

Language Expression Differences in Chinese and Western Media Reports from the Perspective of Post-Colonialism

——Cases Analysis of Beijing Winter Olympics

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Abstract: As the world's largest winter sports event, the Winter Olympics has a growing global influence. At the same time, this event has also attracted widespread attention from all walks of life. News coverage has influenced people's minds and ideologies to some extent. In particular, the differences between Chinese and Western cultures in the reporting language of the Beijing Winter Olympics have aroused widespread attention and research. Based on different cultures, this article uses postcolonial theory to explore the background and context of the language of the Winter Olympics coverage. From a postcolonial perspective, this article finds the language reported by the British media has obvious characteristics of discourse dominance and monopoly. In their reporting, a significant proportion of concepts with negative orientation are often used, reflecting their cultural superiority and legacy of colonial past. In contrast, Chinese reporting is more adept at using decorative language and emotional color, using rhetoric to highlight the meaning and emotional connotation of events. This reflects the importance that Chinese culture attaches to harmony, politeness and emotional expression, as well as the embodiment of identity Chinese reporting. This paper systematically analyzes the above language differences and puts forward relevant opinions or suggestions to promote cross-cultural communication and integration.

Keywords: post-colonialism, discourse power, cultural identity

1. Introduction

The Winter Olympics is one of the most important snow and ice sports events in the world and has attracted extensive international attention. Since the Pyeongchang Olympics in South Korea, the Olympic Games have been hosted by East Asian countries three consecutive times. Therefore, both Chinese and Western media have covered the Winter Olympics extensively. However, due to the different ways of thinking, cultural backgrounds and audience masses, there are differences between the two newspapers in the linguistic features of news reports [1], such as cultural values, differences between Chinese and Western expressions, and the use of rhetorical devices. This article will explore the differences between the Chinese and Western media reports on the Beijing Winter Olympics at

the linguistic level in terms of the cultural backgrounds of the languages, the differences in the expressions and the differences in the perspectives.

The past century witnessed unprecedented change in mass communications [2]. The media has gradually become an important part of people's lives. People access information from media news services all the time [2]. Media of the west like the BBC, Reuters and the Associated Press have strong discourse power in disseminating information, making media of eastern countries have little discourse power. The inequality happened commonly in eastern countries, which caught the attention of researchers. Fatemeh Poorebrahim used Critical Discourse Analysis to discuss how the western media portrayed Islam [3]. Suzanne Franks conducted research about western media coverage of humanitarian disasters like the two Gulf Coast hurricanes in 2005, the Bam and Kashmir earthquakes, the Darfur crisis in Sudan and the Asian tsunami [4]. Researchers started to think about the solution to inequality and monopoly and show criticism to the western media.

In recent years, Chinese media has become more and more important around the world. Although the international status of Chinese media like the Xinhua News Agency is getting higher, the rapid rise of China's media is not enough to compete with the powerful international media forces of the United States and other Western countries, and there is still a big gap with the country's rapidly rising international power status [5]. The external communication has not yet achieved the expected effect.

The inequality of discourse power also attracts the attention of Chinese researchers. Therefore, comparative research was conducted in the country. Meng Huili carried out research on how the "Tibet issue" is constructed in Western public opinion, and examined how China, the United States and the Dalai clique play a game of discourse power through news reports from their own perspectives [6]. Guo Xiaoping built construction of China's Environmental Image from the perspective of Western Media [7]. Shao Bin and Hui Zhiming conducted research about the "Chinese Dream" in the view of western media. They made a conclusion from research that most of the Western media hold a positive attitude towards the "Chinese Dream", associating it with "national rejuvenation" and "world peace", but there are also some media that hold negative and prejudice against it [8]. Efforts were made to establish a national image and improve external publicity capabilities.

