

Strategies for Creating National Image in Documentary Films from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication ——Take *The Belt and Road* as an example

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Abstract: With the deepening development of globalization, the role of cross-cultural communication in shaping national image is becoming increasingly prominent. Documentaries, as a form of media with depth and breadth, have unique advantages in showcasing the history, culture, and social status of a country. This article will take the *The Belt and Road* as an example to explore its strategies for shaping the national image in cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: documentary, *The Belt and Road*, national image, cross-cultural, global dissemination

Introduction

Documentaries, as an important form of cultural dissemination, have the characteristics of authenticity and objectivity, and can vividly present historical events and real life. *The Belt and Road* is a documentary film themed on the “the Belt and Road” initiative, which aims to convey to the audience the importance and significance of jointly building the “the Belt and Road” through in-depth excavation and demonstration of the economic, social and cultural development of countries and regions along the “the Belt and Road”.

1. The significance of the documentary *The Belt and Road* in shaping the national image

The Belt and Road is an economic documentary produced by the CCTV Science and Education Channel and directed by Li Yawei, and premiered on September 5th, 2016 on CCTV’s comprehensive channel. It tells the story of the great changes brought by the construction of the “the Belt and Road” to China and other countries and regions along the line, and the benefits it bring to the people of other countries along the line.

From an international perspective, *The Belt and Road* presents the brilliant achievements and far-reaching impact of the “the Belt and Road” initiative in a panoramic manner, vividly records the extraordinary process and cooperation achievements of jointly building the “the Belt and Road”, and fully demonstrates the image of China as a responsible big country and China’s important contribution to world peace and development.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has launched a number of promotional videos with major themes, of which *The Belt and Road* is one. As a large political

commentary feature film, *The Belt and Road* deeply explains the historical origin, spiritual essence, era value and practical significance of the joint construction of the “the Belt and Road” through rich screen language and vivid character stories, and comprehensively demonstrates the Chinese responsibility and strength of the joint construction of the “the Belt and Road” initiative^[1].

The Belt and Road is not only a documentary with historical significance, but also an inspiring contemporary video work. It sends a message to the world: to jointly build the “the Belt and Road” and build a community with a shared future for mankind is the inevitable choice to realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and the only way to achieve common development.

2. The advantages of the documentary *The Belt and Road* in shaping the national image

2.1 Realistic and objective image recording

The Belt and Road shows the audience the development and construction achievements of China in different regions and fields through authentic video records. This objective and authentic presentation method helps to break stereotypes and improve the audience’s understanding and perception of China.

2.2 Diverse character stories

The Belt and Road involves many people and stories, including government officials, entrepreneurs, workers, farmers and other people from all walks of life. By delving deeper into the stories of these characters, China’s multiculturalism and inclusiveness are showcased, enhancing the audience’s sense of identity.

2.3 Multidimensional display angle

The Belt and Road not only focuses on the policy level, but also shows the economic, cultural and social conditions of countries and regions along *The Belt and Road* from multiple dimensions. This multidimensional display angle enriches the connotation of the national image, allowing the audience to have a more comprehensive understanding of China’s influence and contribution on the international stage^[2].

2.4 Internationalized narrative techniques

The Belt and Road adopts an international narrative approach, taking the story as the main line, and vividly presents the complex policy and historical background. The application of this international narrative technique enhances the audience’s sense of immersion and resonance, and improves the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

2.5 The concept of win-win cooperation

The Belt and Road advocates the concept of peaceful development, mutual benefit and win-win results, and emphasizes the establishment of equal and mutually beneficial relations with countries and regions along the lined. This concept is in line with the trends and trends of global development, and also reflects the responsibilities that China should have.

3. Strategies for the success of the documentary *The Belt and Road* in shaping the national image from the perspective of cross-cultural communication

As a successful documentary, *The Belt and Road* has successfully shaped the image of China as a peaceful, win-win, open and inclusive country, and enhanced China’s status and influence on the international stage. It has successfully promoted the international dissemination and exchange of Chinese

culture through the application and practice of various cross-cultural communication strategies.

