

The Present Situation of the International Spreading of Spring Festival Culture under the View of Strategic Communication

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Abstract: Nowadays, the international situation is undergoing major and profound changes. As a result, social media platforms became the hyper-competitive fields of public opinion which have attracted many countries' attention. It also became a powerful and edge tool to enlarge the influence of different countries' values. As one of the most influential official media of our own country, CGTN, which focuses more on foreign publicity affairs, has kept pace with the times and registered the official account on international social media platforms, shouldering the significant responsibility of presenting compelling Chinese stories. The Spring Festival is the traditional festival of our country, mirroring the spirit of Chinese people. Through analyzing the push notifications published by CGTN Twitter account, the passage will utilize the view of strategic communication and conclude the features and internal logic of these tweets, putting more emphasis on the active influences these features have made on spreading Chinese voice to tell stories relating to traditional Chinese culture. Also, the passage will try to provide lessons and outstanding examples for other media's work in the field of foreign publicity.

1. Introduction

Under the overall background of globalization, different cultures of different countries are constantly impacting and colliding with each other, and even sometimes, blending with each other. Thus, depending on different countries' choices, this situation may provide a new chance or may act as an obstruction for countries' development. On the thirtieth group study session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Organization of China, President Xi proposed that "we must establish a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics and make efforts to enhance the Chinese influence in international communication, the inspirational power of Chinese culture, the affinity of Chinese image, the convincing ability of Chinese viewpoints, and the guiding ability on international public opinion."^[1] CGTN, as the key component of our country's external media, undertake President Xi's great hope, that is "through a wealth of information, a distinctive Chinese perspective and a broad global vision, to present compelling Chinese stories and spread powerful Chinese voice, so as to show a genuine and multi-dimensional image of China to the rest of the world.

Besides, in order to reserve national culture genes, and at the same time to improve international status by enlarging the influence of national cultures, almost all the countries are trying to participate in the international culture communication by various channels. Because of the rapid development of the Internet and the digital technology, the new media platform has been noticed and valued by the whole world at an unprecedented level. Featured with personalized service, wide-ranged audiences and rapid spreading speed, it has the inexorable power to change the international public opinion and the international communication order. CGTN has also been followed the trend and opened the official account on the new media platform.

The spring festival can represent the core of traditional Chinese culture. Through viewing its customs, we can feel people’s yearning for a better life, the eternal pursuit for a harmonious family and the genuine expectation for a peaceful world. During the Spring Festival, CGTN has published much news in different forms on Twitter telling traditional stories concerning this festival. The writer has selected the festival-related tweets of CGTN from January 18 to February 6, which is the foundation of this whole passage. Together with the theory of strategic communication, the passage will the features CGTN Twitter account has shown in the process of spreading traditional Chinese culture, and analyze the active influence caused by these features.^[2] The main aspects and forms mentioned by festival-related tweets are as follows Table 1.

Table 1: The main aspects and forms

Main content of tweets	Main forms of tweets					Total
	Words	Pictures	Website links	Videos	Lives	
Social life	4	43	18	63	21	149
Traditional customs	3	64	34	61	6	168
Wishes for New Year	2	9	18	53	2	84
Total	9	116	70	177	29	401

CGTN has exerted and continued to enlarge its own overseas influence since 2016. Nowadays, it is worth paying more attention to as for the greater importance our country has attached to the strategic communication and the reality that western countries are still predominant in international affairs and opinions. Although there have been many scholars who have studied how CGTN reach its communicative goal, they neither track the complete incident, nor combine the study with the traditional Chinese culture, which are the main tasks this passage will make clear. By concentrating on the active influence caused by features which have shown in tweets published by CGTN, the passage has summarized the highlights of CGTN in cultural communication practice, so as to provide the reference for more media at home, which will contribute to forming an overseas new media matrix for the dissemination of Chinese culture.

2. The features of tweets published by CGTN Twitter account

2.1 Use creative forms to make the content more attractive

To begin with, CGTN is good at using visual signs to improve the enjoyment of audiences. Compared with pure words, visual signs, such as pictures, videos and lives, are more likely to infuse dynamism and creativity to the content, which can leave greater impression on audiences. Taking the introduction of traditional customs as an example, 38.1% related tweets were illustrated by pictures, and 36.3% of them were shown by videos, covering almost all of traditional cultures including the Beijing opera, Zodiac, family reunion dinner, lion dance, lanterns, fireworks, temple fairs and so on.

