

Study on the Regionalized Communication Paths of Chinese Literary Works

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Abstract: Against the complex and diverse backdrop of globalization and the exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, the international communication of Chinese literary works faces a new situation where opportunities and challenges coexist. This study focuses on the regionalized communication paths of Chinese literary works, aiming to address issues in current communication, such as the tendency toward homogenization, unbalanced acceptance, and insufficient communication effectiveness. The study divides the communication regions into East Asia, Southeast Asia, countries along the “Belt and Road” Initiative, and Europe and America, and analyzes the unique communication characteristics, advantages, and obstacles of each region. Based on the analysis of differences among the above-mentioned regions, three major strategies for regionalized communication are proposed. The implementation of differentiated communication strategies of “one policy for one country” and “one policy for one region” is the key to enhancing the international acceptance of Chinese literature and deepening the exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. This study attempts to provide theoretical support and practical suggestions for building an accurate and efficient regionalized communication system for Chinese literary works. It has a certain reference value for expanding the localized application of cross-cultural communication theories, helping China participate in global cultural governance, and promoting the “going global” of China’s fine traditional culture and contemporary culture.

Keywords: Chinese literary works; Chinese culture; Regionalized communication; Communication paths; International Chinese language education

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1. Introduction

As a tool for national image construction, literary works are crucial for realizing the output of literary value and the effectiveness of cultural connection, and their communication should be adjusted adaptively according to regions^[1]. In today’s increasingly diverse and complex context of globalization, the communication of Chinese literary works faces increasingly severe challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the cultural demands of countries under the “Belt and Road” Initiative and the Global South are becoming more urgent; on the other hand, the acceptance

of excellent Chinese literary works worldwide is not high, and the traditional communication paths for literature urgently need optimization.

Against the dual background of policy implementation and discipline construction, building a differentiated regional communication strategy for literary works and emphasizing the adaptability of the communication system should become an important measure to enhance cultural momentum. This will play a significant role in deepening the localized practice in “Belt and Road” regions, promoting people-to-people bonds between China and foreign countries, and facilitating the exchange and mutual learning among Chinese and foreign civilizations.

2. Research status

In numerous previous studies, the channels and current status of the international communication of Chinese literature have been fully discussed and summarized. Liu Li explored the translation and introduction model composed of five core elements: “translation subject”, “translation content”, “translation channel”, “translation audience”, and “translation effect”, aiming to provide insights for the construction of the international translation and communication model of Chinese literary works^[2]. Zhang Jian proposed that “whether using communication theories to explain the circulation paths of literary works overseas or applying effect evaluation methods to analyze the acceptance of literature in foreign contexts, inspiration can be drawn from theoretical resources of communication studies”^[3]. Ge Wenfeng pointed out that “in previous initiatives to promote Chinese literature ‘going global’, government sponsorship has always been the main launch method, but its drawbacks are equally obvious: text selection is to a certain extent interfered by political ideology, which guides text reading towards political aesthetics. However, text selection will ultimately determine the positioning of readers and the tendency of overseas interpretation of Chinese culture”^[4].

Some scholars have also conducted regional studies on the communication of Chinese literary works in different countries, exploring how to optimize communication strategies by improving translation methods, analyzing the preferences of target readers, and studying publishing cases. Bao Xiaoying used communication theories as the basis and translation studies as theoretical support, taking the English translations of Mo Yan’s works in the United States as an example to explore an effective translation and introduction model for Chinese translated literature to “go global”^[5]. Zhuang Yuan and Wu Bo analyzed the characteristics of Chinese works that have been translated and introduced to the Republic of Korea, and examined readers’ preferences and their causes through information such as bestseller lists, work ratings, and reader reviews^[6]. Dong Hongjie analyzed the main characteristics, communication subjects, and communication forms of the translation and communication of Chinese literary works in Albania, and put forward countermeasures and suggestions from the dimensions of platform expansion, communication model innovation, market-oriented operation, and translation talent cultivation^[7].

In summary, current academic research on the communication dilemmas, strategies, and model construction of Chinese literature in the global context is relatively scattered. Discussions mainly focus on aspects such as translation strategies, publishing and distribution, and the communication effect evaluation of Chinese literary works. The analysis of communication links in different regions is still not systematic and in-depth, showing a certain degree of lag and delay.

