many domestic and foreign viewers love this video series, and the single post has reached 1.23 million readers worldwide; American Jew Jerry Guo's account "I am Jerry Guo" has 7,843,000 followers on the Beeping Beeping platform and has been selected twice as one of the top 100 UP owners on Beeping Beeping. In 2020, Jerry Guo's work "Overseas Anti-Epidemic Diary" was recognized by the Chinese official media and recommended by CCTV as "The First Line of

Global Anti-Epidemic". On "Relativity", Jerry Guo also linked up with CCTV to talk about China and the world's views on some of the hot topics. At the same time, Jerry Guo's short videos present the image of China from the perspective of the Other. Some of his works on China's economy, culture and society show the understanding of Chinese culture from the perspective of the Other, which also gives overseas audiences an in-depth understanding of a more real China, and at the same time enables the public to see the invisible Chinese culture through the perspective of the Other;<sup>[3]</sup>In terms of international communication, China Daily has also set up the "New Era Snow Studio". The studio is characterized by "speaking through the mouth" and selects the backbone of expatriate staff from the whole society. The series of short videos "New Era Snow Seeing China" focuses on the narration of "small things" of the grand theme, and discovers, records and spreads the story of China in the new era from a unique other's perspective, using a combination of first-person narration and third-person narration in the creation of the short videos. In the creation of the short video, a combination of first-person narrative and third-person narrative is used extensively, and the language perspective of "plain view" is used to create a communication atmosphere of "talking about the heart". Among them, Nie Zirui is the senior foreign host of the interview series of "New Era Snow Dialogue". In each issue of the dialogue, the small stories of the guests' personal experience are used as the opening point for interpretation, so as to see the big picture in a small way and the macro from the micro, thus triggering the audience's thinking.

In today's all-media era, to tell the Chinese story well and spread the Chinese voice, not only the "solo" of mainstream media, but also the "chorus" of mainstream media, government departments, institutional media, platform media, self-published media and other multi-disciplinary bodies to collaborate and spread the message. We will form an all-media international communication system and integrate various media platforms, media technologies and media resources into the national foreign communication system, so as to collaborate and resonate and play the "symphony" of China's story.

#### ***4.2. Enhance the capacity of the international communication system of the whole media***

The 20th Party Congress report states: "Strengthen the construction of a full media communication system and shape a new pattern of mainstream public opinion." Promote the deep integration of media, build a full media communication system, and strengthen the new mainstream media. In the dimension of media characteristics, the new mainstream media should realize "four", namely, networking, integration, platform and intelligence. Networking refers to the Internetization of mainstream media, for example, the head office has implemented the innovation-driven strategy of "station and network, first network and backstage, mobile first", thus creating intelligent integrated media; Integration refers to the realization of integrated operation and development, the interconnection of content, channels, platforms, talents, management and operation, etc., from "wanting to add" to "integration"; Platforming means to become a platform-based new media and to create a new communication platform with influence; Intelligence means to become an intelligent media. With the arrival of the intelligent age of everything, the degree of intelligence will become one of the important criteria to measure the development of new mainstream media. In the media capacity dimension, it is necessary to improve the power of dissemination, guidance, influence and credibility of news and public opinion, and consolidate the large mainstream ideological opinion. Communication power refers to the news content output by mainstream media and the ability to achieve effective news dissemination, in which it is necessary to open up communication channels, broaden the coverage of news and public opinion, and enhance the sustained attention of news and public opinion dissemination; Guiding power means guiding the audience to establish correct values in the direction control of news and opinion; Influence thanks to the ability to disseminate news, divided into positive and negative influence, in which it is necessary to improve the quality of news content and disseminate it widely through multiple channels; Credibility refers to the audience's trust in the media, as well as the media's intrinsic quality and image in the audience's mind over time.

In the context of today's development of integrated media, the construction of an all-media international communication system should improve the ability to produce high-quality, all-types, multi-terminal adaptation content, improve the ability of multi-channel and multi-platform collaborative communication, carry out multi-scene and multi-form communication forms, and carry out differentiated and vertical effective communication for different audience groups. For example, People's Daily makes full use of the hub role of the "central kitchen" in its foreign communications, integrating various media and production factors to maximize the effect of international communications. It continues to promote international communication capacity building, tell the Chinese story, enhance the national cultural soft power, and let the world see the real,

three-dimensional and comprehensive image of China.

#### **4.3. Transforming international communication storytelling discourse**

Some mainstream media are accustomed to using grand narratives to construct mainstream values. For example, "heroic figures", "grand scenes" and "national policies" are often used in Chinese poverty alleviation stories to highlight their value. But in the new media situation, this grand narrative model of external communication is not optimistic. In the process of foreign communication, the inertia of grand narratives should be avoided, and the foreign communication mode of adopting subtle narratives from the perspective of ordinary people is more easily accepted by people. By changing the perspective of communication, the "grassroots talk" and "folkization" of information dissemination are more prominent. For example, the documentary "I Repair Cultural Relations in the Forbidden City", records that behind a vermilion door, is a group of lovely and honorable people. Their daily work is to restore artifacts that have been brought from all over the world in a way that preserves the characteristics of the artifacts. They love ordinary lives but have extraordinary identities. They are masters, but they are also ordinary people. Some mainstream media, with the help of YouTube and other overseas short video distribution platforms, have told many ordinary stories of ordinary Chinese people, such as achieving "all-round prosperity", some "Chinese style", folk "emotional stories" and other topics. "Telling China's Story" from the perspective of "Civilization", every Chinese person's story is the communication material that constitutes the Chinese story. This way of communication is more likely to be welcomed by overseas audiences, and at the same time brings the distance with overseas audiences closer and spreads the Chinese story more effectively.

It is important to note that "grand narrative" and "nuanced narrative" are not opposed to each other,<sup>[4]</sup> but rather to strive to achieve a balance between the two. The purpose of external communication is achieved by "making a big deal out of a small one". At the same time, we should be good at using empathic communication strategies, highlighting the big principles and logic with small characters and stories, and closely linking the national concept with personal destiny, so that more audiences can feel the charm of China.

#### **5. Conclusions**

China never lacks vivid stories, but how to tell the Chinese story well and spread the Chinese voice requires us to communicate with a full media perspective and multiple forms of communication. Combining localization and internationalization is important. By utilizing the common topics of the current audience to convey national culture and enhance its attractiveness, a global shared appreciation situation has been formed. Adhering to the communication philosophy of integrating large and small screens, flat media and online media, and internal and external publicity, we fully utilize high-quality broadcasting resources such as platforms, newspapers, websites, WeChat, end users, and accounts to achieve high-quality content, intelligent communication, integrated platformization, and media branding. Through continuous innovation and overcoming cultural challenges, we strive to provide new examples of international communication in the era of globalization. Adhering to the collaborative development of multiple subjects, the development of new media is promoting a new narrative way of spreading China's story to the outside world, and mainstream media should continue to transform the communication discourse. By combining self-shaping, other-shaping, and co-shaping methods, we can create a framework that allows overseas audiences to interpret the Chinese story based on their own experiences and values. This approach allows overseas audiences to feel the cultural touch, making it possible to explore a path of foreign communication with Chinese characteristics.

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