

# Strengthen China's International Discourse Power and Strive to Tell Chinese Stories Well

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## Abstract

In the context of the Belt and Road Initiative and building a community of shared future for mankind, China has made great efforts to excavate its unique cultural connotation and tell its stories in a well-accepted way. However, due to the differences of target audience's cognition and media bias of the target countries, China's initiatives and proposals, which are beneficial to the development of the rest of the world, are always misunderstood by western countries. They have been smearing China and ignoring China's contributions, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Therefore, it is quite necessary for China to improve "China view" of other countries. We need to expedite the construction of international discourse power and negotiate obstacles of cultural misunderstanding. We will improve our capacity for engaging in international communication so as to tell China's stories well, present a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China, and enhance our country's cultural soft power. This work first briefly analyzes the reasons for China to strengthen its international discourse power based on the current situation. And it tried to demonstrate some critical principles and strategies on realizing the goal. Besides, it explains what kind of culture we should be spread. All these measures are taken to enrich Chinese stories and help tell Chinese stories well.

## Keywords

**International Discourse Power; Principles and Strategies; International Organizations; "We Media"; Interpreters and Translators; Traditional Chinese Culture; Chinese Stories.**

## 1. Introduction

With a view to building a global community of shared future, China has taken great efforts to advance the Belt and Road Initiative, upholding the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. Through the initiative, China has made a constructive contribution to the reform of the current global governance system and economic globalization.[1] During this process, China needs to explain its ideas to the rest of the world so as to win global support. However, most western countries with the United States at its center, exaggerate the "China Threat Theory". Washington's "elites" regard the "China Threat Theory" as a "universal truth" which gives rise to the so-called "Chinaphobia". Therefore, we need to roll back the specter of the misunderstanding of China's rise. Through the perspective of Michel Fought, a French sociologist, speech is power and man gives himself power through discourse. In some degree, we can see the international discourse power is a pivotal support of China's soft power. For this reason, China's discourse system, which should be geared to China's composite national strength and national standing, must be constructed. The discourse should be well-accepted, persuasive and without any ideological bias, gender or racial discrimination.

## 2. China will Strengthen its International Discourse Power in Various Fields

Without doubt, China will construct its discourse system in all respects, such as economy, politics and culture. I'd like to take our indigenous laws and TCM as examples. As is known to all, in former years, China's legal system kept getting nutrition from western counterparts and we tended to ignore our local resources, which gave rise to the relatively disadvantaged position in international law academic community. For example, nowadays, some countries can't understand why China still retains the death penalty. In part that's because we have special culture and attribution. Likewise, the road to popularize TCM always sees twists and turns. Western countries always regard TCM as "pseudo-science". If we want to make TCM widely-accepted, we should firstly promote the profound culture behind it. In short, it's necessary for us to consider which is the best way to tell Chinese stories well, and construct discourse system with Chinese characteristics.

## 3. The Principles We should Adhere to

### 3.1. Principle of Empathy

We should beware that all human beings are created equal. We share the same emotion and feelings in some ways, which means there is the possibility we can resonate with people from different background. For example, we will sympathize with the weak, such as the homeless and the disabled, and even try our best to help them within our scope. The same goes with international relationship. If we aim to help the backward countries and those oppressed nations, we will gain pervasive support. Therefore, in our discourse system, we need to use words and sentences that are in accordance with the expression of most of the foreign nations. [2].

### 3.2. Principle of Wide Consultation

The principle means that we need to consult with target countries. Only by adhering to dialogue can problems be addressed. We should pursue consultation instead of confrontation. Neither the Ukraine crisis nor the trade disputes between China and the United States can be solved without dialogue or consultation. Through consultation, we can know whether there is any inappropriate part in our discourse; we can handle the different demands and seek wider common ground. Moreover, consultation can strengthen and consolidate mutual trust. Even if there is misunderstanding, the target countries can realize it not China's original intention.

### 3.3. Principle of Shared Benefits

National interest is the determinant of international relationship. Without common interests, no cooperation can be started. Thus, in our discourse system, we should attach great importance to the common interest. Initiatives, propositions and policies should embody common ground of the people all over the world. If a country only fights for its personal gain and pursue egoism, there is no doubt that its proposals and propositions will be rejected by all.

## 4. Main Strategies for Expediting the Construction of China's Discourse System and Strengthening China's International Discourse Power

### 4.1. International Activities and Organizations

In the age of information and technology, never before has China been so closely bound up with the rest of the world as it is today.

Today's China has completely changed and has hosted countless international events, such as the China International Import Expo, the China International Fair for Trade in Services, and the

first China International Consumer Products Expo. All these events provide China a platform to exchange ideas with the rest of the world and consolidate mutual understanding.

The Beijing Winter Olympic Games vividly and perfectly demonstrate the increasingly prominent role of international platform in promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges. During this period, people from different countries with different culture background communicated with each other. Different mindset meets, mingles and finally forms a common perspective in some degree. Moreover, international activities allow the average people to get in touch with each other, excluding political bias and cultural discrimination to some extent. Before coming to China, most foreigners believe that China is a “backward” and “aggressive” country. Foreign athletes come to China, and they probably have a more comprehensive and objective view of Chinese culture than ever before and Chinese people and will help tell the stories of modern China.

Likewise, great efforts made by international organization should also be emphasized. At present, international organizations are playing an increasingly prominent role in ensuring world peace and securing world unity. In the organizations, the authorities formulate international policies which should be followed by all. Organizations like the United Nations, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation can help make global and regional rules and regulations. Charter of the United Nations is the best interpretation of shared international awareness. In this way, China can benefit from these international norms, from set standard to frame structure. Combing international norms of discourse with Chinese characteristics, we can work out a sound discourse system, which is exclusive to China. Therefore, it is of great magnitude for China to contribute its wisdom and propose its solutions in organization affairs.