3. Division and characteristics of communication regions for Chinese literary works

The perspective of differentiation and localization provides a new direction for the communication of Chinese

culture and literature. Drawing on the disciplinary advantages of regional and national studies can help scholars focus on contextualized communication, identify the alignment points between cultures in different regions, achieve precise communication, and explore more actionable communication laws. This addresses the practical issues of single communication methods and poor effectiveness ^[8].

3.1. Communication of Chinese literary works in East Asia

Since Kim Ji-young, born in 1982, sparked widespread social discussion in 2019, “Korean women’s literature” has become a cultural symbol in the Republic of Korea’s literary market and a turning point in the communication of the Republic of Korea’s literary works. Writers such as Cho Nam-joo, Kim Ae-ran, and Han Kang—who won the 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature—have triggered a “Korean Wave craze” with their consistent focus on feminist themes. *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* by Wang Anyi, winner of the 5th Mao Dun Literature Prize, has been listed as a compulsory text for “East Asian Urban Literature” at Seoul National University. The Japanese translation of Yan Ge’s *Sad Stories from Ping Le Town* won the 2023 Japanese Translated Literature Award and was praised by *Asahi Shimbun* as the “Chinese version of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.” The delicate emotional expressions and gender narratives in these works have resonated with East Asian cultures on topics such as “intergenerational family trauma” and “gender political rights”, leading to a positive communication trend ^[9].

Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China all belong to the Chinese character cultural circle. Ordinary young people and Chinese language learners generally have a high acceptance of Chinese culture. Although the successful communication of a specific literary work or series is the result of the interplay between capital operation and literary trends, when promoting literary works to East Asian countries, people should return to the essence of popular literature and avoid excessive labeling and commercialization.

3.2. Communication of Chinese literary works in Southeast Asia

Countries in Southeast Asia have a strong demand for intergenerational inheritance of Chinese (the mother tongue of overseas Chinese), and a solid foundation for the communication of Chinese-language culture. Both Chinese and Southeast Asian literature feature writings on cultural integration and identity, giving them distinct communication advantages. Ethnic Chinese writers in Southeast Asia are often more sensitive to the social dynamics of both China and their host countries. They are more willing to capture the subtle tension of “differences with similarities, and similarities with differences.” Some of their works directly depict the family emotional relationships of overseas Chinese while integrating their unique cultural backgrounds.

An in-depth analysis of *The Uncommon Place* by Malaysian Chinese writer Li Zishu reveals three distinct characteristics: an anti-ethnic essentialism tendency, a prominent sense of locality, and an emphasis on intersubjectivity. Specifically, the new generation of Malaysian Chinese is more willing to embrace local life and identify more strongly as citizens of their country. Both writers and the public demonstrate a fading “Chineseness” and a spiritual “return to hometown” ^[10]. Therefore, the regionalized communication of Chinese literary works in Southeast Asia should prioritize works that reflect the common themes of Chinese culture.

Given the favorable communication environment in Southeast Asia and the bilingual/multilingual advantages of readers, publishing and media strategies must adapt to different communication contexts. Based on factors such as the number of overseas Chinese, the status of Chinese language teaching institutions, the Chinese proficiency of overseas Chinese, and the situation of Chinese-language media, people should enhance their awareness of proactive communication and promote the upgrade of Chinese literature communication from Chinese-only to a

combination of Chinese and English.

3.3. Communication of Chinese literary works in the “Belt and Road” regions

Since 2021, cooperation between Chinese publishing houses and those in countries along the “Belt and Road” has become increasingly frequent and in-depth. The Chinese Writers Association has established the “Belt and Road Literature Alliance” and donated picture books to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, and Kazakhstan^[11]. This has created a favorable environment for the international communication of Chinese literature and provided greater guarantees for the regular operation of its overseas dissemination.

