The Historical Transmutation of English Media in China

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Abstract: From a global perspective and a local scene, this paper analyzes the different characteristics of English media of different historical periods in the historical transmutation of English media in China. The historical evolution of China's English media is the result of mutual influence among the structural elements of international relations, politics, economy, culture, technology and so on. In the future, English media in China will give full play to the resource advantages of Chinese culture, and seek a new round of breakthrough and innovation in international communication concept, narrative mode and presentation mode by means of digital network communication technology.

Introduction

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's English media has been developing through exploration. Especially in the past year of 2019, which coincides with the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening up, flagship media CGTN, *China Daily*, *china.org.cn* and other mainstream English media have made remarkable achievements in their foreign communication, forming a new pattern of foreign communication of Chinese English media in the new era. The historical transmutation of China's English media is closely related to international background, politics, economy, culture, technology and other factors. The whole process has experienced four historical stages: Early Founding（1949-1978）, Reform and Opening up to the New Century（1978-2000), New Century（2000-2017）and New Era, corresponding to the four international stages of internationalization, globalization, transnationalization and post-globalization. [1]

1. Early Founding（1949-1978）

International Background

After the end of the world war II, the ideological opposition of states became the main issue of international relations at that time, and it is called "international period". At this period, the international communication of the English media throughout the world was regarded as an effective means of publicizing its policy and winning the hearts of the world. In other words it was actually an integral part of international relations and essentially an international extension of national interests and domestic politics. In this context, new China was trying to stabilize the domestic order at home, and eagered to establish a new international image, express interests and concerns, and integrate into the international community.

Political Position

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to unify the thinking of the people and safeguard national interests, the correct ideological orientation should be firstly ensured. During this period, "politics" and "political" operation was embedded into the economy, culture and even

the whole daily life, and it already became the leading factor in the entire structure field. The English media in China, as a component of the country's machine operation, was naturally "embedded" into the highly politicized national system, and became the political tool of the nation's foreign propaganda. The nationalistic and political characteristics of this stage, as well as the vertical and class communication characteristics, to some extent not only caused the lack of discourse expression of China's English media, but also left its rigid stereotypes.

Propaganda Feature

The internationalization background and political position in the early PRC,as well as the strengthening of national strength and the application of international broadcasting technology in the field of media, have determined "propaganda standard" and the "propaganda effect" in a wide range of China's English media. Specifically, China's English media seek too much to present a good face to the world and rarely present its problems objectively. "Chinese finalized system"was widely used in *China Reconstructs*, *People's China* and other newspapers. Namely, the manuscript should be reviewed and corrected in Chinese and then translated into foreign languages, which vastly affected the readability of the report in China's English media. It also became one of the historical origins of distrust from the western government, media and the public to China's mainstream media's stereotype.

2. Reform and Opening up to the New Century（1978-2000）

Globalization Background

After the 1980s, with the collapse of cold war relations, countries began to pursue realistic international policies and accelerated the degree of international openness, and international relations entered a stage of "globalization". At this stage, the capital became the main driving force of globalization dominated by America, multinational companies and global media arised at the historic moment. Combined with the spread of technology, especially the development of movie and TV media technology, carrying its appeal to a common human emotion and culture motif, maximumly satisfy the needs of the global audience. Globalization at this period was trying to transcend nationality and particularity of different cultures to maximize the interests of capital worldwide.

Commercial Characteristics

The primary feature of globalization is economic globalization, which is mainly reflected in the marketization of resource allocation. During this period, China began to pursue the strategic decision of "reform and opening up" centered on economic construction, which indicated that the source of national legitimacy and authority had also undergone a transformation from the legitimacy of revolutionary ideology to the legitimacy of practical performance,[2] constantly deepening reform exerted significantly political embedded-off effect. The commercial capital and consumerism began to infiltrate into all areas of Chinese society, and the English media in China also joined the tide of this commercial eform. In this trend, more and more English media begin to play a variety of roles in information transmission, language learning, social services and other areas. Since 1990, China's English media has been in a "trio" of PRC's party leadership, business operation and English characteristics.[3] Especially in commercial aspects, the proportion of economic news in English media increased greatly, and the marketization of different media categories such as educational service newspapers and local newspapers was similarly increasingly apparent. Professional economic newspaper such as *Business Weekly*, newspaper used for foreign language learning *21 Century*, and local newspaper *Guangzhou Daily* were founded at this time.

Publicizing Shift

In the 1980s, China's reform and opening up was a new field for the world. "Introducing China and letting the world know more about China" became the main task of China's English media in

this period. During this stage, the setting up of English newspaper *China Daily*, the successful launch of *People's Daily* (overseas edition), the establishment of the Press Spokesman and Press Conference System, and the adjustment of management departments of the English media at all levels, have all demonstrated that China made timely and accurate presentations to the world on China's aspirations. On the other hand, editing, distribution, communication way of China's English media were also presented significant change. Especially, the international TV program's openning such as CCTV- 4（in 1992） and CCTV- 9（in 2000）, indicated a golden "television era" of China's English media. All the above manifested that the English media media's function partly changed from state's propaganda tool of the dominant ideology to independent institutions for internaitonal communication. However, it should be pointed out that although the English media in this period began to play a certain role in external publicity, the effect of external publicity was still not satisfactory due to the influence of historical and political factors.