3.1 Interpersonal communication: Enhancing understanding and trust between people

The documentary *The Belt and Road* focuses on cultural exchanges and mutual learning between countries, and promotes international cultural exchanges and cooperation by showing the exchanges and integration of different civilizations. This form of interpersonal communication can break national borders and enhance understanding and trust between people. For example, when discussing cultural exchanges between China and Southeast Asian countries, traditional cultural elements such as Chinese martial arts and tea art are showcased to make the audience feel the charm and inclusiveness of Chinese culture. At the same time, it also showcases the efforts made by Southeast Asian countries in cultural inheritance and innovation, enhancing mutual understanding between different countries and ethnic groups.

3.2 Organizational communication: Expanding the country's visibility and influence

The documentary *The Belt and Road* also promotes communication and understanding among countries by organizing various forms of exchange activities and holding forums and conferences. These organizational dissemination activities can not only expand the country's visibility and influence, but also promote economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchange among countries. For example, when introducing the China Europe freight train, by showcasing the scenery and cultural landscape along the railway, the audience can understand the promoting role of this international channel in the economy, culture, and tourism of countries and regions along the line. In addition, experts and scholars from relevant fields were invited to interpret and analyze the film, enhancing the audience's awareness and understanding of the theme.

3.3 Multimedia communication: Attracting more audience attention and participation

The documentary *The Belt and Road* was broadcast on many TV stations, and was broadcast live and on-demand online on many websites. This multimedia communication method can attract more audience attention and participation, improve the country's awareness and reputation. For example, when introducing the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the progress and significance of this important project were conveyed to the audience through television news reports, special reports, and other forms. At the same time, a series of interactive topics and discussion areas have also been launched on online platforms, attracting active participation and discussion from many netizen.

3.4 Public diplomacy: Enhancing friendship and understanding

The documentary *The Belt and Road* carries out foreign exchanges by means of public diplomacy, and actively participates in relevant public diplomacy activities through non-governmental organizations and individuals, contributing to the "the Belt and Road" initiative. This type of public diplomacy can enhance friendship and understanding between countries, and promote the harmonious development of international relations. For example, when introducing cooperation projects between China and African countries, by showcasing the contributions made by Chinese enterprises to local economic development and the friendly exchanges between the Chinese and African peoples, the audience can feel the responsible image of China.

3.5 Humanistic care that puts people first: Enhancing emotional resonance and sense of identity

The documentary “the Belt and Road” focuses on the life and development of ordinary people, and shows their stories and experiences to reflect the positive impact and changes of “the Belt and Road” initiative on countries and regions along the line. This people-oriented humanistic care enhances the audience’s emotional resonance and sense of identity. For example, when introducing the construction process of the China-Laos railway, the audience felt the real benefits brought by this transnational transportation artery by telling the story of a Laos girl who changed her destiny because of the railway construction. At the same time, by describing a series of social changes and life changes brought to countries and regions along the “the Belt and Road” initiative, the audience has a deeper understanding of the importance and significance of this initiative.

In a word, the documentary *The Belt and Road* has successfully shaped the image of China as a peaceful, mutually beneficial, open and inclusive country, and enhanced China’s status and influence on the international stage. Through in-depth exploration and presentation of the lives of ordinary people, the film shows the positive impact and changes of “the Belt and Road” initiative on countries and regions along the line, and enhances the emotional resonance and identity of the audience. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, the strategies adopted in the film include interpersonal communication, organizational communication, multimedia communication, public diplomacy, and people-oriented humanistic care, which together promote the shaping and dissemination of the national image.

4. Peroration

In the future, China should continue to play the important role of documentaries in cross-cultural communication, deeply explore the excellent traditions and contemporary values of China’s historical and cultural heritage, and showcase China’s development achievements and people’s spiritual outlook to the world in a more open manner. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen cultural exchanges and cooperation with countries around the world, promote the development of cultural diversity and the progress of human civilization. Through these efforts, we can further enhance China’s international influence and discourse power, and contribute to the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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