

# Research on Localization of Communication Based on Traditional Chinese Culture

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**Abstract:** Communication was first introduced into China from the West in the 1970s and rapidly developed there. It was merged with journalism in 1997 and since then it has become a popular discipline. Due to different national conditions, there is a great deal of inappropriateness in practice as a foreign product. Therefore, the concept of localization of communication has been put forward. Traditional Chinese culture boasts 5,000 years of rich, extensive and profound cultural deposits, and many historical theories also contain a wealth of communication ideas and theories. Exploring ideas and phenomena in the long history of traditional Chinese culture will promote the localization studies of communication, and create the communication suitable for China's national conditions. This paper elaborates on the localization studies of communication based on traditional Chinese culture.

## 1. The rise of communication in China

At the beginning of the 20th century, when the English word "communication" was translated as "jiaotong" by scholars, it was the first time that communication studies in the United States entered China. Its meaning not only represents the exchange of information, but also the flow of materials. In July 1978, communication was first introduced in public on the *Document of Overseas Journalism* published by the Journalism Department of Fudan University, which was a translation entitled *Public Communication*. In May 1982, American communication scholar Schramm came to China for academic exchange, which promoted further research and development of Chinese communication and made the communication systematized and disciplined gradually. In 1997, communication laid the disciplinary status in China, merging with journalism and becoming a national first-level discipline. Since then, communication has drawn increasing attention, becoming a hot subject of scholars continuously. However, as a foreign product, there are still a lot of controversies over the construction of its discipline system and its localization.

## 2. The proposal of localization of communication

The concept of communication is introduced into China from western countries and the research and understanding of communication of scholars in China are also based on the western communication theories. Although there have only been a few decades since communication entered China, Chinese scholars have achieved many achievements in the studies of communication and there are many published works and research results. Because most of Chinese references for studies of communication are translations of monographs of foreign communication studies, most of the communication studies in China are rigid theories of western communication, which did not explore China's own communication value based on its national conditions, so the theories of communication put forward by Chinese scholars rely much on western communication theory and is not very applicable to Chinese communication. With the constant development of Chinese communication scholars and the continuous development of communication studies, the contradiction between western communication theories and Chinese national conditions has become increasingly prominent, so communication scholars held many seminars on communication to solve a series of problems in Chinese communication academic circle, and finally putting forward the solution of "Localization of Communication" to create a communication science suitable for China's

national conditions.

### **3. Problems existing in Chinese localization of communication**

The Chinese localization of communication marks a breakthrough in the development of communication in China. Over the years of researches of communication scholars, progress has been made in China's localization of communication, however, there is still no original theories and academic concepts of communication in China currently, which shows that the development of China's communication is not yet mature, and there still exists many problems in localization of communication.

#### **3.1 Scholars of communication neglected communication theories in traditional Chinese culture**

As one of the four ancient civilizations, China has a long history and its cultural influence spreads every corner of the world and such a powerful influence will surely contain a wealth of precious deposits of communication. But it was western countries that first proposed communication theory, which is a preconceived constraint for Chinese communication scholars, leading Chinese scholars to be restricted within western communication theories. China contains 5000 years of profound cultural deposits being inherited with strong influence, and of which there is bound to be uniqueness and laws of cultural communication. However, in the development of China's communication studies, scholars have neglected the tremendous treasure of traditional culture. As a result, communication scholars have not found theories of communication with Chinese characteristics. Based on 5000 years of profound traditional culture, Chinese communication has its unique phenomena and practices. It is obviously impractical to rely solely on the theory of communication introduced from the West to solve problems in Chinese communication. The China localization of communication must focus on the value of Chinese traditional culture, explore the theory and practice of communication studies, and summarize communication studies with Chinese characteristics.

#### **3.2 The relatively one-sided communication discipline system construction**

The merge of China's communication and journalism really serves for the studies of news communication, and is not an independent discipline. China's communication studies and journalism are combined, the boundary is vague, the construction of its discipline system is less comprehensive, and the study of cultural communication is neglected. However, communication is more than just a kind of news communication at all times and in all countries, but is more about cultural communication in essence. Therefore, the one-sided construction of discipline system of China's communication is also one of the factors hindering the China's localization development of communication. The construction of the system lacks characteristics of Chinese cultural communication and it is obviously unscientific to interpret Chinese communication phenomenon simply based on western communication theories.

#### **3.3 China's communication lacks original communication theories**

China's communication lacks innovation force, researchers only focus on the western communication monographs and materials, only study hard to understand the theory, and sort out communication studies in China instead of concluding Chinese unique laws of communication and creating new theory of Chinese communication from practical situation based on theories of western communication. China's communication focuses on explaining phenomena with theory rather than summarizing theories from phenomena. Communication in China is merged with journalism in discipline setting, and the contents of materials used in the communication teaching are mostly western communication theories, without referring to the unique phenomenon and theory of communication in Chinese traditional culture, which hinders the localization of communication. The cultural transmission in China has its distinctive characteristics, and the phenomenon of communication also can be found everywhere, but so far China's communication scholars have not

drawn a comprehensive induction. The uniqueness of Chinese civilization leads to the unsuitable application of western communication. China's 5,000 years of traditional culture is a huge treasure to be explored, the communication information of which is no less than other countries. Chinese scholars should not continue to neglect this value, but explore theories and phenomena of communication studies, sum up the rules of communication with Chinese characteristics, and create the theory of communication with Chinese characteristics.

