

A Cultural Discourse Study on the News Reports of Beijing Winter Olympics—Taking Xinhuanet as an Example

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Abstract: *Telling China's stories well and making China's voice heard globally are major issues facing contemporary China. Taking 128 news reports of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics on Xinhuanet as examples, this research delves into characteristics of the news reports and their cultural implications under the framework of SIMPHC in Cultural Discourse Studies. Findings suggest that diverse subjects engage in the discourse in which official subjects cooperate with the public. Secondly, the contents of news reports principally focus on four aspects, including athletes' performance, significance, preparation, culture and technology, with language and tone authoritative and humane at the same time. At last, in terms of Culture Dimension Theory, relevant news reports prove that Chinese culture characterizes high power distance, collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance and femininity. This research is conducive for people worldwide to having a better understanding of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, the infinite glamour of Chinese culture and the image of China. This research is conducive for people worldwide to having a better understanding of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, the infinite glamour of Chinese culture and the image of China as a trustworthy, lovable and admirable country in the new era.*

Keywords: *Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics; Cultural Discourse Studies; news reports; cultural dimensions*

1. Introduction

The Olympic Games is the largest and most far-reaching sports and cultural event in the world, and it is also an important window to show and shape the national image. The successful hosting of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics has not only built a platform for promoting cultural exchanges among countries, but also provided an opportunity for people around the world to have a better understanding of Chinese culture and enhance the international influence of Chinese culture.

As the most watched Winter Olympics in the world so far, the Beijing Winter Olympics has attracted wide attention from the public, media and scholars at home and abroad. For the news coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, the existing researches mainly involve the fields of communication and linguistics. In the aspect of communication, this paper probes into the news framework of "Beijing Winter Olympics" news report, discusses its communication effect, including analyzing the shortcomings of "Beijing Winter Olympics" in external communication, and puts forward targeted communication strategies.

Sun Zhenhu and Ouyang Zhaolan (2021) put forward the problems of single content, limited narrative perspective and blocked communication channels in the external publicity of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games in the early stage of Chinese media, and put forward the external communication strategies of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, such as building a "cultural Olympics" and breaking through the discourse mode[1]. Fan Hong and Zhou Xinci (2022) provide new ideas and directions for the integrated communication of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, starting from the mutual structure logic of the value identification of national identity symbolization, the identity reconstruction of national brand story and the three-dimensional media presentation of national image[2].

In the field of linguistics, the study of the news report of the "Beijing Winter Olympics" is to regard language or discourse as the object of study, and to study their characteristics, construction and meaning. In previous linguistic studies, scholars have also paid attention to the cultural factors involved in the process of communication, but they have not regarded it as the main approach to analyze the

problem. Based on the theory of cultural discourse analysis, this paper analyzes the relevant news reports of the Beijing Winter Olympics on the website of Xinhuanet, sponsored by Xinhua News Agency, and explores the cultural connotation behind the news reports, so as to help people have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the objective and true Beijing Winter Olympics, further enhance their understanding of China.

2. Literature Review

American linguist Zellig Harris first introduced the concept of "Discourse" in language studies and proposed the term Discourse Analysis. Harris (1952) believed that discourse refers to coherent and complete discourse, rather than isolated words or sentences[3]. At present, the researches on discourse analysis at home and abroad mainly include the Anglo-American school, Foucault School, critical discourse school and the positive discourse school which was put forward at the end of the 20th century. Fairclough, a representative scholar of CDA, proposed that discourse can not only give feedback, but also shape, construct and change society. It builds interpersonal relationships and builds systems of knowledge and belief. Michel Foucault put forward the idea of "discourse practice", that is, to explain how the relationship between things is constructed and changed through language.

