

Cross-cultural Communication Strategies in the View of "One Belt and One Road Initiative "

--Taking Henan Cultural Products as an Example

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Abstract

In the contemporary landscape of global economic integration and societal informationization, cross-cultural communication emerges as an indispensable phenomenon, fostering cultural exchange and driving economic and social progress. The "Belt and Road" initiative stands out as a significant strategy to bolster China's economic and cultural soft power, marking a crucial step towards the global dissemination of Chinese culture and the enhancement of China's international influence. This paper seeks to delve into the foundational principles, contextual dynamics, encountered challenges, and navigational pathways inherent within cross-cultural communication. Employing Henan cultural products as illustrative case studies, it endeavors to conduct a thorough analysis aimed at gaining deeper insights into the essence and dynamics of cross-cultural communication. Through scholarly inquiry, the paper aims to offer both theoretical perspectives and practical guidance, with the overarching objective of advancing China's economic and cultural soft power and facilitating the globalization of Chinese culture on the world stage.

Keywords

Cross-Cultural Communication; The Belt and Road Initiative; Excellent Traditional Culture in Henan.

1. Introduction

With the continued advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, Henan culture has encountered both new opportunities and challenges. As the birthplace of Chinese civilization, Henan Province occupies a pivotal role within the Belt and Road framework. This paper aims to delineate the foundational background and significance of the Belt and Road strategy, alongside highlighting the distinctiveness and importance of Henan's cultural heritage.

Henan stands as one of the crucial cradles of Chinese civilization, boasting a rich history and a splendid cultural legacy. Its culture is characterized by unique regional features and profound values. For instance, landmarks like the Luoyang Longmen Grottoes and the Anyang Yin Ruins enjoy both national and international renown. Moreover, traditional arts such as Henan opera and Shaolin kung fu exude a captivating allure.

Simultaneously, Henan serves as a significant hub for manufacturing and agricultural production in China, playing a vital role in the nation's economic and social fabric. Within the Belt and Road Initiative, Henan culture assumes a pivotal position. Through bolstered cooperation in the cultural sector, the promotion of Henan's tourism brands, and the facilitation of educational exchanges, Henan's cultural heritage can be better showcased and cultivated, fostering increased mutual understanding and friendship among peoples worldwide.

Furthermore, this initiative provides fresh opportunities and avenues for Henan's development, contributing to the province's heightened visibility and influence on the global stage. However, it also poses challenges to the dissemination of Henan's cultural products. Thus, it behooves us to actively explore innovative channels of communication, ensuring broader exposure to Henan's cultural essence and fostering the continued prosperity and evolution of Chinese culture as a whole."

2. Cross-cultural Communication under the Belt and Road Initiative: Preconditions and Background

The Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, represents a grand vision put forth by China. This ambitious project, often referred to as 'One Belt, One Road,' spans the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, forging connections between the dynamic economic spheres of East Asia and the well-established economic landscapes of Europe. Serving as a comprehensive roadmap for the advancement of these regions, China's Belt and Road Initiative encompasses various vital components, including policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, facilitation of trade, financial integration, and fostering people-to-people bonds [1]. The initiative aims to bolster economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges among countries along the Belt and Road, fostering mutual development and prosperity across regions.

Henan, a province rich in cultural heritage, boasts a profound history deeply intertwined with the tapestry of Chinese civilization. From the Xia Dynasty to more than 20 subsequent dynasties over the span of 5000 years, Henan has been a focal point of historical significance, with over 200 emperors either establishing or relocating their capitals here. Moreover, Henan has served as a cradle for numerous luminaries in Chinese history and culture, including figures such as Huangdi, Fuxi, Laozi, Li Bai, Du Fu, Li Shangyin, and Yue Fei, all of whom have left indelible marks on Henan's landscape, contributing significantly to the rich tapestry of Chinese civilization[2].

Henan's illustrious history, comprising half of China's historical narrative, serves as a potent avenue for fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese culture among nations along the Belt and Road, laying a cultural foundation for mutually beneficial cooperation in the realm of cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, as Europe represents the terminus of the economic belt along the Silk Road, there exists a pressing need for increased communication and integration. Henan's profound traditional culture can serve as a cornerstone for exchange and scholarly inquiry, offering a window through which the world can gain insights into China, thereby facilitating cultural integration among nations, seeking common ground while respecting differences, and fostering cooperative development.