### **3.4 The thinking and phenomena of communication in traditional Chinese culture**

Chinese civilization has a long history, which contains countless thinking and phenomena of communication. Chinese traditional culture has been inherited for 5000 years and exerted an undeniable influence on all parts of the world. Therefore, the localization of communication based on Chinese profound traditional culture is bound to have more advantages than western countries. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, for instance, China has already created a variety of modes of communication, such as the beacon message, the history recording by official historians, politician lobbying, scholarship lectures and so on. In the Qin Dynasty, the First Emperor of Qin unified the character and currency and promoted the development of information dissemination. The emergence of "Cai Hou Paper" in the Eastern Han Dynasty and the movable type printing in the Song Dynasty created more powerful conditions for the dissemination of Chinese culture, as well as historical events such as the Silk Road, Zheng He's Expedition and so on. At the same time, the theories and treatises put forward by Chinese thinkers all contain rich ideas of communication. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend at that time, and the thinking of communication was very mature and far-reaching. China's long history and long-standing cultural heritage contain so many thinking and imagination of communication, and these highly valuable treasures urgently need to be developed by Chinese communication scholars achieve the localization of communication and create the communication with Chinese characteristics.

## **4. The application of localization of communication based on traditional Chinese culture taking Confucius Institute as an example**

Traditional Chinese culture comes from the summary and sublimation of the objective laws of real life, and its advantages lie in the interpretation of the nature and significance of the universe, society and life from philosophical and scientific perspective. It accords with thinking logic of human and can be authenticated in practices. Therefore, Chinese traditional culture, with its flexible nature, can enlighten the society with the powerful communication force. Confucius Institute is the application of localization of communication based on traditional Chinese culture.

Confucius, a great philosopher and educator in China, and his theories have a powerful influence on China even the world. Confucius Institute adheres to the outstanding values of "Peace is to be cherished", "harmony in diversity" and "harmony between man and nature", which disseminates the core values of Chinese traditional culture around the world and has achieved certain influence. On the one hand, Confucius Institute has made it more clear to the world about China's basic position on building a harmonious world and on the other hand, it provides the stage for the world and China for the reason why China needs to build a harmonious world and historical and philosophical traditional cultural background. The dissemination conducted by the Confucius Institute based on traditional Chinese culture not only made the world aware of China's peace and friendship, but also provided a peaceful and beneficial solution and theoretical guidance to disputes and disagreements in the world, and made the world more aware of China's desire for the development of modernization and cultural support of China's "peaceful rise" and modernization development strategy. With the rapid development of China, it occupies a pivotal position in the world. At the same time, the so-called argument of "China Threat Theory" overseas has also been unceasingly spread, which shows that many people in foreign countries do not understand traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, the Confucius Institute has just provided a platform for world exchange so as to show the world the peace and friendship of China and promote the development of world peace and

at the same time, also opens up a more feasible path for China to go to the world. The Confucius Institute, interpreted from the perspective of communication, establishes an equal and mutually beneficial relationship between the initiator and the recipient, which provides a platform for the communication between the subject and the object in the communication of traditional Chinese culture, avoiding the passive acceptance of the object in regular communication. This mode of communication has created a successful communication effect. As a cultural brand of China, Confucius Institute has formed soft power for China and played an active role in the world, complementing China's increasingly strong hard power. The dissemination results of Confucius Institute made it possible for those who previously had no contact with or did not understand Chinese traditional culture become more active in learning traditional Chinese culture, learn more about China, understand the principle of peace that China adheres to, eliminate prejudices, promote the exchange among the people in the world and further promote mutual understanding and form a profound international friendship. Confucius Institute highlights the transmission force of traditional Chinese culture and improves friendly cooperation between China and foreign countries through cultural transmission, which is conducive to having more voice on international stage for China. Therefore, Confucius Institute is an application of localization based on Chinese traditional culture by deeply exploring rich cultural accomplishments contained in Chinese traditional culture and giving full play to its advantage of cultural transmission, which promotes the Chinese localization of communication.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, communication show different characteristics in different political, economic and cultural environments. There must be many problems from the inconsistency between American communication and the actual situation in China. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct the Chinese localization of communication. There is still a long way to go for the research and development of the Chinese localization of communication. Chinese scholars should jump out of the constraint of western communication theory and look at the issue from the macroscopic view. Based on the theory of western communication, scholars should focus on China's own national conditions and its 5,000 years of profound traditional culture, give new life to traditional Chinese culture through the localization of communication, explore and develop communication treasures deposited in the long history of China. They should sort, summarize scientifically, realize the Chinese localization of communication, promote the dissemination of Chinese culture around the world and enhance its influence, and establish a unique international image for the emerging China on the international stage.

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