Under the influence of western dualistic philosophy and other concepts, Western discourse analysis emphasizes text analysis and ignores the exploration of historical and cultural factors. Chinese scholar Shi Xu (2010) believes that Discourse refers to the events or phenomena that people use language to communicate in specific social, Cultural and historical environments[4]. Based on this, he first proposed the theory of Cultural Discourse Studies rooted in Chinese history and culture. In *Research on Cultural Discourse: Exploring Theories, Methods and Problems in China*, Shi Xu (2017) further points out that the fundamental nature of "discourse" is cultural, so he redefines discourse as "cultural discourse" and emphasizes that the analysis of cultural discourse should follow interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and cross-historical perspectives and methods[5]. In terms of research methods, Shi Xu (2010) proposed the "SIMPHC" cultural discourse analysis framework based on the idea that discourse subjects are social communicative events/activities[4]. Where "S" represents the Subject of discourse; "I" stands for Intent/Form/Relation; "M" stands for Medium; "P" stands for Purpose/Effect; "HC" stands for History and Culture. The six elements of "SIMPHC" can be used selectively according to different characteristics of linguistic data. This paper mainly focuses on three aspects: discourse subject, discourse content and cultural factors.

Based on the theoretical framework of cultural discourse studies, this paper mainly analyzes the following three research questions:

Who are the subjects of the news reports about the Beijing Winter Olympics? What are the identities of the discourse subjects?

What is the main content of the news coverage about the Beijing Winter Olympics?

What cultural factors have influenced news coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics?

3. Research Design

This study is a mixed-method research including methods such as content analysis, literature analysis, corpus discourse analysis, to name but a few.

As for quantitative research method, from the opening day of the Beijing Winter Olympics on February 4, 2022 to the closing day of the Beijing Winter Olympics on February 20, 2022, a total of 2,537 valid news reports are retrieved from Xinhuanet from the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. Viewing the total 2537 news reports as a whole, stratified sampling method is adopted to extract 5% from daily news reports to constitute the target corpus containing 128 news reports, which is processed by ROST Content Mining software for word segmentation followed by being imported into AntConc3.5.8 software for analysis of keywords, collocations and clusters. Developed by Professor Laurence Anthony of Waseda University, AntConc3.5.8 is known as a corpus analysis software widely used in linguistic research at home and abroad.

In terms of qualitative research method, under the guidance of literature analysis, this research reviews the previous research findings at home and abroad in relation to news reports of Olympics, chiefly laying emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of the perspectives and methods they adopt

which provide reference and lay a solid foundation for the analysis in this research. Meanwhile, in terms of the "SIMPHC" framework of CDS proposed by Professor Shi Xu, this research aims at summarizing the characteristics of news reports of Beijing Winter Olympics on Xinhuanet from perspectives of subject, intent/form and further analyzing the cultural and historical causes behind the discourse.

4. Research Results

As a linguistic phenomenon, the news report about Beijing Winter Olympics has its unique communication subject and content, and is influenced by Chinese culture. The following is an analysis of the news coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics from three aspects: the subject of discourse communication, the content of discourse communication and the history and culture behind it.

4.1. Discourse Subjects

Shi Xu (2010) proposed that speakers, listeners and their respective social status and identities are the main contents of cultural discourse theory's research on discourse subjects.

According to the subject categories of international sports events, the discourse speakers of 128 research samples are divided into seven categories: reporters, athletes, staff, government officials, Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games, International Olympic Committee, and scholars. Table 1 lists the occurrence times and representative figures of various discourse speakers.

Table 1: Categories of Speakers

Speaker	Representative	Frequency
Reporter	Xinhua News Agency reporter	72
Athlete	Chinese Gu Ailing, Su Yiming	10
	Foreign Mikaela Shiffrin, Matt Hamilton	9
Staff	Zhang Yimou, arbitrator	11
Government Official	vice-minister of Propaganda Department	8
BOCOG	Yang Shuan(vice chairman)	8
IOC	IOC president Thomas Bach	6
Scholar	Professor Ding Gangyi in Beijing Institute of Technology	4