3. Cross-cultural and external communication under the Belt and Road Strategy: issues and obstacles

The intricacies inherent in culture itself, juxtaposed with the inherent limitations of human understanding of culture, pose formidable challenges in the realm of cross-cultural communication. Culture, by its very nature, is multifaceted, comprising myriad elements and dimensions such as values, beliefs, customs, and languages. These intricately interwoven components give rise to unique cultural phenomena and characteristics. Moreover, the cultivation of appropriate behavior plays a pivotal role in shaping the international image of a country or region.

Research suggests that national cultural disparities often serve as primary catalysts for conflicts and wars between nations [3]. Thus, in the realm of cross-cultural communication, it is

imperative to acknowledge and navigate the myriad differences and complexities inherent in diverse cultures.

Furthermore, cross-cultural communication is influenced by a multitude of factors, including the unidirectional nature of propaganda dissemination, which often lacks reciprocal interaction. While China has utilized mass media to propagate and amplify the "Belt and Road" initiative, it has predominantly relied on one-way communication, simplifying the message for ease of dissemination. However, this approach has its drawbacks:

- 1.It can transform initiative into passivity, potentially alienating audiences and fostering a sense of indoctrination.
- 2.It lacks reciprocal interaction, resulting in suboptimal communication outcomes.
- 3.Insufficient interaction and communication may precipitate unnecessary misunderstandings [4].

These factors compound the complexity and difficulty of cross-cultural communication, necessitating nuanced strategies for effective engagement.

3.1. Contradiction between the rigid cognition of preconceived and cultural diversity

Stereotypes represent a simplistic, rigid, and superficial form of cognition individuals apply to communities and social phenomena. They constitute one of the modes of social cognition, rooted in preconceived and entrenched cognitive experiences.

Firstly, stereotypes exacerbate the divergence between information and cognition in cross-cultural communication. Stemming from individual socialization processes, stereotypes are shaped by the long-term immersion in one's language, customs, and social interactions. When encountering unfamiliar situations, individuals often rely on stereotypes to fill the gaps in their experiences, resulting in a predetermined understanding of unknown issues across countries, regions, and cultural spheres. As the famous American journalist Walter Lippmann aptly stated, "Most of the time, we don't understand first, we define first, then we understand." In the hustle and bustle of the external world, individuals tend to interpret unfamiliar cultures through the lens of their own cultural frameworks[5].

Secondly, stereotypes fuel the escalation of cultural conflicts by oversimplifying and homogenizing diverse cultural identities. Due to their fixed and uni-dimensional nature, stereotypes frequently overlook the richness and complexity inherent in cultures. When stereotypes clash between different cultural groups, misunderstandings and conflicts readily ensue, exacerbating intercultural tensions.

Hence, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the contradiction between stereotypical cognition and cultural diversity. In the realm of cross-cultural communication, it is crucial to cultivate respect for the diversity and complexity of cultures, actively challenging and dispelling preconceived stereotypes. By doing so, we can foster genuine communication and mutual understanding between diverse cultures, paving the way for a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

3.2. Cultural centralism.

Cultural centralism refers to the tendency to regard one's own culture as the pinnacle of civilization, using it as the benchmark to judge and measure the worth of other cultures [6]. Deeply ingrained in people's psyche, cultural centralism perceives the values, social systems, and ideologies within one's cultural sphere as inherently superior and correct. In the context of cross-cultural communication, this mindset often manifests as a dismissive attitude towards other cultural spheres, with individuals believing their own culture to be the epitome of excellence while viewing others as inferior.

This patronizing stance presents a significant barrier to achieving equilibrium in cross-cultural communication. By solely emphasizing the superiority of one's own culture and disregarding the value and contributions of others, we risk perpetuating inequality and imbalance in cultural exchanges. This imbalance not only undermines the efficacy of information dissemination but also hampers the cultivation of a favorable international image for the country.

Cross-cultural communication involves the exchange of information among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, each with their own set of values and ideologies. Throughout this process, the values and ideologies of the cultural information sender are inevitably woven into the communication content. However, by conveying these values and ideologies in a gentle and non-confrontational manner, we can foster progressive cultural transmission.

Effective communication necessitates the gradual bridging of cultural divides. This entails ensuring that individuals comprehend the existence of diverse cultures and grasp the nuanced connotations inherent in cultural information exchange. Only through such efforts can we dismantle cultural barriers and foster mutual understanding and integration among disparate cultures.