However, there still exists deficiency in the above research: there are few comparative studies on western and domestic media coverage from the perspective of post-colonialism. The research on post-colonialism theory in China started late and the domestic media has little discourse power in the world, on account of the dominance of the western media. The western media is dominant and monopolistic in the international media, guiding the focus of international reports and having a large voice in the international media. Unfortunately, it is affected by orientalism and therefore has incomplete comprehension towards the situation of our country. As a result, it is necessary to conduct research from the perspective of post-colonialism. Post-colonialism originated from the West in the 1970s, which mainly studies the cultural discourse power relationship between the suzerain and the former colony after the end of the colonial era. The use of post-colonialism will provide theoretical support to this article.

This article mainly utilizes textual comparative analysis and theoretical analysis to compare and enumerate the differences between the language of Chinese and Western media reports, and analyzes them from the perspective of postcolonial theory. This article compares and enumerates the differences between the language of Chinese and Western media reports, and analyzes the differences from the perspective of postcolonial theory, mainly by reviewing the reports of the same scene or the same event in Chinese and Western media, comparing the language of the reports and applying postcolonial theories, and citing relevant literature to support the reasonableness of the reports in the process.

Borrowing textual comparative analysis to solve the problem of differences, which is reflected in this article in comparing the differences between the English and Chinese media expressions of the

same scene or the same race, can clearly find the differences and commonalities between the reporting languages under different cultural perspectives, and help to understand the differences in language use and style, and to study the ways of expression, rhetorical techniques and language features in different cultural contexts, which helps to gain a deeper understanding of different cultural backgrounds' language habits and writing styles. The theoretical analysis method is to help deeply understand the basic framework and core ideas of postcolonial theory. Postcolonialism can better reflect on modernity and globalization from the colonial perspective, and more profoundly answer the questions of cultural conflict and cultural construction after the independence of colonies and non-colonies [9]. The theoretical core in the text corresponds to analyze the reasons for the existence of differences, analyze the basic principles and core concepts of the theory, a better understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western reports in terms of language, this article adopts postcolonialism theory to provide a better perspective to figure out the language differences, to deduce its applicability in the Chinese and British reports of the differences in the language and the way of application, to provide guidance and inspiration for the inquiry. To provide a theoretical basis for the article and to apply the theory in practice.

This article is based on the background of the coverage of the Winter Olympics from different cultural perspectives, to carry out research on the differences in the language of Chinese and Western media reports, through the analysis of the differences in the language of the coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics between the British media and the Chinese media under the perspective of post-colonialism, aiming at the use of post-colonialism theory to apply to the language of the report, to understand the way of reporting and the mode of discourse under the context of different cultures, and the way of reporting and the mode of discourse, the news reports to a certain extent influence people's thoughts and ideas. To a certain extent, news reports influence people's thoughts and ideologies, so the differences between Chinese and Western cultures have a decisive impact on the form and content of news reports. The development of news reports in the future should strive to break through such cultural barriers, so that the news reports have more vitality [10]. To provide reference for building a bridge of cross-cultural communication and to promote cultural exchange and integration.

2. Theoretical Basis

Postcolonialism is a theory of multiculturalism. It mainly studies the relationship of cultural discourse power between the suzerain and the former colonies after the end of the colonial era, as well as the new face of racism, cultural imperialism, national culture, cultural power identity and other issues in the post-colonial context [11]. The maturity of post-colonial theory is marked by the publication of *Orientalism* written by Edward Said. In this book, he pointed out that Orientalism is a style of western rule and jurisdiction over the East, rather than a true comprehension of the East. According to Said, Orientalism has two concepts. Firstly, based on Ontology and Epistemology, the East and the West live in the eastern and western hemispheres of the earth geographically, and they have long-term confrontation and differences in many aspects such as politics, economy, and even language and culture. Secondly, the strong West had long-standing domination, reconstruction and discourse power oppression over the weak East. If Spivak's post-colonialism theory has obvious feminist and deconstructive features, and Homi Bhabha's theory has strong characteristics of "third world" cultural criticism, then there is no doubt that Said's theory has a strong ideological and political criticism, and it criticizes directly the cultural hegemony and power politics of the West. Orientalism, an important part of post-colonial theory, is a kind of political doctrine created by the West in an attempt to restrain the East. As a deep-rooted cognitive system of Westerners towards the East, it has always served as the ideological pillar of European and American colonialism.

