

Cultural Identity Construction of CCTV English News Anchors: The Case of "China 24"

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ABSTRACT

This paper takes the CCTV English news program China 24 as a research object, focusing on the cultural identity construction of English news anchors. By analyzing the program context, the anchor's multi-dimensional performance and influencing factors, we reveal the logic and practical path of its cultural identity construction. The study found that the cultural identity of CCTV English news anchors is dynamic and dual, as both "Chinese narrator" and "international communicator", and its construction is influenced by the core elements of cultural stance, audience perception and professional role. Based on this, this paper proposes optimization strategies such as language training, cultural sensitivity cultivation, and interactive feedback mechanism to provide reference for the identity shaping of media practitioners in cross-cultural communication and to help enhance the effectiveness of China's international communication.

KEYWORDS

CCTV English news; Anchors; Cultural identity construction; Intercultural communication; China 24

1 Introduction

In the context of globalization and increasingly frequent cross-cultural communication, CCTV English news, as an important window for China's external voice, has a key impact on the effectiveness of international communication in terms of the cultural identity construction of its anchors. Taking the CCTV English news program China 24 as a research sample, this paper focuses on the special media role of the English news anchor, aiming to explore the dynamic logic of its cultural identity construction. By analyzing the anchor's multi-dimensional performance in verbal symbols, non-verbal symbols and news practices in the program context, and combining the influencing factors such as cultural stance and audience perception, we reveal the dual identity qualities of the anchor as a Chinese narrator and an international communicator, and provide theoretical and practical references to optimize the identity shaping of media practitioners in cross-cultural communication. This will provide theoretical and practical references for optimizing the identity shaping of media practitioners in cross-cultural communication.

2 Theoretical foundations and the context of the program China 24

2.1 Core theories of cultural identity construction

Cultural identity is not a fixed and unchanging label, but is characterized by dynamism. It evolves over time, space and social contexts. In the complex context of intercultural communication, the identity construction of media practitioners is influenced by a variety of core elements.

Cultural stance is the root of identity construction of media practitioners. It reflects the practitioner's identification with and adherence to the culture to which he or she belongs, and determines the cultural values and orientations embedded in the content of the communication. Different cultural stances can lead to differences in communication perspectives and content choices, which in turn affects the audience's understanding and acceptance of the message.

Audience perception is an important factor that cannot be ignored. Media practitioners need to fully understand the cognitive habits, ways of thinking and information needs of audiences in different cultural contexts. Only by adapting to the cognitive characteristics of the audience can the communication content be more easily accepted, thus realizing effective cross-cultural communication. Ignoring audience perceptions may lead to poor messaging and even misunderstanding.

Professional roles also constrain and shape the identity construction of media practitioners. As news communicators, their professional norms and ethics require them to maintain an objective, fair and accurate attitude towards communication. At the same time, professional roles also give them specific communication missions and responsibilities. In the process of cultural identity construction, it is necessary to balance the relationship between professional roles and cultural stance and audience perception.

2.2 The role of CCTV English news anchor

CCTV English news anchors play the dual roles of “Chinese narrator” and “international communicator”, which are both interrelated and focused.

As “China narrators”, they have the important mission of telling China's story and spreading China's voice to the international community. They need to accurately and comprehensively present China's history and culture, social development, policy concepts, etc., so that international audiences can better understand the real face of China. In the narrative process, it is important to adhere to China's cultural stance and values, and to reflect China's national image.

As “international communicators”, they need to be able to communicate cross-culturally and be able to communicate and interact effectively with audiences from different cultural backgrounds. It is necessary to respect the cultural differences of other countries and regions, understand the way of thinking and acceptance habits of international audiences, and adopt communication methods and language styles that are easy for them to understand and accept.

This dual attribute determines that the goal of CCTV English news anchors' cultural identity construction is to establish a good image of China in the international arena and to promote the international community's understanding and recognition of China. At the same time, there are certain boundaries, and it is important to avoid overemphasizing one's own culture to the neglect of other cultures in the process of dissemination, as well as to prevent the loss of one's own cultural characteristics and stance in order to cater to an international audience.

2.3 Program qualities and research value of China 24

China 24 constitutes a core in-depth news program of CCTV-NEWS and is broadcast daily. The program focuses on a variety of topics in China, including political, economic, social and cultural areas, and provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of rapid changes in China as a developing country on the lives of its people. It provides in-depth coverage on three to four topics each day, using a combination of news clips, supporting hosts, big-screen graphics, and studio interviews to elaborate and organize the content. China 24 meets its viewers Monday through Saturday at 20:00 p.m. sharp, with each episode lasting 45 minutes^[1].