3. New Century（2000-2017）

Transnational Background

The discipline of international communication had to disentangle itself progressively from a nation-centric discourse. Once the myth of cultural imperialism thesis were dispelled, attention began to be given to regional and transnational media.[4] In the new century, with the deepening of globalization, international relations show a new trend of multi-polarization, and international communication entered the stage of "transnationalization". At this stage, in adddtion to globalization, nation and its localization started to play another important role. Namely globalization and localization became the common theme of international relations in this period. The concept of "globalization" coined by Roland Robertson in the 1990s. Resources elements such as capital, technology and human resources presented transnational flow and combinationin, to further promote the optimal allocation in the global range, enhanc the different countries and regional cultural relevance, complementarity and dependency. Meanwhile, with the wide application of Internet, mobile phones and other mobile new media, it not only promoted economic globalization, also further realized the cultural exchange. And the new trend of localization and its resistance to cultural universalism naturally .

Networking Trend

At the end of last century, the development of internet created a new pattern of English media' external communication in China. The Chinese Internet News Center was founded On January 1, 1997. Internet medium, as the new emerging technology, was also widely used in the political, economic, cultural and social life. Many English media in China such as Xinhua News Agency, *China Daily*, *People's Daily* also launched their own online edition, and joined the international internet communicaiton. These online media include mainstream English media such as *www.xinhua.net.com*, *www.peopledaily.com.cn*, *www.Chinadaily.com.cn*, *www.cri.com.cn*, and local websites such as *www.beijingnews.com.cn*, *www.eastday.com.cn*,and *www.southcn.com*. In addition, with the continuous innovation of internet communication technology, the network TV version of Chinese English media successively opened the network TV platform, such as CNC （China News Network corporation） and CCTV（China Network TV）. When exploring the demensions of "soft power" in 1990s, Nye pointed out that information technology was making soft power more relevant than ever.[5] The development of networking and information technology provided a necessary platform for the foreign publicity of Chinese soft power.

Prominent Publicity

After the new century, building an omni-directional, multilevel and wide-range of "big foreign communication", and promoting Chinese culture and Chinese media "going out" became the focus of this phase. English media in China started to shoulder the responsibility of "publicity function", especially extenal publicity of Chinese culture. While embarking on a journey to trace the roots of

Chinese culture at homeland, a series of overseas events such as the "the Year of Chinese Culture" (Paris, in 2003) and the Confucius Institute (Seoul, in 2004) were constanly promoted and spread all over the world. During this period, the domestic scholor Duan liancheng first proposed the concept of "external publicity" in 1998, and the word "propaganda" was officially replaced by "publicity", which is no longer used in English translation of public document. In terms of the way of discouse expression, the rigid tone of propaganda was weakened, and emotional resonance started to be created from the perspective of ordinary individuals and daily life to tell Chinese stories. Since then, Chinese English media began its journey of telling good stories about China.

4. New Era（Henceforward）

Post-globalization Background

At present, the world has entered the post-globalization era in which multi-centers, multi-cultures and multiple values coexist, [6] which forms the new context of international comminication. In the era of post-globalization, international communication and cultural exchanges need a double vision. Basesd on this vision, there will no longer be a superpower enveloped by the packing under globalization trend, also will not stick to itself in the localization of the siege, and all countries should seek to culture as the preferred international platform, to realize the internationalization of local content, particularly the indigenous culture expression. Therefore, paying more attention to the diversity of culture and connectedness, and building a community of shared future for mankind in the new world will represent the general trend and be on the agenda in the future.

Connectivity

It was proposed a long time ago by Alexander Wendt that international institution can be transformed by practices of sovereignty, by an evolution of cooperation, and by critical strategic practice. [7] His point to some extent predicted the current trend and the importance of cooperation, namely, connectivity and its corresponding strategies. Ancient China has long been the tradition connected to the outside world, such as the "silk road". In the post-globalization era, China has also entered a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, an era in which China is increasingly approaching the center of the world stage and making greater contributions to mankind. On this background, China began to rethink the communicative ethics tracing back   ancient idea of connectivity , actively seeking common sense with the rest of the world culture. Therefore, China put forward the new concept of "building a community with a shared future for mankind" and the strategic initiative of "One Belt And One Road" . In this context,   China's English media should shoulder the new responsibility and historical mission of "connecting foreign countries and connecting the world" .

Digital Networking

In this new age, internet communication and social media has become the new trend in external publicity of China's English media. That is to say, technology is playing an increasingly important role in cultural communication, especially the digital network.   In addition to its advantages in information collection, storage, transmission, search and processing, because of its extensive and compatible product forms as well as interactive and diversified communication methods, digital network technology has become an inevitable choice for the transformation of traditional media. In an increasingly digitised and globalised 24/7 multi-media age, Asian countries play an increasingly significant role, and the ascent of Asia could contribute to further internationalising of media.[8] especially in China, with the new media technology, the acheivements of external communication of China's English media in a new era have been known to the whole world. The three major national English media in the 2018's reform have formed multi-dimensionally international communication matrix and opened a new situation represented by Xinhua News Agency, Central

Radio and Television Station and *China Daily*. The mainstream English new media represented by China international television (CGTN) have also started to go abroad and connect with the world.

Summary

Througn above analysis on the historical transmutation of China's English media, it indicates that development of China's English media is the result of mutual influence of the structural elements such as international relations, politics, economy, culture, technology and so on. At present, under the new context of international communication, technology, culture and value becomes the primary structure elements in the whole field,[9] it should paid more attention to the shift from the international communication "power" paradigm to "cultural body" paradigm. On the basis of understanding culture, constructing the connection between the different cultures and consensus with the help of new media and new technology to create the new context of dialogue, to achieve a new interpretation of culture and communication.[10] In the context, English media in China in the future as an important platform should follow the idea of "community with shared future for mankind" and the initiative of "one belt and road", shoulder its "connecting China and foreign countries, communicating the world" responsibility and mission, and give full play to the advantages of the resources of Chinese culture and digital network technology, expand mobile social media platforms, to seek a new breakthrough and innovation with international communication concept, narrative mode and modes of presentation.

Acknowledgements

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