The pictures were well photographed, which means they could not only highlight the relevant customs but also have aesthetic function. For example, among all pictures concerning the temple fair, most of them selected the crowds on the street as the main part of the photos. Others have chosen to put emphasis on dense stands along the road. No matter what the form they have used, audiences could feel how lively and busy the temple fair were. As a result, they had a chance to gain a better and clearer recognition of this custom. In addition to pictures, the videos were also well-made, with organized images and easy-to-understand topics. There were 61 videos focusing on the traditional customs, and 21 of them were related with traditional songs and dances, which accounted for the largest proportion. CGTN selected some excellent and outstanding singing and dancing programs shown on the Spring Festival Gala and the Lantern Festival Gala, through which audiences could feel the charm of ethnic dances, ethnic costumes, as well as ethnic instruments such as suona and pipa. As there are no boundaries for art, singing and dancing programs can, on the one hand, motivate more foreigners' interests towards traditional Chinese culture; on the other hand, they can reproduce the artistic conception of the traditional Chinese culture to the greatest extent, so that audiences will be touched imperceptibly while appreciating the programs. It is worth noting that CGTN published the singing program "Sheng Sheng Man" for several times. In these videos, performers are wearing Hanfu of different historical periods, playing the Chinese zither, pipa and erhu, and singing the song in four different languages, including the English, Cantonese and Chinese. Such a creative program showing the communication of different cultures was so outstanding that CGTN has promoted it heavily on its Twitter account. Via videos, CGTN followed up on this program both in front of and behind the stage. This series of videos has gained many "likes" from foreigners, expanded the program's influence, and promoted the cultural value to the greatest extent.

Besides, CGTN also attaches importance to secondary spreading and strives to enhance audiences' interactive experience. Taking the advantage of Twitter's hashtag function, CGTN Twitter account launched some new hashtags during the Spring Festival, for example, #HereIsMyChineseRed#, to encourage netizens to publish the stuff in Chinese red colour they encountered while celebrating the Festival. CGTN, without any doubt, took the lead in showing off red couples, red lanterns and red clothes, revealing that red symbolizes prosperity in traditional Chinese culture. In the process of taking part in the topic interaction, foreigners would personally experience the good wishes and expectations of Chinese people contained in these traditional customs. In addition, CGTN also acted actively in other hashtags, such as #SpringFestival2023#, #SuperNight2023#, #ChineseNewYear#, #YearOfTheRabbit# and so on. When netizens entered topic page, they could easily catch the content posted by CGTN. This kind of secondary spreading can expand the audience scope, and improve the influence of the published content.^[3] Furthermore, CGTN actively issued dance challenges, encouraging netizens to post their own rabbit dance challenges with the hashtag #NewYearRabbitDance3#. This funny and interesting challenge activity was easy to spread, and had received many interactive videos from people all over the world, which promoted the Chinese Spring Festival culture subtly while becoming a hit on the Internet.

At last, CGTN also makes sufficient use of traditional customs to create original way to make interactions with audiences. On February 4 and the day of the Lantern Festival, CGTN released three lantern riddles in the form of pictures to interact with netizens, so that foreigners could accept this custom more easily while participating in it. Compared with other tweets posted at the same time, these tweets gained high volume of interaction--about 56 "comments", 42 "quotes", and 157 "likes".

2.2 Adhere to the audience orientation and use multiple subjects to spread Chinese values

Because of the nature of CGTN as the communication organization affiliated to the China Central Television, it can represent the image of our country. Thus, important speeches addressed by various

leaders are often seen in its tweets. However, we-media platform Twitter is used by people from all over the world with different cultural backgrounds. In order to present compelling Chinese stories well, the narrative subjects should not be confined to a certain type, but to be expanded to more different types. Only in this way can the stories be accepted by more different types of people. [4] Apparently, CGTN has a clear understanding about it. During the Spring Festival, the main types who have given New Year greetings in videos posted by CGTN are shown in the following Figure 1.