Looking at the literary exchanges between China and Russia over the past 100 years, a large number of classic Russian literary works have been translated and introduced to China. Soviet literature, represented by works by writers such as Maxim Gorky and Mikhail Sholokhov, has influenced the development of modern Chinese literature. The experiences of the Soviet people’s struggles depicted in these works inspired the revolutionary will of progressive Chinese youth. To this day, government-led projects for the mutual translation of classics between China and Russia, as well as thematic translation and promotion of “Chinese Regional Literature” carried out by writers’ associations from multiple Chinese provinces in Russia, have promoted the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature in Russia. The promotion of Chinese literary works must address the issues of the times. It should focus on promoting works that meet policy requirements, take into account the shared historical memories and classic literary aesthetics of countries in the “Belt and Road” regions, and gradually increase the proportion of modern and contemporary literature. This aims to showcase the unique changes of Silk Road culture and jointly build a literary value system rooted in Eastern aesthetics.

3.4. Communication of Chinese literary works in Europe and America

Chinese literary works have long followed an elite-oriented communication path in Western countries. Popular literature has little penetration into the cultural lives of ordinary people, resulting in a narrow range of target readers and a disconnect between audience groups. Many works also face significant gaps with Western cultural concepts.

In recent years, Chinese popular works such as suspense, sci-fi, and online literature have gained popularity in Europe and America. After the English versions of Zhou Haohui’s *Death Notice* and Mai Jia’s *Decoded* (suspense and mystery novels) were released, media outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Financial Times* covered them extensively. Ma Boyong’s *The Silent City* and *The Mystery of the Antique Bureau* sparked a wave of Chinese “suspense fever” overseas^[12]. From reading data on Amazon and Goodreads, literary works that spark widespread discussion in Europe and America often include outlooks and imaginations about technology and the future. The globally popular *The Three-Body Problem*, for example, takes China as its narrative starting point and raises questions about human nature from a sci-fi perspective. It not only disseminates the values and vision of contemporary China but also reflects the common value pursuit of all humanity. It is precisely the dual focus on national characteristics and universality that allows it to cross cultural barriers and gain recognition from foreign readers. Therefore, the international communication of contemporary Chinese literary works should shift from focusing on the English-speaking world or traditionally influential Western countries to emphasizing comprehensive global communication. It is necessary to actively promote works with universal value narratives to achieve the translation of the contemporary value of Chinese literary works.

4. Regionalized communication paths for Chinese literary works

To enhance international recognition and perception of the richness and diversity of China's contemporary literary works, and establish an effective literary dialogue model, people must start from the perspectives of historical and cultural resonance, cultural gene synergy, and joint construction of Silk Road civilization. People should align genre literature with popular literature, continuously adjust and optimize communication strategies based on regional realities, and provide precise and efficient methodological support for the differentiated communication of outstanding Chinese literary works.

4.1. Balancing literary heterogeneity and linguistic flexibility

The purpose of communicating Chinese literary works is to spread the essence of Chinese culture and the true meaning of national thought to the world. The key lies in remaining faithful to the core of "Chinese stories"; people should not blindly cater to the reading habits and aesthetic tastes of overseas readers at the expense of the unique Chinese cultural heterogeneity of the works. As long as the meaning is clear, when encountering expressions unique to Chinese culture, people should try to use existing equivalent expressions in English for conversion. At the same time, people need to continuously explore effective mechanisms for combining language models with cultural heterogeneity to find the optimal balance between localization and heterogeneity. For example, it is better for translation software to render Chinese-specific solar terms like “惊蛰” (Jingzhe) as “Awakening of Insects” rather than simply “March 5th.” Although such translations require higher comprehension from readers, they help readers better understand the Chinese lunar solar terms in the corresponding context, grasp the connection between ancient Chinese calendars, agricultural production, and the cycle of seasons, and add more vividness and cultural connotation to the language.

Therefore, the translation technology for literary works should not be limited to superficial applications. Currently, the most widely used large language models are based on the English context. If readers use AI for translation, the issue of cultural context adaptation must be addressed. For instance, on the basis of translation styles and tones such as “academic, commercial, and informal”, people can add language models like “literary, classic literary”, and accelerate the development of intelligent technologies adapted to translation for target communication countries. This will improve the inconsistent quality of translated literary texts.

