

The Discourse Power of The Target Language in External Communication

-- Take the COVID-19 as an example

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Abstract: "Telling the story of China well and mastering China's leadership" is related to the establishment of China's international image and the maintenance of its international discourse power. With the continuous enhancement of China's technological and economic strength, frequent foreign exchanges, and increasing international influence, going global has become an inevitable trend. In the process of external communication, the discourse power of the target language plays a leading role in the direction of international public opinion. Only words that are understandable to both parties are more conducive to expressing their own demands and ideas, and promoting China's entry into the international stage.

Keywords: Voice power, External reporting, Cultural appeal.

1. Introduction

The concept of discourse power originated from the theory of the relationship between discourse and social power proposed by French sociologist Michel Foucault. Foucault (1970) proposed in his speech "The Order of Discourse" that "discourse is power, and people endow themselves with power through discourse", and further pointed out that discourse is not only a symbol of thought and a tool of communication, but also a means and purpose of people's struggle. Words and power can be reflected through corresponding language and writing. Discourse is not just about simply combining vocabulary and sentences based on grammatical rules, it represents the complex power relationships behind language. The discourse power of the target language means that the country actively uses the correct form of the target language in foreign communication to make other countries accept China's cultural demands. The deeper purpose is to tell the story of China well, spread the voice of China, spread Chinese culture in foreign exchanges, and broadcast the essence of the discourse. Power lies in language, and the acquisition of discourse power in the translated language is beneficial for other countries to understand Chinese culture, increase their acceptance of Chinese culture, further participate in international events, lead the direction of world public opinion, and better demonstrate China's international status. Therefore, China is increasingly emphasizing the acquisition of discourse power in the target language for external communication.

2. The Necessity of Enhancing China's Discourse Power

Nowadays, in China, whenever there are foreign-related meetings, events, or occasions with foreign participation, most people take pride in speaking English rather than Chinese. Not only that, all professions and professions need to ask about their English proficiency levels when evaluating professional titles. This phenomenon has led Chinese people to blindly worship English, which requires us to deeply consider. In today's context, the maintenance of discourse

rights has become an urgent matter. In the process of China's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, Academician Li Lanjuan, who went deep into Wuhan, made outstanding contributions, and she also injected pride and pride into our country and nation. When Li Lanjuan held a video conference for Americans to explain the prevention and treatment methods of COVID-19, she communicated in Chinese throughout the process. Americans brought their own Chinese translators. Academician Li Lanjuan's English level was also excellent. However, in this special period, Chinese can show our cultural characteristics while more highlighting the international status.

Nowadays, from the perspective of obtaining foreign discourse power, China's discourse dominance in international events has weakened. If China loses its discourse power in international activities, it will not be conducive to using its own discourse to express its position, convey information, and express cultural demands in the future. It will only make China a randomly defined object, which is not conducive to showcasing China's superior cultural characteristics and better safeguarding national interests. China needs to maximize the dominance of international discourse, grasp the direction of world public opinion, and establish the image of a major country.

3. Overview of Foreign Media Reports

In recent years, foreign media often have some false negative reports on the COVID-19 in China. On December 19, the internationally renowned journal Nature published an article entitled "China COVID wave could kill one million people, models predict" "Model predicts that China's COVID-19 wave may kill one million people". At the beginning of the article, an Australian expert, James Wood, stated that China will experience several bad months. The comprehensive opening up of the epidemic in China may become a global burden in the fight against the epidemic. Not to mention whether China's liberalization will become a global burden, simply relying on some data to shift the blame entirely to China is a completely irresponsible statement, and at the same time, it is a stain and contempt on the Chinese government.

This article indicates that China's liberalization poses a threat to many countries, so they have changed their attitude towards accusing China of violating human rights during the period of lockdown, and started to say that China's arbitrary liberalization is irresponsible to the world. In fact, liberalization is a decision made by the Chinese government after careful consideration, which inevitably reflects on the future development situation. In the past three years, we have been well aware that the hope of clearing to zero is almost zero. The current toxicity and therapeutic ability of Omicron have decreased significantly compared to before, and seizing this opportunity to restore normal life for the people is the top priority. The article on China in "Nature" appears to be expressing opinions on the epidemic, but in reality, it is alarmist and exaggerated.

After the liberalization, various parts of the country experienced a wave of infection peaks, with many people being recruited. CNN reported as follows: "China could see near a million deaths as it exits zero Covid, The death rate of Omicron is 0.0684%. Considering that China has a population of 1.4 billion and the final death toll is 964000, why did foreign media not mention 0.0684% and instead repeatedly mention China's death toll, which caused unnecessary intimidation and sarcasm and disdain in their words. The repeated mention of 1 million indicates a high death toll, which can be said to be ulterior motives. Compared to the 330 million population in the United States, China's epidemic prevention policy has still had a significant effect. With a large population, it is already much more difficult to govern a large country than a small one. How can we compare it equally? China delayed its release until today, avoiding the first generation COVID-19 and delta variant with the highest mortality rate, and did not release it until the death rate of Omicron has dropped significantly. This is the best decision.