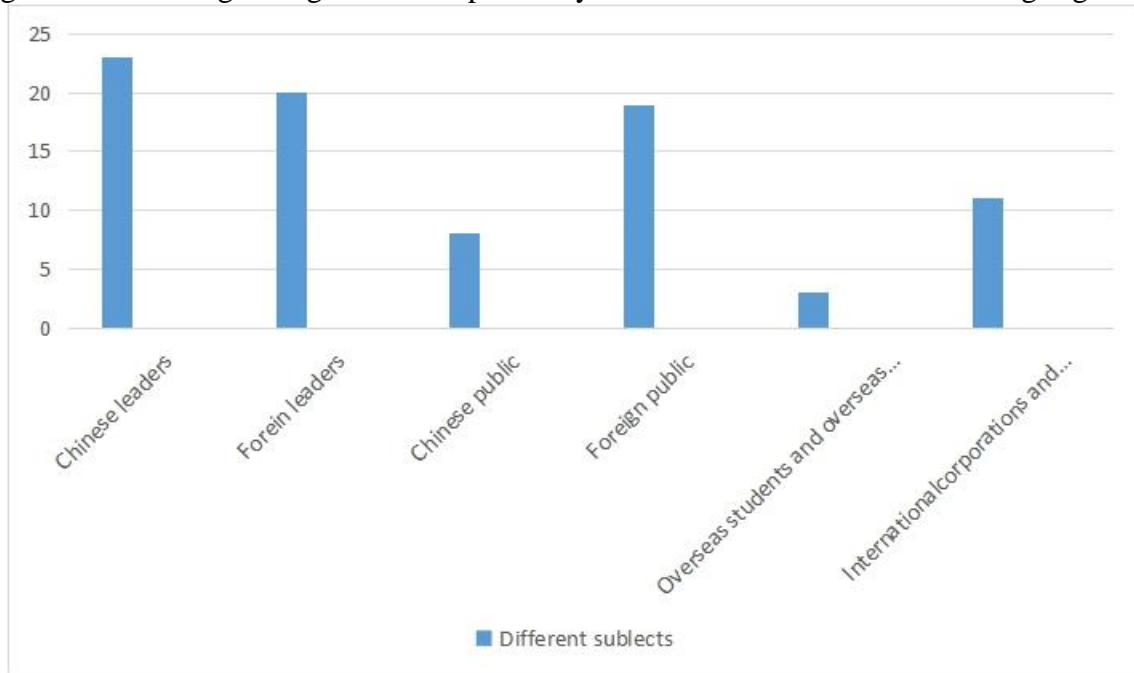


Figure 1: Different Subjects who sent the New Year greetings

Among all subjects sending blessings for the rabbit year, Chinese leaders are the most frequent characters. CGTN reported the wishes sent by the President Xi to workers, businessmen, old people, tourists, ethnic minorities, doctors and nurses and so on, which reflected the basic mission of CGTN - spreading the voice of China. The second largest group appearing in CGTN videos to send their blessings is foreign leaders, including the Secretary General of the United Nations, the IMF Chief, the President of Argentina, the Prime Minister of Canada and Thailand and so on. New year greetings from foreign leaders could increase the influence of the Chinese New Year, and could enhance the emotional identity between the two nations as well. And it was also a special means of expanding China's influence in the world. In a video released by CGTN on January 22, the President of Sri Lanka not only sent Spring Festival wishes, but also affirmed China's great contribution to the world's economy in the last whole year, and the firm leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Organization of China with Comrade Xi as its core. This kind of evaluation of leaders from the third organization was characterized by objectivity, authenticity and high credibility, which contributed to enlarging China's influence in the international community. Besides, CGTN also sought breakthrough in seeking special narrative subjects that were familiar to foreign audiences, such as international enterprises and overseas institutions, to spread our traditional culture. For example, on January 21, it tweeted that McDonald had launched a new mahjong gift box called "Spring Festival Jie Jie Gao", and briefly introduced the culture connotation of mahjong. Another example mentioning the New Year greetings sent from Foreign Minister Qin Gang to NBA can also serve as the evidence. CGTN released 8 videos of this content, and with the help of NBA's global popularity, the influence of Chinese New Year were expanded and the relationship between US and China was promoted. In short, CGTN was committed to spreading our cultural values through the ideas of

multiple perspectives and expanding the influence of its reports through the voice of multiple subjects.