The post-colonial theory is influenced by Foucault discourse power theory. The core concept of Foucault discourse power theory is the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power, which has a wonderful discussion on the important role of power and institutions in the process of knowledge generation [11]. According to Foucault, knowledge is a form of power, for it enables people to control and shape social reality, and discourse is the basis for exercising power. Foucault discourse power theory puts forward a new way of understanding power and social reality, emphasizing the diversity and embedding of power.

The post-colonial theory is also influenced by African anti-colonial discourse theory. This theory puts forward three stages of national cultural development:

1. Absorb Western culture analytically
2. Awake of traditional culture and further explore it
3. Completely possess national awareness and participate in the national liberation movement.

This article uses post-colonial theory on discourse power, cultural identity to construct a basic research framework to explore the language differences in Chinese and British media reports.

3. The Analysis of the Reports in British Media and Chinese Media

3.1. The Difference of Cultural Discourse Power Between British Media and Chinese Media

British media reports on the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games from the perspective of orientalism have the dominant and monopolistic right to speak, and often use a considerable proportion of negative concepts [12]. From the standpoint of Orientalism, the British media still looks down on the Eastern countries and reports the relevant events in the Eastern countries from the perspective of its inherent and historical values. As can be seen from the British media's reports on the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics, their reports not only involve sports content, but also involve domestic politics, environment, society and other aspects, reflecting negative discourse characteristics. For example, coverage of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has some negative content that has little to do with the content of the Winter Olympics [13]:

I. A number of countries declared a diplomatic boycott of the Games, including the United Kingdom, with no ministers or officials attending the opening ceremony.

After a brief introduction to the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics, the report began to make comments on the Winter Olympics held in China in a negative way, and also report on social and political events in China, including the issues of Xinjiang and Tibet. Some of its reports distorted facts. The coverage started from Western ideology and cultural values, reflecting the culture and stance of Western society.

The environmental pollution of the Beijing Winter Olympics has been the focus of the British media. Due to heavy snow in Beijing on February 13, outdoor events were postponed. The British media made reports on it, but in addition to the report on weather conditions, it also mentioned the environmental problems of artificial snow for the Beijing Winter Olympics [14].

II. Heavy snow has caused major disruption to the Winter Olympics schedule with temperatures set to plummet below -22C at the Beijing Games. Ironically, the difficulty caused by the fresh snow came after the Games had been criticized for being the first Winter Olympics to rely almost 100% on artificial snow. Artificial snow used at Beijing 2022 "poses tough environmental questions" with more than 222 million litres of water needed to create snow conditions, ecological experts said last month.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also been the focus of the British media. The Beijing Winter Olympics was held in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The British media kept focusing on what measures China would take. During the Beijing Winter Olympics, Beijing implemented closed-loop

management in order to prevent the spread of the virus. This pattern was dubbed ‘Life inside the Winter Olympics bubble’ by British people. British media showed their positive attitudes toward this kind of manage mold, pointing out that it was progress compared to the Tokyo Olympics. For example, here is part of the reports from BBC [15].

III. China - wealthy, powerful and determined - has gone even further to create a vast system designed to ensure a virus-free Games.

The words ‘wealthy, powerful and determined’ show the praise towards the Beijing Winter Olympics and China. But then the report shows its criticism [15].

IV. Reporter Alex Capstick, attending his ninth Olympics, says ‘it’s called a ‘closed loop’ for a reason-there is no way out. I’m still getting used to it but at least the buses run on time and everyone seems friendly.’