The principle of cultural equality is paramount in establishing a culture of tolerance and moderation in communication. In cross-cultural exchanges, it is imperative to adopt an attitude of equality, respect, and inclusivity, honoring the uniqueness and worth of each culture while refraining from imposing our own values onto others. By embracing this ethos of relative equality, we can cultivate a communication order characterized by tolerance, moderation, and inclusivity, thereby fostering the diversity and shared prosperity of the world's cultures.

In essence, cross-cultural communication is a multifaceted and vital process that demands the conveyance of values and ideologies in a moderate and non-coercive manner, the bridging of cultural divides and barriers, and the promotion of a tolerant and moderate cultural communication order. Only through these concerted efforts can we achieve genuine cross-cultural communication and understanding, thereby contributing to the construction of a harmonious global culture.

4. Cross-cultural Communication and Foreign Communication of Henan Cultural Products under the Belt and Road Strategy

4.1. Use appropriate communication language according to the laws of communication.

In light of the contemporary landscape of cross-cultural communication, it becomes imperative to enhance communication effectiveness and broaden its impact by employing tailored communication methodologies. Utilizing culture as a vehicle for communication presents a more receptive avenue for audiences to absorb information. Compared to overt propaganda, cultural communication and educational endeavors offer greater accessibility, with their distinct content ensuring communication efficacy.

Additionally, the organization and advancement of academic exchange activities facilitate nuanced cultural discussions and consensus-building within academic spheres, holding significant implications for the propagation of Chinese culture. Furthermore, various art forms, including sculpture, painting, photography, drama, film, craftsmanship, architecture, music, and dance, each convey diverse expressions and communication modalities.

Among these, dance, as one of the oldest and most dynamic art forms, elicits profound aesthetic appreciation and engages viewers visually. Through the amalgamation of visual elements and the evolution of movement, dance intuitively communicates its artistic beauty, fostering a deeper understanding of the human essence.

For example:

Henan Satellite TV's latest production, a captivating underwater Chinese dance video titled "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess," has garnered widespread acclaim from internet users. Even Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying took to Twitter to praise the video, describing it as possessing "incredible beauty." Drawing inspiration from the ancient legend of Luo in Chinese culture, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" brings to life the revered figure of Luo, a deity of immense cultural significance in ancient Chinese mythology. Regarded as a symbol of beauty, nobility, and mystery, Luo embodies the essence of love in Chinese folklore. Through the art of dance, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" masterfully intertwines the imagery of Luo with the element of water, evoking a unique aesthetic experience. The performance skillfully employs intricate dance techniques and a distinctive choreographic language to vividly depict the romantic narrative between Luo and Hebo. Dancers gracefully portray the complex emotions of longing and affection shared between Luo and Hebo, while the incorporation of water elements—manifested through undulating waves and blossoming water flowers—creates a dreamlike ambiance, transporting the audience into the realm of mythology. Undoubtedly, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" assumes a pivotal role in cross-cultural communication. Firstly, through its captivating artistry, the production showcases the allure of ancient Chinese culture to a global audience, offering a visual and auditory portrayal of the legend of Luo in a captivating manner. By engaging with the universal language of dance, the performance not only facilitates a deeper understanding of Chinese ancient culture but also evokes appreciation for its unique charm and profound symbolism.

Secondly, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" serves as a catalyst for cultural exchange and integration. By highlighting the distinctiveness of Chinese culture while conveying universal themes and values, the production fosters a sense of shared humanity among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through the medium of dance, people worldwide can immerse themselves in the enchanting narrative of "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" while resonating with the common emotions and ideals it embodies. This cross-cultural mode of communication fosters mutual understanding, friendship, and the advancement of a harmonious global culture. Thus, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess" stands as a testament to the power of intercultural communication in promoting cultural appreciation, understanding, and unity on a global scale.

4.2. Identify appropriate communication themes according to the needs of the audience.

The target audience of cross-cultural communication initiatives aligned with the Belt and Road strategy encompasses individuals who engage with and participate in communication activities facilitated by our nation. A thorough examination of this audience reveals its heterogeneous composition, characterized by diversity in ethnicity, language proficiency, and affiliation with multiple cultural spheres. This intricate interplay of identities underscores the imperative for media entities within our nation to meticulously select and delineate distinct communication themes. Such strategic planning is essential to ensuring precision and efficacy in communication endeavors, thereby enhancing communication outcomes and fostering accelerated intercultural understanding and cognition among disparate communities.