By presenting Chinese stories from multiple subjects, CGTN obviously adhere the audience-oriented principle, and focus on enhancing their interests in our traditional culture. It clearly knows that if the videos' subjects are someone that foreign audiences are interested in or familiar with, the interests are easily to be stimulated. Thus, in spite of the foreign leaders, CGTN often selected normal foreigners as the video's subject and used their voices to tell Chinese stories. For instance, CGTN has launched a new series of video programme called "The real China against COVID-19", and each video was pushed in the form of vlog made by foreigners living in China. During the Spring Festival, many foreign friends from different countries, including British bloggers, Indian bloggers, Syrian bloggers, Ukrainian bloggers, have shown the real society of China under the epidemic, as well as the traditional customs of the Spring Festival. In addition, given all human-beings' love for beautiful landscapes and cute animals, CGTN often used animals or plants as their medium to introduce our culture indirectly. These tweets have achieved a large amount of interaction, especially the mascot "Rabbit Yuan Yuan", which was warmly welcomed by foreigners because of its cute appearance.

2.3 Combine closer with domestic hot issues and get deeper into the outstanding story

Closely followed by the hot topics at home, CGTN obviously pays much attention on the timeliness of reports. During the Spring Festival, the number of festival-related tweets posted by CGTN everyday is shown by the following Figure 2.

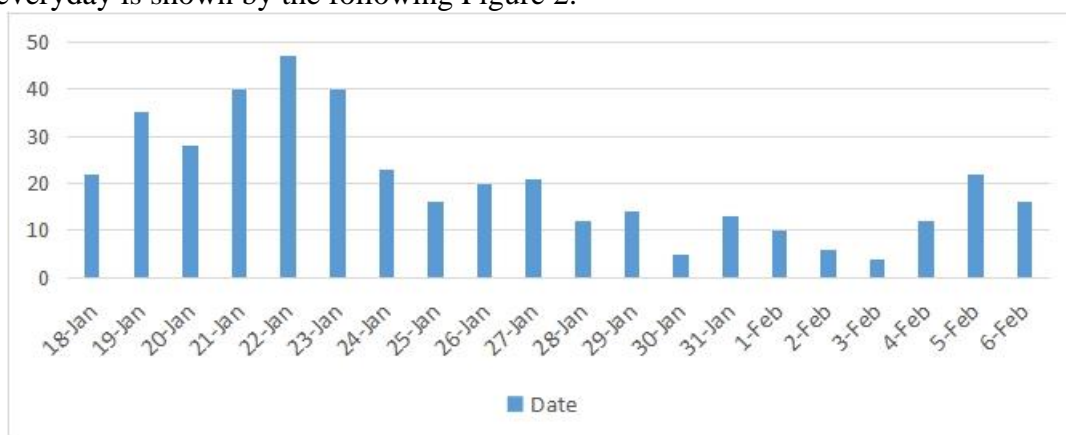


Figure 2: The daily number of tweets during the Spring Festival

It can be seen that CGTN kept up with the hit topics, and posted the most Spring Festival related tweets on the New Year's Eve, the Spring Festival and the second day of the New Year, mainly showing the splendid stage shows, Spring Festival wishes, and traditional customs. Compared with the days before the New Year's Eve, tweets posted in these three days received more interactions, with the volume of interaction of many videos and lives even reaching the peak. For example, the video of the opening ceremony of the Spring Festival Gala posted on January 21 received 2237 "views", 19 "quotes" and 44 "likes", which was also the most viewed video of all videos posted by CGTN Twitter account from January 18 to February 6. During the same period, the most viewed live was the live show of "Supernight", with the total of 12,700 viewers watching the Spring Festival Gala on this account. Besides, there were some other videos which has received many interactions. The video of sending New Year greetings from world leaders on January 22 received 1,202 "views", 12 "quotes", and 25 "likes". On January 23, a dance video related to the tea culture got 1,242 "views", 10 "quotes", and 37 "likes".