According to German mainstream media reports, they urged to suspend flights with China in view of the explosive number of COVID-19 infections in China. Not only that, but also foreign media have spread rumors to smear China's policies, such as "China Mandates COVID-Zero Policy, Shenzhen People Desperate For Food". The term "preserve" was originally intended to be a commendatory term, referring to a desire and longing for a beautiful thing, but here it is a derogatory term. The real situation is that people in the north queue up on snowy days but are deliberately accused of not being able to buy food, It makes people point the finger at the Chinese government for being hungry, deliberately distorting the facts. It's funny that foreign media did not carefully understand the climate in the north and south of China when smearing it. Where did it snow in Shenzhen at that time? No matter what situation China is in and what policies it releases, foreign media will always "pick the bone in the egg" and will not give up until they find something wrong. Three years ago, during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in China, the Guardian reported that the first case of someone who was affected from COVID-19 could be traced back to 17 November, according to media reports on unpublished Chinese government data, It is clearly a defamation of the Chinese government, which can shift the responsibility to the "irresponsible" entire Chinese people and further damage China's international image. In fact, the first patient in our country was only discovered in December, not November as claimed by the British media. Their inaccurate and objective reports violate the principles of authenticity and objectivity in news release, which is not conducive to the dissemination of

true news and affects the authenticity of information. Not only that, let's take a look at how the New York Times, as an internationally renowned "double standard" media, reports on China: "China may be beating the coronavirus, at a paid cost." For Italy, which adopts a similar approach to China, it evaluates: "Italy, panel's new officer, has lessons for the world." The same approach, foreign media have completely different attitudes towards the two countries. Saying to China that the epidemic will cause extremely painful costs, while praising Italy as a good example to the world is truly a double standard, without considering China's stance and attitude.

Since the release of China in December, health codes and travel codes are no longer checked across the country. Airport stations are always open and there is no need to scan codes to enter. In the past three years of fighting the epidemic, the country has borne too much for us. Once there is an epidemic, strict lockdown and management will be implemented immediately. At the same time, China's economy has also been greatly affected by the blockade. Moreover, the mortality rate of the Omicron strain has greatly decreased, and officials have provided data stating that 90% of the epidemic in China is mild or asymptomatic. Now is the best time to loosen up. However, foreign media tend to seize the opportunity and hold onto various slanders, claiming that China's opening up of the epidemic will lead to catastrophic growth, with millions of deaths. When it is not opened up, the New York Times stated in an article that China's strict control management will lead to economic decline and people's living pressure will also increase. It is nonsense to say that no matter how China does, its economy will be affected.

Of course, in China's external communication, some foreign media also hold an objective, accurate, and scientific attitude when reporting on events in China, in order to effectively spread discourse and promote communication between countries. For example, according to a report by the Chinese Academy of Culture and Tourism, China will experience a "significant recovery" in inbound tourism in 2023, according to the report by the Effe News Agency. "Everyone hopes to easily travel to Beijing again soon," Felix Souter, president of the Swiss China Economic Association, said in a recent media interview.

4. Overview of Foreign Media Reports

The media's external reporting should achieve the unity of authenticity and accuracy, which is the basic principle of news. Only scientific and accurate reporting can truly reflect the situation of a country and promote discourse exchange between countries. Strictly eliminate all intentional distortions, infinite exaggeration of facts, and actions aimed at belittling and smearing the image of the country, which is not conducive to the objective and effective dissemination of national events. External reporting should ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the content, avoid unreliable information, and reduce the possibility of false reporting leaving room for imagination for the audience. During the epidemic, some foreign media did not report the truth of the news, but distorted the facts, used false information to attract attention, which can be said to be an organized slander against China by unscrupulous means for the sake of traffic. This set of words with ulterior motives can be said to be more unexpected than the aggressive COVID-19. Such dangerous practices in the West ignore the health of people around the world, It also violates the fundamental principles of news reporting. China should take this as a warning and continue to

participate in world discourse activities with an objective and fair attitude, in order to become a country dominated by world discourse, rather than being subject to other countries, and thus being constantly tarnished, damaged, and belittled by foreign media without any means. This not only goes against the maintenance of China's international image, but also goes against China's traditional concepts and values.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the above reports, China is increasingly appearing on the international stage. In order to better spread culture and showcase the image of a great country, obtaining the right to speak the translated language is particularly important in external communication. When China's international status is elevated to a certain level, it is enough to deter foreign media and dare not point out, promote, and smear China's policies. Only when China's discourse power is enhanced can the Chinese people lift their heads and look more confidently and proudly at the world, showcase our great country demeanor and international discourse attitude to the West, establish our unique international discourse system, showcase our international image, and make good relations with the world with a better face. They can truthfully introduce epidemic prevention policies and methods to the world, and showcase our humanitarian spirit. This is also a new requirement for translators in current society. Translators

need to constantly learn, keep up with current events, and learn as much as possible about Chinese culture in order to better spread culture. In translation practice, it is important to consider the acquisition of discourse power in the target language, showcase cultural demands, and avoid unnecessary international conflicts and disputes. Accept the values and demands of the target language in a language that the audience can understand.

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