Among the criteria guiding the selection of information content is the principle of proximity, wherein the perceived relevance and value of information are contingent upon the extent of psychological proximity between facts and recipients. This encompasses factors such as individual interests, geographical location, gender, age, educational attainment, occupational specialization, economic status, as well as ethnic or religious affiliations. Aligning communication themes with the interests and contextual realities of the target audience serves to optimize the efficacy of information dissemination.

Given Henan's status as a bastion of traditional cultural heritage, the judicious selection of communication themes assumes paramount significance in facilitating effective cross-cultural dialogue, particularly with nations along the Belt and Road. Tailoring communication themes to resonate with the cultural proclivities and sensibilities of diverse audiences along the Belt and Road corridor is pivotal in fostering heightened engagement and appreciation for Henan's cultural legacy, thereby fortifying cultural exchanges and nurturing mutual understanding among participating nations.

II. For example:

The Guardian Warriors of Longmen," a part of the Chinese Festivals series, gained significant attention online last year. This spectacle showcases musicians, flying apsaras (female spirits), and guardians set against the backdrop of the Fengxian Temple at the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang city. Through meticulous restoration efforts, the show brings to life the temple's original colors, presenting a breathtaking view of the 17-meter-tall Vairocana Buddha.

Shi Jiazhen, head of the Longmen Grottoes Research Institute, lauds the production as an exceptional representation of Henan culture. Employing cutting-edge AR technology and innovative interpretations of traditional culture, the show resonates particularly well with young audiences, facilitating greater accessibility for youths in Belt and Road countries. Moreover, this approach fosters deeper engagement beyond superficial aesthetics, effectively fulfilling the role of genuine cross-cultural communication.

This cross-cultural mode of communication serves to enhance understanding and foster friendship between diverse cultures. By offering insight into Chinese traditional culture, it facilitates greater appreciation and comprehension among global audiences. Additionally, it promotes the exchange and integration of various cultural traditions, thereby making a significant contribution to the advancement of world cultural diversity.

4.3. Relying on multiculturalism and avoiding improper communication behavior.

To achieve the desired dissemination effect, it is imperative to mitigate the "noise" and interference factors that impede the propagation process. These impediments often stem from cultural disparities, language barriers, and information asymmetry, all of which can hinder the seamless progression of information dissemination and its ultimate impact.

Within the communication sphere of the Belt and Road cultural circle, communicators must diligently strive to mitigate cultural conflicts arising from divergent values and standards. It is paramount to refrain from employing a singular propagandistic approach, as this method is susceptible to engendering cultural clashes and misinterpretations. Propaganda, characterized by its mechanistic nature, seeks to enforce value conformity through value imposition—a method ill-suited for cross-cultural communication endeavors.

Effective cross-cultural communication hinges on the recognition and reverence of each culture's uniqueness and worth, approached with an attitude of equality, openness, and inclusivity. Simultaneously, there must be a steadfast commitment to the accuracy and objectivity of information dissemination, avoiding embellishment or distortion of facts that could engender needless misunderstandings and conflicts. Embracing multiculturalism and eschewing improper communication behaviors are essential in realizing the effective transmission of information and facilitating the seamless progression of cultural exchange.

Only through these concerted efforts can we foster the advancement of the Belt and Road cultural circle, promoting mutual understanding and integration among diverse cultures.

For example:

The inaugural installment of the bilingual series, "Zhongyuan Henan Tales," intricately weaves local cultural motifs to narrate Chinese tales. This pioneering endeavor was orchestrated by the

foreign affairs office of the provincial committee and stands as the first provincial government-led initiative to systematically translate and disseminate Chinese cultural treasures. Part of the overarching "Translation Henan" project, this series encompasses nearly 30 meticulously curated topics. The latest release comprises ten volumes, including "Poverty Alleviation," "Yellow River Culture," "Grand Canal," "Cultural Relics," "Jiao Yulu (French version)," "Zhuangzi," "Air Silk Road," "Aviation City," and "Yellow Emperor."

Of particular note, "Yellow River Culture" serves as a conduit for globally sharing the narrative of the Yellow River in accessible language, thereby showcasing a symbol of national civilization. Similarly, "Poverty Alleviation" offers a series of narratives aimed at disseminating insights into global poverty management experiences. Notably, the French rendition of "Jiao Yulu" stands as the world's premier publication to expound upon Jiao Yulu's spirit in French, thereby illuminating the exemplary image of this outstanding Communist Party member. Additionally, volumes dedicated to "Air Silk Road" and "Aviation City" augment international recognition of the "Silk Road" construction through compelling case studies.

