Research on the Strategy of “External Shaping” of China’s National Image

Dian ZHANG
College of Foreign Languages, Hunan University of Humanities, Science & Technology

Abstract: In new media highly developed decades, with the global outbreak of coronavirus, the west mainstream media use public opinion to shape the brain concept of national strategy, to mobilize the local media, Europe and the United States and other developed countries, the media, through the democratic foundation pro-western media all over the world. They Systematically pass the so-called responsibility bunk to China, causing public opinion on the offensive, and damage to China’s national image. This paper aims to put forward Suggestions and reflections on the “external shaping” of China’s national image.

Keywords: External Shaping; National Image

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As China’s image in the world is still “other-shaped” rather than “self-shaped” to a large extent, the discourse power of deciding and judging China’s image is still in the hands of the Western world and its mainstream media, and international discourse power of China is still in a weak position. [1]


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1. Attach Importance to the “self-shaping” of National Image

Under the demonization of western media, Chinese media should take the initiative to control the international discourse power, strive to improve the soft power of culture, and “self-shape” the national image with Chinese identity. Say no to those who question China, and tell China’s stories in a reasonable way and deliver the Voice of China. Domestic media should master the construction of China’s external publicity discourse, external publicity strategy and international communication strategy. In order to establish a good image of China, the international media of China can propose discourse construction strategies based on some related evidence. At the same time, domestic political literature research can best reflect the simulation policies and ideological viewpoints of a national party, including government work report, leaders’ speeches, press conferences, news conferences, and national publicity declaration. The study of these political documents can help to shape the image of China.

To be specific, take China’s external publicity media as an example, Both China Daily and CGTV have made great examples. CGTN produced the first English-language documentary that comprehensively shows the history of Wuhan against the epidemic -- The Lockdown One month in Wuhan. This is the first English-language documentary to show the full story of Wuhan’s fight against COVID-19 since the outbreak. In 33 minutes, It reviewed how the outbreak went from rapid outbreak to gradual containment in this city of 10 million people over a month after the outbreak. To demonstrate the true record of the Chinese people’s unity in fighting the epidemic overseas. Some descriptions are like this: “At 10 a.m. on January 23, Wuhan went into lockdown. This was done to stop a deadly virus from spreading further across the nation. A major travel day for people planning to return home for the holidays. This documentary is dedicated to all those who’ve had been battling tirelessly against the virus get COVID - 19 in order to keep the Epidemic at bay. Their efforts in safeguarding humanity from the virus will always be remembered.”

Secondly, the news media also participated in the struggle for the discourse power of public opinion. For example, in a strongly worded commentary broadcast on Primetime in the US on May 14, host Tracy Reagan called the China-Us trade imbalance a “weapon” that the US must use against China. In addition to calling China’s prosperity “at America's expense,” Tracy has three times accused the Chinese of “stealing” billions of dollars from Americans – “we have no choice,” she says, but to “fight.” Liu xin sai said that if you read Tracy’s words carefully, you will find that she is full of emotions and accusations, but little concrete evidence. Tracy
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cites a core figure that says “intellectual property theft” from China costs the US economy so much money a year. That’s according to a 2017 report by the National Bureau of Asian Research, a nonprofit organization in the United States.

Ms. Liu replied, First of all, this is an unverified statement, Second, the report makes it clear in black and white that global “intellectual property theft” could cost the United States as much as $600 billion a year, not China! American newsmaker Trish took 11 minutes to respond on her show and invited Liu to ask for a debate on Her personal Twitter account with Chinese state television. This is a way of “self-shaping” the national image, and also provides ideas for the construction of refuting discourse strategies. Finally, the “self-shaping” of national image should attach importance to the Internet in the context of new media. The Internet will become an important channel of national image communication. The rapid development of the Internet and the emergence of integrated media have demonstrated the great ability of new media, which makes the national image building closely linked with the Internet. The world is like a global village. The most convenient and efficient way for people outside China to understand China is the Internet. Chinese Internet celebrity Li Ziqi, owner of tens of thousands of Followers on Twitter and a spokesman for Traditional Chinese culture, also went viral on the Internet, causing netizens to question the idea of presenting China’s backward rural image to the world and drawing different voices. In their words, this is related to China’s national and international image, the power of the Internet can be imagined. But at the same time, the Internet has also become a tool to hinder the dissemination of national image. Due to its anonymity, duplication and freedom, the Internet has created a place for netizens to exaggerate and fabricate rumors in order to attract attention, resulting in false headlines and other self-shaping behaviors.