The British Broadcasting Corporation conducts commentary and reports on my country’s domestic politics, society and other aspects, especially reporting on my country’s Xinjiang and Tibet issues. Such reports show an obvious fusion of Western capitalist hegemony and Western media group ideology, and tend to construct a narrative framework centered on Western interests, standing in the East. From the perspective of communism, create an “irrational” East, place the East and the West in an unequal power relationship, demonize and pathologize China, and publish negative reports that distort facts and make false assumptions. Speeches with certain tendencies that are unfavorable to China [4] have deepened foreign people’s stereotyped impression of China, and made the Chinese media in a passive position, limiting the discourse power of the Chinese news media.

There are two reasons for the above characteristics of British media reports. First, the British media cannot get rid of the cultural legacy of colonialism and the sense of cultural hegemony of Britain as a colony. Due to its historical status as a sovereign country for many years, Britain cannot get rid of its colonial cultural legacy of overlooking eastern countries and still has a sense of national superiority. In the era of media diversification, the British media are facing enormous competitive pressure. In order to maintain its dominant and monopolistic discourse power in international media, the British media adopt negative biased reporting. Second, under the influence of Orientalism, there is a tradition of negative reporting in British news reports. In order to satisfy the special appetite of European readers and cater to the Western audience’s stereotype of China, British media often adopt the hijacking strategy in their reports and add their own logical judgment in the reports to attract the audience and achieve the effect of news communication.

However, since the press releases cited by the media in the world to report on China mainly come from several major British and American news agencies such as the Associated Press, as well as newspapers and television [4], the international influence of the Chinese media is far less than that of the British and American media. Most of the Chinese media’s reports on the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics are positive and objective. For example, China Daily made a comment on the opening ceremony [16]:

V. Fourteen years after impressing the world with a grand show to open the 2008 Summer Games, Beijing delivered again, wowing an international audience with a celebration of not just the highest level of winter sports, but also the traditional Spring Festival, during the opening ceremony of the 24th Winter Olympics.

However, due to the weak discourse power of Chinese media in the world, it can not achieve the expected effect in external communication. At the same time, the British media is dominant in the international media, and the tendency of leading international media’s public opinion leads to the vicious circle of “orientalism” logic in China when criticizing the discourse hegemony of European and American media by adopting the discourse and logic system of European and American media. In order to break the discourse hegemony of European and American media, Chinese media often fall into the vicious circle of “Orientalism” logic. Trying to appeal to an international audience. In order

to enhance its international influence in the international media, Chinese media tend to cater to the tastes of international audiences and fall into the logic circle of “Orientalism”. This phenomenon has a certain influence on the external publicity of our country, and also affects the building of our national image.

3.2. The Exploration on the National Cultural Identity of Chinese Media and Western Media

Since the hosting of the Winter Olympics is a manifestation of my country’s comprehensive national strength, it has received extensive attention from the media from all walks of life. Among them, the expression of the language of media reports will also be affected by national identity, and the attitudes and perspectives of different countries towards the Winter Olympics will also vary. reflected in the report. The use of cultural identity in the perspective of postcolonialism just corresponds to it. Postcolonialism theory focuses on research and has tried to solve the confrontational relationship between different cultures in the postmodern context. It is in line with the contemporary concept of “cultural identity”. Echoing, committed to the study of multiple cultural conflicts such as strong and weak, foreign and native [17], the national cultural identity in post-colonialism theory can be reflected in the language differences between Chinese and Western media reports, China’s mainstream media must find a way to convey the voice representing China to overseas users in a more interpersonal way, emphasizing the cultural values behind it [18], so Chinese media reports highlight cultural elements with Chinese characteristics. As a result , Chinese media reports often focus on highlighting China’s history, culture and traditional values. Western media, on the other hand, pays more attention to objective statements, straightforward narratives, without too much emotional color. It can be seen from the following Chinese and Western media reports on the same scene of the Winter Olympics:

I. On the evening of February 4, the opening ceremony of the 24th Winter Olympic Games was held at the Beijing National Stadium. Songpanhuan Bird’s Nest, every idea is amazing, from the national flag handed down by ordinary Chinese people to the five-star red flag, which complements the five rings of ice and snow, and every feeling reaches people’s hearts. The torch has never been seen in the “world” and “slight fire” in a century. The hand-held torch that raised the last stick was transformed into the main torch of the Beijing Winter Olympics. This is unprecedented in the history of the 100-year Olympic Games. A classic moment in history [19]. (Extracted from People’s Daily)

II. The Opening Ceremonies are a visual delight, from the colorful outfits worn in the Parade of Nations to the water and ice imagery to the elaborate technology, even if these ceremonies are more subdued than some previous versions. Click here to see a collection of some of the best photographs [20]. (Extracted from The Washington Post)

From the above examples of reports on the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics reports, it can be seen that Chinese reports pay more attention to cultural and identity factors. Using symbols and metaphors related to Chinese culture to describe the Winter Olympics scenes, as well as the values and meanings behind the words used, reproduced the wonderful opening ceremony scene for us. In contrast, The Washington Post’s coverage of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics described the opening ceremony as a visual treat, from the colorful costumes paraded by the countries, to the imagery of water and ice, to the elaborate The technique, this time the opening is more subdued. And the “Times” reported that the Winter Olympics had a grand opening, and the opening ceremony was held on the day of Lichun in China. The countdown video quoted 24 solar terms in a year, and the images represented the natural beauty of China.

The above-mentioned western media only made a brief statement on the opening ceremony, without delving into its cultural background and meaning behind it. From the comparative analysis of the above texts for the same opening ceremony, it can be directly seen that the concise and clear

language of Western reports pays more attention to the use of direct and objective expressions, and pursues factual statements and logical coherence. The Chinese reports are more adept at using decorative language and emotional overtones, using rhetorical techniques such as symbols and metaphors to highlight the meaning and emotional connotation of the event. The rich emotional expression of the Chinese media for the opening ceremony is a manifestation of the culture with Chinese characteristics, and it is also the recognition of national culture in post-colonial theory. Post-colonial theory is to open eyes to the East, to speak out for the defense of Eastern civilization, and to serve as the theoretical basis for the positioning of national-state cultural identity and the construction of national culture [21]. In the context of globalization, it is still a difficult process to construct and recognize the cultural identity of a nation-state, and it is faced with difficult choices. Inequality at the material level, and the cultural construction of the self and the other by the subject under the influence of ideology, so it is more conducive to cross-cultural development to be deeply rooted in the theory of post-colonialism, to identify with the national culture, to strengthen cultural self-confidence, and to exert subjective initiative.

4. Conclusions

As the world's largest winter sports event, the Winter Olympic Games are increasingly influential around the world. It not only promotes the development and popularization of ice and snow sports, but also promotes exchanges and cooperation between countries and regions. At the same time, it has also attracted widespread attention from all walks of life media. This article is based on the postcolonial perspective and studies the differences in the language of Chinese and Western media coverage. The main research finding is that is that the British media's coverage of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics stands from the perspective of Orientalism, has the dominance and monopoly of discourse, and tends to use a considerable proportion of concepts with negative directions, and Chinese reports are more adept at the use of decorative language and emotional color, using rhetorical devices to highlight the meaning and emotional connotation of the event, with the embodiment of cultural identity. Finally, it aims to apply postcolonial theory to the language of reporting and understand the reporting methods and discourse patterns in the context of postcolonialism. News reporting affects people's thoughts and ideologies to a certain extent, so the difference between Chinese and Western cultures has a decisive impact on the form and content of news reports, and the development of future news reports should strive to break through this cultural barrier and make news reports more vibrant and dynamic. At the same time, this article also has the limitations of a single perspective, which only provides a reference for cross-cultural communication, and future studies are suggested to adopt more perspectives to provide a reference for building a bridge of cross-cultural communication and promoting cultural exchange and integration.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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