#### **4.2. Give Full Play to “We Media”**

Media are the pivotal and crucial tools for strengthening soft power and demonstrating different mindset and ideas. “We media” here don’t include official media; instead, they’re managed by average people. Official media always implement activities with clear political stand; rather, “We media” users tend to record their life merely. It will be easier for foreign people to accept this kind of culture which is spread by the local people like them.

Take Chinese vlogger Li Ziqi as an example. She set a new record for “Most subscribers for a Chinese language channel on YouTube” with 14.1 million subscribers according to Guinness World Records. Li’s content is about daily life in China’s countryside, cooking dishes with basic ingredients and tools. Her slow-paced videos featuring stunning natural scenery have attracted fans around the globe. Guinness commented that through these elaborate productions, the vlogger, overcoming language barriers and bridging cultural gaps, allows more people to understand the beautiful and profound meanings of Chinese culture.

For these reasons, China should attach great importance to the role of We media users. On the one hand, China should remove some superfluous restraints online and smooth the channel of communication between people at home and overseas. Nowadays, the global video streaming is flourishing and shows great vigor, and platforms like TikTok become household names. Therefore, creation of “positive-energy” video should be encouraged.

#### **4.3. Train a Contingent of Competent and Professional Interpreters and Translators**

China is moving towards the center of the world stage. The world needs to hear China’s voice and perspectives. We are in urgent need of cultural ambassadors who are familiar with both eastern and western culture, and possess qualified intercultural communicative competence. In China, interpreters and translators play an important part in avoiding cultural misunderstanding and defusing conflict. Although China has a relatively mature system of

cultivating talent majoring in MTI, it should still enhance the education of intercultural communicative competence. At the bilateral high-level strategic dialogue in Anchorage, Alaska, we have the inspiring statement that the United States does not have the qualification to say it wants to speak to China from a position of strength. Unarguably, we have excellent senior diplomat Yang Jiechi, but the interpreter Zhang Jing also rates a mention.

The status quo of MTI is that most of its students major in foreign languages during undergraduate period. In some degree, those students don't have enough specialized knowledge about other fields like politics, technology, medicine and so on; rather, most science-technology students' oral English leaves a lot to be desired. Based on it, we should consider whether we can train interpreters and translators in different areas; also, we can strengthen the oral English proficiency of those science, politics, medicine majors. In this case, they will have more of a chance for their voices to be heard. Likewise, the interpreters who know different culture such as religion and dietary habits and customs will perform themselves even better on telling Chinese stories. In conclusion, their interpreting and translation can be the content of China's discourse system and they can be the main force of telling Chinese stories to the world.

#### **4.4. Continue to Explore the Value of Chinese Culture**

In order to consolidate the foundation of discourse power, we should ask ourselves what is "socialist culture". [3]

Culture is the foundation of discourse power. We should make it clear that not every kind of culture should be cherished. Culture is related to a nation's inherent characteristics and defined its identity. President Xi once said, "China's excellent traditional culture can provide useful enlightenment for people to understand and transform the world, it can provide useful enlightenment for governance, and it can also provide useful inspiration for moral construction. And our national governance system today is the result of long-term development, gradual improvement and endogenous evolution on the basis of China's historical inheritance, cultural tradition and economic and social development." In the history, we have Jixia Academy, the later Jixia School. Jixia Academy to ancient China is like Academy of Athens to ancient Europe. It creates an atmosphere of cultural inclusiveness, and forms a landscape of diverse thought. Furthermore, we have countless world-renowned thinkers including Laozi, Confucius, Zhuangzi, Mencius, Mozi and Xunzi and great literary works such as The Book of Songs, The songs of Chu, The Book of Rites, the poetry of the Tang and Song dynasties, operas of the Yuan dynasty and the novels of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Still, great moving epics such as the tales of King Gesar, Manas, and Jangar have been passed on from generation to generation. All these cultural points contribute to the main topics of Chinese stories. Truly, everything becomes clear with the time and our Chinese culture stands the test of time. However, it is not enough to inherit and develop the traditional Chinese culture only. We should promote the creative evolution and development of fine traditional Chinese culture. We should cherish our cultural roots, draw on other cultures, and be forward-thinking.

For example, in the history, we have culture of "harmony". We cherish peace and advocate maintaining harmony while allowing for difference and that never do to others what you would not like them to do to you. We seek common ground while reserving differences. In The Book of Rites, we have the famous saying, "One good deserves another." In The Analects of Confucius, we realize that we should be truthful in speech and resolute in action. In The Songs of Chu, we gain the virtue of "Tou Tao Bao Li", which means you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. Today, all these cultural genes, grounded in the traditional Chinese culture and bearing the distinctive hallmarks of the nation, have since become China's contribution to the international governance system. Building a community with a shared future for mankind is now a widely-accepted proposition. Likewise, we should transform more culture genes into common will of

the international community. And in the future, there will be a sound discourse system with Chinese characteristics, which is rooted in the fine traditional Chinese culture.

## 5. Conclusion

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc around the world, rumors like “virus leaked from the Wuhan virology institute” are flourishing. We should take solid headway in constructing China’s own discourse system and making ourselves understood by the rest of the world. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China with comrade Xi Jinping at its core, China is taking solid step to accelerate the improvement of the “China view” of all countries in the world. In the context of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China continues to offer Chinese wisdom and Chinese approaches to solving the problems facing mankind. Furthermore, Chinese wisdom and approaches, carrying Chinese cultural genes, are vivid practice of telling Chinese stories well.

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