According to the Table 1, among the various discourse speakers, "reporters", "athletes" and "Winter Olympic Games staff" accounted for 78.1% of all discourse events. Among them, "reporters" serve as the most active speakers, accounting for 54.7%, indicating that the most important way of Xinhua News Agency's news discourse about the Beijing Winter Olympics is to rely on the third-party perspective of Xinhua News Agency reporters to report the truth, which also ensures the objectivity and reliability of Xinhuanet as a national mainstream media news report. At the same time, athletes are also one of the main speakers of diplomatic discourse, accounting for 14.8% of the discourse events, in which Chinese athletes account for 7.81% of the discourse events, and foreign athletes account for 6.99% of the discourse events. The contribution rate of Chinese and foreign athletes to the discourse of the Beijing Winter Olympics is similar. Government and business officials and the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games also played a key role in the participation, reaching 6.3% followed by the contribution of international organizations such as the International Olympic Committee, contributing 4.7% of the discourse events. All three represent 17.3% of official utterance events, enhancing the authority of Xinhuanet's news report on the Beijing Winter Olympics. Experts and scholars representing academic voices accounted for only 3.1% of discourse events, about 1/5 of the contribution rate of athletes.

Sponsored by the Xinhua News Agency, Xinhuanet serves as China's largest comprehensive news information service website. Committed to providing netizens worldwide with timely and authoritative news relying on language services available, Xinhuanet is regarded as a crucial window for users in more than 200 countries and regions into China. Therefore, the listener of discourse can be regarded as Xinhuanet's global readers.

As for the identity of discourse subjects, on one hand, there is a diversification of the subjects in the discourse of news reporting on the Beijing Winter Olympics. The active participation of various discourse subjects at home and abroad reflects the strong focus on and the significant influence of the Beijing Winter Olympics worldwide. On the other hand, official discourse is combined with grassroots

discourse. Among the discourse subjects, athletes, Winter Olympics staff, experts account for about 28%. The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Winter Olympics and other remaining discourse subjects to some extent represent official attitudes and positions, and their professionalism in their respective fields also ensures the credibility of the information.

4.2. Discourse Content

This study sorted out the content of 128 target samples, and on this basis concluded that the Beijing Winter Olympics news report of Xinhuanet mainly focused on the athletes' performance, the significance and impact, culture and technology, and the event preparation concerning the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Among the 128 news reports in the study, 42 of them showed the performance of domestic and foreign athletes, highlighting the "athlete-centered" concept of the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games. Xinhuanet not only reports the competitive results of domestic and foreign athletes, but also pays more attention to the athletes' growth experience and spiritual qualities. Samples 46, 101, 112, 117 and 118 conducted post-match interviews with Gu Ailing, Nicole Silvera, Su Yiming, Zhu Yi and Patrick Rust respectively, covering their growth experience, daily training, and preparation for the competition, which enhanced the humanities of news reports. In addition, in sample 72, Gu Ailing and Swiss Ma comforted French athlete Tess after the race, which reflected the Olympic spirit of solidarity and friendship. Samples 51, 75 and 81 For Yuzuru Hanyu's failure to challenge 4A and miss a medal, Xinhuanet pointed out that medals are not the only meaning of the Olympic Games and highly praised his courage to challenge himself and challenge the limit of self-improvement spirit. Among the sample 100, Xinhuanet took stock of the top 10 veterans of the Beijing Winter Olympics, showing the athletes' enthusiasm about and persistence for their dreams incisively and vividly, which is conducive to news reports to gather consensus, excite the people, and arouse resonance.

In the target sample, 27 news reports discuss the significance and impact of the Beijing Winter Olympics. Among them, 20 reports utilize authoritative data and related evaluations from the International Olympic Committee, foreign government officials, and mainstream media to highlight the significant global impact of the Beijing Winter Olympics from multiple perspectives. For example, in sample 39, it is mentioned that the Beijing Winter Olympics has become the most-watched Winter Olympics in history. In sample 32, International Olympic Committee President Bach mentioned, "The Beijing Winter Olympics has been very successful in powerfully promoting global participation in winter sports." Five news reports focus on the domestic impact of the Beijing Winter Olympics, such as sample 12 mentioning, "The Winter Olympics has brought a 'winter sports boom', and the goal of 'driving 300 million people to participate in winter sports' has been achieved." In sample 90, big data shows that searches for winter Olympics-related terms such as "ice and snow" in the Beijing area have increased by over 215%, demonstrating the significant driving force of the Beijing Winter Olympics on domestic ice and snow tourism.