China 24 focuses on China news from a global perspective, not only on important events and developments in China's domestic political, economic and cultural spheres, but also on international hot issues from China's point of view, providing a unique window for international audiences to understand China and the world. The program adopts a 24-hour rolling broadcasting scenario, which is able to deliver the latest news information to the global audience in a timely and rapid manner. This uninterrupted broadcasting format ensures the timeliness and continuity of the news and enables the audience to obtain the information they need at any time.

As an important program of CCTV English news channel, China 24 can fully reflect the communication concept and style of CCTV English news. By studying this program, we can gain a deeper understanding of the performance of CCTV English news anchors in cross-cultural communication and the process of cultural identity construction, which can provide a reference for the development of other similar programs.

3 Multi-dimensional presentation of cultural identity of China 24 anchors

3.1 Identity expression at the level of linguistic symbols

The identity expression of China 24 anchors at the level of linguistic symbols is an important vehicle for the construction of their cultural identity, which is reflected in various aspects such as accent adaptation, lexical preferences and pragmatic strategies.

In terms of accent adaptation, the anchors have developed a unique “international generalized accent”. The accent is neither purely British nor typically American, but retains a certain rhythmic character of the Chinese language while taking into account the listening habits of the international audience. For example, when broadcasting news involving Chinese place names and people's names, the anchor will appropriately incorporate Chinese tonal elements within the framework of English pronunciation rules, so that the pronunciation of words such as “Beijing”, “Shanghai”, etc. will both Beijing “, “Shanghai” and other words are pronounced in accordance with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) standards and with obvious Chinese identifiers. This kind of accent choice not only avoids the understanding obstacle of some audiences due to the overly strong single-country accent, but also conveys the identity message of “broadcaster from China” to the international audience through the subtle voice differences, and realizes the balance of ‘comprehensibility’ and “cultural recognition” in the cross-cultural communication. The balance between “comprehensibility” and “cultural recognition” is realized in cross-cultural communication.

In terms of vocabulary preference, the anchors showed their ability to accurately use and skillfully transform “culturally loaded words”. When it comes to China-specific cultural concepts and policy terminology, they prioritize vocabulary that

has already formed a certain cognitive base in the international community, while expressions that have not yet been popularized are conveyed through the “core words + explanatory phrases” approach. For example, when reporting on the unique social phenomenon of China's “Spring Festival Travel Rush”, the anchor will first use the internationally recognized translation “Spring Festival travel rush”, and then add the following explanation “it's the largest annual human migration in the world, as Chinese people return home to reunite with their families for the Spring Festival”. This ensures the cultural accuracy of the vocabulary and helps the international audience to quickly understand its connotation.

In terms of linguistic strategies, the anchors are good at balancing “China's position” and “international acceptance” through euphemistic expressions and contextual additions. When stating China's view on an international event, they seldom use direct, absolutist, judgmental statements; instead, they use “From China's perspective...” “It should be noted that...” Instead, they use guiding phrases such as “From China's perspective...” and “It should be noted that...” to place their own positions in a dialog framework of multiple perspectives. For example, when commenting on global trade disputes, the anchor will say “From China's perspective, trade wars are not beneficial to either side. We advocate solving problems through dialogue and consultation on the basis of equality and mutual respect”, which clearly conveys China's position and also reflects an open attitude of willingness to communicate and consult. For content that may cause cultural misunderstanding, anchors will take the initiative to supplement cultural background information, such as when reporting on the traditional Chinese festival “Dragon Boat Festival”, they will not only introduce the origin of the name “Dragon Boat Festival”, but also explain the meaning of “zongzi (glutinous rice dumplings)” and the cultural connotations of dragon boat races. For example, when reporting the traditional Chinese festival “Dragon Boat Festival”, the anchor will not only introduce the origin of the name “Dragon Boat Festival”, but also explain the meaning of “zongzi (glutinous rice dumplings)” and the cultural connotations of the Dragon Boat Race, so as to eliminate the information gap in the cross-cultural communication through the contextual supplementation.

3.2 Transmission of identity at the level of non-verbal symbols

Non-verbal symbols, as an important supplement to verbal symbols, play an indispensable role in the construction of the cultural identity of the China 24 anchors, mainly in the two dimensions of visual image and body language, and always centered around the balance between “professionalism” and “cultural recognition”. It always centers on the balance between “professionalism” and “cultural recognition”.