2. Strengthen the Media Crisis Management Ability, Improve the Public Opinion under the National Image

Judging from the timeline since the outbreak of COVID-19, several peak points are the collective “dumping pot” events orchestrated by western media to stigmatize China by taking advantage of relevant domestic events. Such as covering up the death toll, concealing the truth, not giving advance warning of global prevention, and even the Wuhan Virus Research institute leaked the virus and other absurd statements. This stigmatized is also wearing the western media objective language will, the media and journalists in reporting news and events will reflect the attitude and position directly or potentially influence the audience and the society’s perception of news events, the in the mind, attitude and behavior, is bad for
China’s national image building.\[2\] We should enhance the awareness and ability of new media crisis management. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, China’s news media have updated the latest information of the epidemic in a timely manner, guided the positive social sentiment, calmed the panic of the public, and effectively defused the epidemic crisis.

The construction of China’s national image is faced with three public opinion environment, international public opinion environment, world public opinion environment and mass public opinion environment. Both world and international public opinion are, to a certain extent, established by the public opinion space of the mainstream media. It is one-sided to study the formation of national image only from the perspective of international public opinion and world public opinion, and the mass public opinion should also be taken as the object of reference, because it is a force of image building and can also be used as a force of image destruction. \[3\]

3. Construct Refutation Discourse Strategies

When the Western media deliberately stigmatize, slander, spread rumors and “dump the cask” to stigmatize China, the Chinese news media lacked the ability to deal with the crisis and did not respond or even refute the foreign stigmatization in a timely manner. Based on the theory of evidence, this paper attempts to construct refutation discourse strategies. There are some methods to construct refutation discourse, Evidentiality is one of them. Evidentiality is actually a cognitive encoding of the source and reliability of information and a subjective addition to the propositional meaning. The strategies are classified into attitude and citation strategies, reporting and belief strategies and expectation strategies. On this basis, Hu Divides the strategy into speech and sense, hypothesis and belief, and reliability and expectation. \[4\]

“There are a lot of lies and rumors against China on foreign social platforms, some of which are very malicious,” said Hua Chunying, a Spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry. In such a dark and ugly world of false information, it may be necessary for some Chinese people, including Chinese diplomats, to make some real, objective and fair voices. It’s like being able to light and strike some candles and matches on a dark night. So those who are not so iron-hearted as to close their eyes and pretend to be unable to wake up will be able to make a sound of justice and see the truth through The Chinese side. This should be the direction that researchers need to work hard on. In addition to constructing a discourse system with Chinese characteristics, refuting discourse strategies should be constructed to collect Chinese official discourses that refute foreign media’s “criticism”, and
explore the propaganda scope, communication trend and communication effect of national refutation of misinterpreted content. Attention should also be paid to the influence of overseas Chinese media. Overseas Chinese media websites are mainly targeted at overseas Chinese and overseas students. In various international social media, such as Facebook, twitter, weibo, WeChat, etc. play a good publicity role. In addition to studying the formation of national image from the opinion field of mainstream media, we should also explore the national image built by public opinion from the perspective of public opinion. If data collection is complete, a comparative study can also be conducted between the public opinion field of mainstream media and the public opinion field. This will lay a solid foundation for telling China’s story, spreading the Voice of China, enhancing international communication and enhancing China’s national image.

In short, in the spread of Chinese culture out of the area strategy at the same time, should not be total analysis is how to see Chinese abroad, the Chinese national image “he model”, more should be attention to in the process of going out, how to do a good job in China’s national image “the model”, will be a good political stability, economic development and people’s unity of the Chinese nation’s international image spread all over the world.

Works Cited
[2] Li Liangrong, “Introduction to Journalism”. Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2018