The Beijing Winter Olympics is not only a global sports competition, but also an important opportunity to integrate cultural creativity with technological innovation and show the beauty of Chinese culture. A total of 19 out of a sample of 128 news reports involved cultural and technological elements of the Beijing Winter Olympics. For example, in sample 121, Chang Rong, chairman of Beiao Group, pointed out that the use of "naked eye 3D ice projection technology" in the Winter Olympics not only brings an audio-visual feast for the global audience, but also shows the world Chinese culture, tells the story of China, and highlights China's scientific and technological strength. In sample 14, Zhang Yimou, director of the opening ceremony of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, interprets how Chinese ideas such as integration and harmony are fully exhibited at the opening and closing ceremonies in a creative and delicate way. In terms of AR technology, the light and shadow form a "Chinese knot" in the sky, expressing good wishes of connection. The 16 days of competition and life in China has witnessed friendships among athletes of all delegations and a more united Olympic Family. In sample 126, Cao Xue, head of the design team of Bing Dwen Dwen, pointed out that Bing Dwen Dwen's design combines the image of the giant panda, China's "national treasure", with the ice crystal shell, which is "hard and soft, transparent and opaque, black and white, the color contrast of the five colors of the ice ribbon." Both embody the aesthetic of "contrast and unity" of Chinese culture and the philosophical thinking of "hardness with softness".

The sample also includes 19 news reports related to preparation for Beijing Winter Olympics, in particular the venue construction. The Beijing Winter Olympics strives to build a professional arena for athletes so that they can give full play to their talents on the stage. For instance, as sample 84 demonstrated, the National Snowmobile Center organized volunteers to carry out many venue training,

on-the-job training and field reconnaissance exercises to ensure the smooth progress of the competition. In sample 21, the National speed skating Hall of this Winter Olympics has witnessed the birth of eight Olympic records and one world record, and all this is inseparable from China's use of science and technology to continuously build high-quality venues, while all the staff members also carry forward the spirit of craftsmanship, and strive to improve the details of venue construction.

4.3. Cultural and Historical Factors

According to the theory of cultural discourse, the fundamental attribute of discourse is cultural, and the analysis of "cultural relations" is to answer what kind of cultural laws and principles, what kind of cultural powers, and what kind of cultural relations and states are formed. In *Culture and Organization: Software of the Mind*, Hofstede (2010) puts forward the well-known theory of cultural dimensions, by which culture can be analyzed from dimensions of "Power Distance", "Individualism/Collectivism", "Masculinity/Femininity", "Uncertainty Avoidance", "Indulgence/Restraint" and "Long-term/Short-term". Combining the theory of cultural dimensions with data analysis, the study concludes that the news reports of Beijing Winter Olympics on Xinhuanet reflect that Chinese culture characterizes high power distance, collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance and femininity.

According to Hofstede, power distance refers to the degree to which people with relatively low status accept the fact of power distribution in society or organizations[6]. Xinhuanet functions as China's key news website sponsored by Xinhua News Agency. During the Games, it provides comprehensive, in-depth, fair and vivid coverage of the grand event each day in more than 10 languages including Chinese and English. The subjects of the news reports involve IOC, BOCOG and government officials, whose professional knowledge and unique opinions are conducive to minimizing the uncertainty in the process, ensuring the authority and credibility of news reports and rendering effective communication. As a result, it is believed that Xinhuanet's news reports of the Beijing Winter Olympics are severely impacted by the high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance in Chinese culture. Chinese people tend to judge by authority, which can be traced back to expressions like "identity or status is unverified, or inconsistent in detail" and "In one's humble position, one's word does not carry much weight." in the *Analects of Confucius*. Such thoughts continue to the present day when people often view authority figures as the embodiment of truth and morality, in order to highlight the correctness and rationality of things.