In terms of visual image, the dress style of anchors is characterized by “hidden cultural elements in formality”. Male anchors tend to use dark suits as the basic match, shirt colors in white, light blue and other subdued shades of the main, tie will occasionally choose with traditional Chinese patterns (such as auspicious clouds, back to the pattern) style, but pattern design simple and low-key, will not be overly ostentatious. The female anchor's attire is also centered on professional suits, and the colors are mostly black, grey, navy blue and other business colors. In terms of makeup, both male and female anchors adopt a natural and light style, with male anchors focusing on facial tidiness, and female anchors focusing on brightening the skin tone and modifying the contours, avoiding heavy makeup. This visual image design not only conforms to the professional norms of international news broadcasting and shows the professionalism of the anchor, but also conveys the aesthetic qualities of Chinese culture to the audience through the implantation of subtle cultural elements.

The use of body language, on the other hand, exemplifies “emotional transmission in restraint.” When broadcasting regular news, the anchor's hand gestures are small in amplitude, mostly natural open palms and slightly closed fingertips gestures, mainly used to assist in emphasizing key information, avoiding excessive waving of the arms and other exaggerated movements, and demonstrating the rigor of news broadcasting. When reporting news of positive significance, such as China's major breakthroughs in science and technology and international aid operations, the anchor's hand gestures will be slightly stretched out, together with gentle facial expressions, conveying emotions of joy and pride. When confronted with disaster news or international conflict events, anchors will tighten their body movements and their facial expressions will tend to be stony, in order to express the importance of the event and sympathy for those affected. Eye contact is another important non-verbal sign, the anchor will keep a steady gaze with the camera during the broadcasting process, this kind of gaze not only reflects the respect for the audience, but also shows a confident and calm attitude, which establishes a psychological connection with the international audience in cross-cultural communication.

3.3 Practicing identity in journalism practice

Journalistic practice is a key scenario for anchors to realize their cultural identities. By commenting on international issues and interpreting China's policies, China 24 anchors translate their identities as “China narrators” and “international communicators” into concrete communication behaviors.

In the commentary on international issues, the anchor shows a “Chinese perspective in a global view”. When confronted with global issues such as climate change and public health and safety, the anchor will first recognize the joint efforts of the international community, and then elaborate with China's practical experience. For example, when commenting on the global carbon neutrality goal, the anchor will say: “Many countries have made commitments to carbon neutrality, and China, as the world's largest developing country, has also put forward its own timetable and roadmap. We are actively promoting the development of renewable energy, and our wind and solar power generation capacity continues to be the largest in the world”. This way of expression not only recognizes the importance of global cooperation, but also highlights China's responsibility and accountability in it, positioning China in the larger framework of global governance. For some controversial international topics, the anchor will adopt the “presenting facts and reasoning” approach, citing authoritative data and objective facts to support his views and avoiding emotional arguments. For example, when discussing international economic and trade relations, the anchor will cite data on China's trade exchanges with other countries to illustrate the results of mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, so as to rationally For example, when discussing international economic and trade relations, he will cite data on China's trade exchanges with other countries to illustrate the achievements of mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, and convey China's position in a rational manner.

China's policy interpretation, on the other hand, reflects a “livelihood perspective in professional interpretation.” When interpreting major national policies (e.g. “Rural Revitalization Strategy” and “Common Wealth”), the anchors will not limit themselves to a superficial interpretation of the policy provisions, but will combine them with specific grass-roots cases to link macro policies with micro livelihoods. For example, when introducing the strategy of rural revitalization, the anchor may say, “China's strategy of rural revitalization is not only aimed at developing the economy, but also improving people's lives. In a village in Zhejiang Province, local farmers developed specialty agriculture with government support and increased their income by more than 30 per cent in three years”. This type of interpretation translates abstract policies into life changes that are perceptible to the audience, making it easier for international audiences to understand the meaning and significance of the policies. At the same time, the anchor will take the initiative to explain the cultural logic behind the policy, for example, when interpreting China's “household contract responsibility system”, he will mention the influence of the traditional Chinese concept of “family and state co-structuring” on the mode of rural governance, to help international audiences to understand the background of China's policy formation from its cultural roots. This helps international audiences to understand the background of China's policy formation from its cultural roots.