4.2. Synergy between technology empowerment and multimodal communication methods

“Rooted in the profound Chinese civilization, people should adapt to the trend of information technology development, constantly enhance national cultural soft power, and the influence of Chinese culture. People will promote the restructuring of the international communication pattern, innovate in online international communication, and build a multi-channel, three-dimensional foreign communication pattern”^[13]. With the support of new technologies represented by various AI tools, the integration of multiple modalities such as text, images, audio, and video is reshaping the new ecology of cultural communication. It is a necessary measure to provide more professional, intelligent, and diversified high-quality services and reading experiences for readers around the world by focusing on providing digital and intelligent book resources, innovating reading experiences, and realizing a service model of free open reading and open learning through the Internet.

Facing cultural “competitors” such as short videos, literary creation cannot adhere to outdated practices. Instead, it should make good use of multimodal symbols, use forms other than print media to assist translation and communication, and create cultural products such as comics, audiobooks, audio dramas, short videos, and

films. This allows non-verbal symbols and verbal symbols to complement each other, maximizes the activation of readers' multiple perceptions, improves the effectiveness of information communication, effectively narrows the psychological distance between target audiences and the source culture, and lowers the acceptance threshold of serious literary works.

Relevant industries in China should seize this opportunity to strengthen comprehensive cooperation with print and online media in target communication regions, enabling Chinese and foreign media to share resources and meet their respective needs to achieve complementary advantages in communication resources. People should build a multimodal promotion platform that covers everything from traditional print media to digital terminals, and realize the transformation from traditional communication to intelligent communication.

4.3. Regionalized compilation and localized adaptation of Chinese language and culture textbooks

With the enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength and international status, exchanges and cooperation in Chinese language and culture between China and foreign countries have deepened, and international Chinese language education has developed vigorously. Currently, Chinese language teaching is carried out in more than 190 countries and regions around the world, with 85 countries incorporating Chinese into their national education systems. Outside China, over 30 million people are learning Chinese, and the cumulative number of learners is nearly 200 million ^[14]. China should continue to strengthen cooperation with regions with promising prospects for Chinese language learning and countries driven by cultural and educational needs, promote appropriate localized Chinese textbooks in these areas, and compile books and reading materials that cover the essence of China's excellent traditional culture and contemporary cultural content.

The International Communication Research Center of China International Publishing Group once collaborated with Kantar Millward Brown and Lightspeed to conduct the 5th Global Survey on China's National Image. Data analysis showed that Chinese cultural and technological elements, such as Chinese cuisine, traditional Chinese medicine, China's high-speed rail, and China's coal mining and oil extraction, continued to be highlights of China's national image ^[15]. Chinese enterprises "going global" have an increasing demand for local compound talents who are proficient in Chinese, skilled in technology, and competent in professional fields, which has driven the release of more textbooks for "Chinese +" programs and related literary works. To further promote the in-depth integration of Chinese language proficiency and professional skills among learners in various countries, and enhance their ability to communicate in Chinese in specific industry scenarios and for typical work tasks, the Center for Language Education and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education has developed learning resources that integrate language and skills in-depth, covering fields such as mining, manufacturing, and transportation. These professional Chinese textbooks not only carry professional knowledge but also build a new bridge for cultural exchange and mutual learning between China and countries along the "Belt and Road." Going forward, professionals in the international Chinese language field should pay more attention to the training trend of "industry + Chinese", selectively promote professional social science literary works, and use books as a medium to contribute to the sound and stable development of bilateral relations.

5. Conclusion

Communication is one of the fundamental attributes of literature. The international communication of Chinese

literary works is not only a need for China to build its own cultural subjectivity, but also one of the internal driving forces for the diversified development of world culture. In the practice of international communication and diplomatic strategies, the principles of “one policy for one country” and “one policy for one region” are particularly important. This is not only the inevitable path for China’s literary cause and Chinese language education cause, but also a crucial link in promoting global cultural exchange and supporting national strategies. While firmly upholding cultural confidence, China should continuously examine and summarize the shortcomings and limitations in the communication process in different countries, provide targeted guidance and improvements, and on this basis, build a strategic system for the regionalized communication of Chinese literary works. This will maximize the international acceptance of Chinese literature, shape an internationally inclusive cultural image, create a favorable external environment for promoting the genuine spread of Chinese literary works overseas, contribute to deepening cultural exchange and mutual learning, and drive Chinese culture to go global.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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