Additionally, news reports of the Beijing Winter Olympics also display the characteristics of collectivism. Hofstede (2010) believes that collectivist cultures pay more attention to collective interests, and strong ethnic ties can bring individuals more sense of security and sustaining protection[6]. Therefore, people who are strongly affected by collectivism have a stronger sense of identity, belonging to and responsibility for their country, nation or ethnic group. For example, the slogan of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics "Together for a Shared Future" proves Chinese interpretation of the new Olympic motto of "Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together". Moreover, the opening ceremony of Beijing Winter Olympics conveys the idea of "the whole world is one family". Such pursuit of settling out differences, working together, and building a community of shared future for mankind give full expression to the collectivism and femininity of Chinese culture. Plus, it also highlights the traditional Chinese thought of "harmony in diversity" and "all nations live in harmony". The traditional Chinese thought pattern is much concerned with harmony, which virtually means "harmony in diversity". Chinese ancestors believed that to achieve the level of "harmony", we must adhere to the principle of "the mean", which requires moderate words and actions, rationality towards emotions as well as opposition to extreme. Only in this way can the interpersonal relations remain harmonious. The national psychology of advocating neutralization has also shaped the Chinese people's national spirit of paying attention to harmony, maintaining the whole, together with being gentle, cultivated, modest and tolerant.

In addition, other cultural and historical factors are also reflected in Xinhuanet' coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics. For one thing, it reflects the spiritual values of "unity of man and nature", "vigorous and promising" and "unremitting self-improvement". The news reports of Beijing Winter Olympics on Xinhuanet demonstrate the athletes; strive for the best and their courage to challenge themselves at the same time. We are particularly motivated by veterans' perseverance and the young athletes' bravery to pursue their dreams. "Unity of man and nature" is one of the basic features of Chinese philosophy, underlying building up the harmonious relationships between men, men and nature and plus, men and society. Taoism advocates seeing all things as a whole, in order to maximize the potential energy of the human body. "Vigorous and promising" originates from the I-Chin, "As Heaven keeps vigor through movement, a gentleman should unremittingly practice self-improvement"., which intends to emphasize that a gentleman should learn from the heaven, actively pursuing

self-improvement, perseverance and fortitude with enormous efforts. For another thing, news reports of athletes' devotion to winning glory for their countries and the staff's selfless dedication to the Beijing Winter Olympics mirror China's core value of patriotism, which is rooted in the history of China for thousands of years. Ranging from the worship of emperors Yan and Huang, who are said to be the earliest ancestors of the Chinese nation, Li SAO written by Qu Yuan, the first patriotic poet in China, to the May Fourth Movement, one patriotic and democratic display of will in modern times, patriotism has evolved into a distinctive character of Chinese culture and traditions. Nowadays, the world is still far from peace and equal, in which the western developed countries exercise practice power politics.

5. Conclusion

In this research, a total of 2,537 news reports of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics on Xinhuanet were collected, among which 128 news reports constituting the target corpus were obtained through stratified sampling. Under the framework of SIMPHC in CDS, this paper made an in-depth analysis of regarding news reports from perspectives of subject, content, and the cultural and historical factors.

Results suggest that the discourse subject is diversified, "reporters" are the most active discourse subject, and civil discourse and official discourse are combined. The main content of the discourse include the athletes' performance, the impact and significance of the Winter Olympics, the cultural and technological elements, and the preparation of the event. The language and tone are both authoritative and humanistic. In addition, discourse is influenced to a certain extent by the characteristics of high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and flexibility in Chinese culture.

As for the implications of this research, to begin with, it benefits people worldwide interpreting news reports of Beijing Winter Olympics on the Xinhuanet more thoroughly and comprehensively, so as to gain a more sophisticated insight into the Beijing Winter Olympics. In addition, it also contributes to exhibiting the image of China featuring vigor, prosperity, openness and China's strong desire to build a community of shared future for mankind, which provides reference for shaping China's image in the "post-Olympic" era. Another implication that arises from the research is that it promotes deeper understanding of Chinese history and culture, boosts a higher level of confidence in our own culture and expands the influence of Chinese culture internationally. However, this research also has some limitations. For instance, the time span of corpus can be further extended. In this research, a total of 128 valid news reports from the opening ceremony of Beijing Winter Olympics on February 4, 2022 to the closing ceremony on February 20, 2022 are under stratified sampling to form the target corpus. However, since Beijing won the bid in 2015, Xinhuanet has been focusing on and reporting the preparation for Beijing Winter Olympics consistently. Moreover, the great impact of the Beijing Winter Olympics still has triggered public attention and discussion for a period of time since the closing ceremony. Therefore, follow-up researches are expected to expand the time range and increase the number of samples to draw a more representative conclusion.

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