4 Influencing factors and optimizing paths of cultural identity construction of China 24 anchors

4.1 Triple constraints on identity construction

At the macro level, the national foreign propaganda strategy plays an important role in guiding the construction of the cultural identity of China 24's anchors. The national foreign propaganda strategy clearly defines China's image positioning and communication goals in the international arena, and the anchor's cultural identity construction must be in line with it. For example, as the state emphasizes the need to build up China's image of peace, development, cooperation and win-win situation, anchors will focus on embodying these elements in the communication process, and convey China's concept of peaceful development through news reports and commentaries.

At the meso level, media institutional norms act as a constraint on anchors' cultural identity construction. As an important national media organization, CCTV has strict norms of news reporting and professional code of ethics. These norms require anchors to maintain objectivity, impartiality and accuracy in the communication process, while safeguarding the image and interests of the country. Anchors' verbal expressions, behavior, etc. must conform to the norms of the media organization and must not exceed certain boundaries.

At the micro level, the culture of individual anchors is a key factor influencing the construction of their cultural identity. Anchors' educational background, cross-cultural communication experience, understanding and perception of different cultures all affect their performance in the communication process. Anchors who are culturally rich are better able to understand the differences between cultures and are more comfortable in communicating with international audiences, thus constructing their cultural identity more effectively.

4.2 Contradictions and challenges in existing practices

There is a certain tension between adherence and adaptation, which is the main contradiction faced in the process of constructing the cultural identity of China 24's anchors. While “cultural adherence” requires anchors to maintain China's cultural characteristics and stance in the communication process, “international adaptation” requires them to cater to the reception habits and cognitive characteristics of international audiences. It is a challenge to find a balance between the two, avoiding “cultural discounts” while maintaining one's own identity.

For example, when reporting on traditional Chinese customs, overemphasizing cultural characteristics may make it difficult for international audiences to understand, resulting in a “cultural discount”; while overly catering to the tastes of international audiences may lose the true nature of Chinese culture.

In addition, in the face of some international hotspot issues, adherence to China's position may conflict with some international public opinion, and it is also a considerable challenge to make international audiences understand and accept China's viewpoints while adhering to its position.

4.3 Optimization strategies in intercultural communication contexts

The mass media should focus on the discursive space at the international, civic and public levels, and conduct online and offline research on international official, civic and public organization audiences. The aim is to bridge the gap between “the stories we tell” and “the stories the international community expects to hear,” to improve China's international communication capacity, and to enhance China's influence in the arena of international public opinion ^[2].

In terms of language training, the bilingualism of anchors should be strengthened. Not only to improve listening, reading and writing skills in English, but also to deepen the understanding and utilization of Chinese language and culture. Through bilingual comparative learning, anchors can better grasp the differences and conversion skills of the two languages, and be able to express themselves more accurately and fluently in the communication process. At the same time, targeted accent training is carried out so that their accents are international in nature without losing their Chinese characteristics.

Cultural sensitivity development is also crucial. It is necessary to regularly organize anchors to participate in cross-cultural communication training, so as to understand the cultural customs, values and taboos of different countries and regions. Through case studies and simulated exchanges, anchors' ability to perceive and cope with cultural differences should be improved, so as to avoid affecting communication effects due to cultural misunderstandings.

The establishment of an interactive feedback mechanism can help anchors keep abreast of the needs and opinions of their audience. Feedback from international audiences on programs and anchors can be collected through social media, questionnaires, etc., and such information can be analyzed and summarized to find out the problems and deficiencies, and accordingly adjust the anchors' communication methods and cultural identity construction strategies. At the same time, the anchor can also enhance the emotional connection with the audience by interacting with them and improve the effectiveness of communication.

5 Conclusions

Taking “China 24” as the core case, this study systematically explores the logic and practical path of cultural identity construction of CCTV English news anchors. The core of journalistic boundary work is not merely drawing boundaries, but exploring the rules of journalistic boundaries and establishing the fundamental values of journalism in order to maintain and expand them in the context of ongoing change ^[3]. The study found that the cultural identity construction of CCTV English news anchors is a dynamic and diversified process: at the theoretical level, their identities are shaped by the combination of cultural stance, audience perceptions and professional roles, presenting the dual attributes of “Chinese narrator” and “international communicator”. At the practical level, anchors have formed a multi-dimensional cultural identity presentation system through linguistic symbols (accent adaptation, pragmatic strategies, etc.), non-linguistic symbols (visual images, body language, etc.), and journalistic practices (commentary on international issues, policy interpretation, etc.). In the future, it is necessary to deepen the knowledge of the law of constructing the anchor's cultural identity, to provide more accurate theoretical guidance and practical paths for the identity shaping of media practitioners in cross-cultural communication, and to help deliver China's voice and present China's image to the international community more effectively.

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