In addition, CGTN paid great attention on showing China's image all the time while combining the tweets with current hot issues. Taking the introduction of people's social life during the Spring

Festival as an example, the topics mentioned by CGTN tweets were as follow:

Table 2: The topics which have mentioned in the introduction of the social life

Analysis Activities	Number	Proportion
Street scenes	30	20%
Epidemic	7	5%
Aerospace industry	2	1%
Tourism and transportation	43	29%
Economy	15	10%
Nature	40	27%
Box office	12	8%

It can be seen from the table 2 that CGTN intended to combine the Spring Festival culture with the social and political hot issues, showing the real situation of China and conveying our country's core values indirectly. For example, by posting pictures of crowded streets and alleyways during the festival, and by adding big characters like "The Flow of China Has Come Back" to highlight the impact of the new epidemic policy. Besides, CGTN also highlighted the prosperity of tourism and transportation. Through broadcast lives showing the crowds in the popular tourists attractions such as Hong Kong-ZhuHai-Macao Bridge, Hongya Cave in Chongqing and the beaches in Sanya, the vitality of whole China has been shown completely. The boom in the field of tourism and transportation also showed China's thriving economy to the world, indicating that China will continue to make remarkable progress and continuous contributions to the world. In short, CGTN reports were not only spreading traditional culture, but also conveying Chinese values and showing a real image of China to the whole world through hot topics and meaningful stories.

CGTN has shown ingenuity in digging stories as well. During the period the festival, CGTN has seized this time to conclude the progress in many aspects China has made in recent years. Compared with the general judgement and comment on these progresses, it has transformed into another effective way, which means to get deeper into the personal and profound story, so as to transmit Chinese values indirectly. These typical stories narrated by vivid public can be more persuasive and representative, with the universal phenomenon contained in them. A video posted on February 5 could serve as an example. In this video, CGTN interviewed a couple whose parents lived in a mountainous village in Bazhong, Sichuan province and hadn't seen them for the last three years. Via what this couple had said and experienced, the audience would have a deeper and better understanding on the current situation of migrant workers in Bazhong region. Then they would also realized the massive changes that had happened in the countryside with the help of the government. Apparently, this story-dominant way can lead to an effective communication with the foreigners. ^[5]

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this passage has studied the festival-related tweets posted by CGTN during the Spring Festival, and analyzed the data in a direct and visible way. Also, it has summarized the features of CGTN tweets, and the advantages these features made on spreading Chinese Spring Festival culture. First, it makes breakthrough in the form the tweets, using live videos, hashtags and dance challenges to enhance the interest of the content, so as to attract more audiences and expand the influence of traditional Chinese culture, which can be seen by more foreigners in an approachable way. Second, in terms of the content, CGTN adheres to the principle of audience orientation, which can be shown through videos narrated by foreigners rather than boring and plain academic introduction to culture. Apparently, the methods used by CGTN are easily to be accepted by foreign

audiences for the relaxing content and familiar narrators. Followed by foreigners' vlogs during the New Year, people can appreciate the vibrancy of cities, the beauty of quaint towns, the vitality of tourists attractions and the prosperity of tourist attractions. With their lenses and voices, CGTN has recorded many busy and bustling scenes where Chinese people were actively preparing for the New Year after the epidemic. At last, CGTN also make great efforts to present compelling Chinese stories related to traditional cultures. It closely follows the domestic trend of thought, and tries to combine the traditional culture with the hot topics. Its exploration of Chinese story is also worth learning by other media. It reflects the reality and values through vivid experiences of characters, which can more easily to arouse the audiences' thoughts than simply preaching and piling up figures to explain the phenomenon.

Under the background of globalization, CGTN, as the mainstream media of China, shoulders the earnest instructions of the President Xi, and assumes the responsibility of competing for the international right of speech and shaping China's international image. Spring Festival, which is one of the most important traditional festival, is influential all over the world. However, in recent years, because of the deliberate guidance of other country's media, there exists some comments on "de-sinicization" of the Spring Festival culture in the international community. In fact, not only the Spring Festival, some other traditional Chinese festivals or cultures also face the same dilemma in their spreading. Under the current situation of the international public opinion, which the west 's influence outweigh our country's influence, CGTN should continue to give full play to its strengths, make good use of "we-media" platform and create more approachable ways to present Chinese cultures, so as to contribute to convey Chinese values and expand the influence of Chinese culture.

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