Wang Qingyi, the party secretary of North China University of Water Conservancy and Hydropower, who contributed to the compilation of the Grand Canal volume, underscores the importance of such initiatives in fostering mutual understanding among nations.

As emphasized by Zhang Yuhong, the quality of translation significantly influences the efficacy of cultural communication. Translation assumes a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural exchange[7]. Our translation approach encompasses various strategies, including literal translation, free translation, and cultural connotation, all informed by the principles of cross-cultural communication theory. This approach prioritizes the dissemination of Chinese culture and national values while also considering the cultural backgrounds and cognitive tendencies of foreign audiences. Through these efforts, Chinese and Henan narratives resonate effectively on the global stage.

As mentioned above, it's crucial to steer clear of relying solely on a singular propaganda approach, which often leads to cultural conflict and misunderstanding. Propaganda tends to be a mechanical, one-way expression aimed at imposing specific values, disregarding the nuances and diversity inherent in different cultures. Effective cross-cultural communication necessitates the adoption of more flexible and inclusive strategies. This entails respecting the uniqueness and value of each culture, fostering an open and inclusive mindset towards others, and prioritizing the accuracy and objectivity of information.

In the translation and dissemination of Henan cultural works, the translation team comprises not only language experts but also cross-cultural specialists. Their role extends beyond linguistic accuracy to encompass cross-cultural communication. They strive to grasp and convey the distinctive charm and essence of Henan culture, ensuring audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds appreciate its richness.

Specifically, they tailor translations to suit the cultural background and language preferences of the target audience, employing expressions and language styles resonant with local culture. Annotations and illustrations are utilized to provide necessary cultural context, enhancing understanding of Henan culture. Moreover, active collaboration with local cultural institutions, scholars, and artists facilitates the dissemination and promotion of Henan culture. Through such cross-cultural cooperation, the team not only amplifies awareness of Henan culture but also fosters mutual understanding and integration among different cultures.

In summary, achieving effective cross-cultural communication entails avoiding a singular message, prioritizing information accuracy and objectivity, and embracing flexible and inclusive communication strategies. The involvement and collaboration of cross-cultural experts are indispensable, as they facilitate a deeper understanding and conveyance of the unique charm and essence of various cultures.

5. Conclusion

"Cultural communication involves the dynamic exchange of ideas and values among communities and individuals within the social sphere[8]. Intercultural communication, being intricate and nuanced, hinges on acknowledging the validity of differing perspectives and identities. This necessitates discarding rigid notions of right and wrong, and instead embracing diverse cultural viewpoints with openness and inclusivity, fostering an atmosphere conducive to mutual understanding and dialogue.

Achieving effective information flow in cross-cultural communication demands a pragmatic approach, temporarily setting aside cultural discord. This entails prioritizing specific communication objectives, tailoring messages to resonate with the cultural context and preferences of the audience, rather than fixating on differences. By doing so, we can ensure the precision of our message delivery and enhance communication outcomes. Moreover, deferring cultural conflicts can alleviate tensions, paving the way for enhanced cooperation and collaboration."

The fundamental tenet of cross-cultural communication revolves around prioritizing the exchange of cultural information while demonstrating genuine sincerity in communication. This entails a steadfast commitment to authenticity and accuracy in disseminating information, eschewing false narratives and misleading propaganda. Furthermore, it necessitates attentiveness to audience feedback and preferences, enabling timely adjustments to communication strategies and content to ensure effective information transmission and seamless cultural exchange.

Adhering to the principle of cultural information flow as the nucleus facilitates the establishment of enduring and robust communication relationships, fostering the continuous and progressive advancement of cross-cultural communication within the Silk Road cultural sphere under the Belt and Road initiative.

In essence, successful cross-cultural communication demands an open, inclusive, truthful, and honest approach towards understanding and embracing diverse cultural concepts. It requires a keen focus on specific communication challenges and audience requirements, driving the ongoing development of communication with cultural information flow at its core. Only through such concerted efforts can the Silk Road cultural sphere under the Belt and Road initiative achieve genuine cross-cultural exchanges and cooperation, thereby contributing to the enrichment and flourishing of global cultural diversity.

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