Improve Chinese International Discourse Power by Telling Chinese Stories in Chinese Histories

Qiao Zhaohong
Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai, China

At present, the road to the rise of China faced more severe challenges of public opinion, “collapse” and “threat” shaping a negative national image of China, reflects China and other countries on the diplomatic strategy at the level of suspicion and struggling of the voice of international public opinion. The fundamental way to solve this dilemma is to eliminate the misunderstanding on the fields of culture and knowledge. Study of overseas Chinese helps us understand the outside view of China and mechanism of China’s image and its value system and reduce strategic miscalculation on the external communication policy, to promote the construction of China’s voice and provides a solid foundation for external communications. To sum up, telling Chinese stories through Chinese history, from up the angle of scientific conception of the world to understand and grasp the construction of China’s international voice, and gradually form up a China-specific discourse that reflects the contemporary world system, breaking the traditional forms of discourse, to form up a problem-centered research domain, terminal value is based on the world and its development in contemporary China. The enhancements of international discourse in contemporary China are several of the most important aspects of the right.

Keywords: China studies, understand China, inter-subjectivity

Introduction

Currently, China’s comprehensive national strength has greatly improved, but the international discourse power of China is not synchronization enhancements. Under the existing logic and context of the international community, China cannot avoid the issue of international power when we take the road of peaceful development. To strive for more international discourse power is a kind of appeal to China to deal with the current western-dominated international system. The world is full of new changes, more serious and more dangerous than the “misunderstanding”; the westerners are accustomed to use their own perspective to interpret China. In today’s world, China’s “sense of being” is everywhere. Western will inevitably need to try to understand China and understand China’s history and reality. China should take the initiative to tell their histories, telling Chinese stories in historical fact.

China of Global View: What It Means China to the World?

Scholars generally believe that today, Chinese academia “aphasia” is still evident in the world. As like as “aphasia” for China in the world of academia, “aphasia” phenomenon is also very obvious for the international discourse power of China. With the promotion of comprehensive national strength, China is seeking more
international discourse power as important and responsible country on the international stage, which is China’s response to the demands of the current western-dominated international system and is adapted to China’s national interests and its commensurate responsibilities in international affairs. In the new century, the transfer of international power provides a historic opportunity to China as a great developing country. However, only to focus on or be content with the improvement of indicators such as “cultural soft power” is not enough; it is obligatory to have full courage to occupy “cultural high ground” and keep increasing China’s international discourse power.

In 2015, the 22nd International Congress of Historical Science was successfully held in China. Since 115 years, the International Congress of Historical Sciences was first time held in China and Asia, which has symbolic significance to the historical science in China. Innovation of this conference is setting Chinese issue “China of global view” as the main theme of the meeting, making scholars both at home and abroad discuss the status and function of China from “global perspective” rather than “Chinese perspective”, which effectively promoted the integration of two perspectives. The first Jaeger-LeCoultre historical Prize-winning scholar Serge Gruzinski in International Congress of Historical Sciences expressed the understanding that the world history goes into “China time” in an interview. In his point of view, the world is full of new changes, more serious and more dangerous than the “misunderstanding”; the westerners are accustomed to use their own perspective to interpret China. In today’s world, China’s “sense of being” is everywhere. Western will inevitably need to try to understand China and understand China’s history and reality. Gruzinski points out that today’s history is the history of globalization; the key lies not in how to define globalization, but how to understand each other in the context of globalization: If you understand history from a different perspective, understanding the past can understand better now. It is as important to Europe as China, because everyone is a global player, in the same historical context, to use a diverse perspective to understand history. “For China, in fact, can also take the initiative to tell the world about their own history, not just waiting for the west to tell”.

But sources in China’s foreign policy, China’s interactions with globalization issues, other scholars have not in Chinese historical context for the study of Chinese history. We must have crossed the border to understand different cultures, ideologies, and research methods, and expand cooperation.

Today, greatest loss of human civilization is emphasis on substance, contempt of spirit, pays attention to technology, despises humanity, and causes of morality and social disorder. Theories workers as philosophy and social science should appeal to all people of conscience to rise quickly, strengthen communication, enhance mutual understanding, seek cooperation, explore valuable spiritual resource of the historical and cultural heritage, and create new culture of harmonious coexistence between man and man, man and nature.

The Breakthrough of “European Center Theory”:
A Comparative Approach of “Inter-Subjectivity”

Break through the “European Center Theory” and promote the comparative approach of “inter subjectivity”, representatives by Mulan Peng, in the Great Diversion—the development of the Europe, China and modern world economy. Since the second half of the 20th century, along with the critique of “European Center Theory”, there is an emphasis on “global vision” looking at the tide of history of human history in academia. Some western scholars regard China as one of the economic centers of the world in the globalization process by watching their relationships with other parts of the world, to explore the origins of the modern world economy and power.
Historiography of international historians said the current challenge is to use each other’s dimensions to rethink. Historians should pay more attention to cross-border, cross-cultural research, standing on each other’s reflections on the dimension, which might see a truer history. Historians should possess different perspectives and learn about different cultures, the history of different peoples. International historical society Secretary General Frank said in an interview: When people stood in their perspective on research in Europe during World War II, World War II began in 1939, but if you stood on the perspective of Asia and China, you should start from the “the Lugouqiao emergency” in 1937, or can be extended to earlier in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria. So looking to global concepts, standing in each other’s view of history, will be able to get a global answer. “History is not clear and one-dimensional, and not just one-sided and always the same”. Gruzinski believes that for historians, they should try to understand the others. Each country’s historian at the time of global history is in their perspective, local perspective to write, but globalization should be established proceeding from local final link to avoid thinking of regional, ethnic, national, into a broader perspective.

19th century was the time that United States enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act; it was also the “yellow Peril” popular period. “Yellow Peril” is one of the core words that western warned to congener and slandered and defamed Japan and China. When western powers set off to carve up China, China began to criticize the “Yellow Peril”. But they tend to focus on criticism at governments and people lacked counter measures and did not take effective reform action.

As cultural nationalism, Gu Hongming thought “Yellow Peril” obviously is not just for “selfish greed for material interests and focus on trade purpose”, but what hide behind are their attempts to conquer Chinese colonialists from spirit. The beginning of 20th century, Sun Yat-Sen realized that powers just ready to make China’s traditional role as a dumping of foreign goods markets and cheap supplies of raw materials. He said: “I firmly believe, if we show any tendency of industrialized road, then the whole of capitalist world will highly shout so-called industries ‘Yellow Peril’”. In this regard, Sun Yat-sen said: Whatever attitude the great powers will take, we must try to develop business in China. He explained to the foreigner: “the only possibility may be in the form of industrial competition; but in the case of changes, comfortable level of living and wages rates will soon rise, so there is no need to reexport the Chinese workers to other parts of the world”. That means, with the development of China’s industry and commerce and the improvement of people’s living standards, this kind of competition is no longer shown as China’s cheap labor and the workers’ jobs. As “national soul”, Lu Xun emphasized that it’s a great risk if we can only dream of the Chinese people thought strong or powerful, but we cannot agree with excessive inferior manner, declaring that “no us on the stage of the 20th century, is not reasonable”.

Entering the 21st century, China’s comprehensive national strength has greatly improved, but the international discourse power of China is not synchronization enhancements. Under the existing logic and context of the international community, China cannot avoid the issue of international power when we take the road of peaceful development. To strive for more international discourse power is a kind of appeal to China to deal with the current western-dominated international system. China’s Foreign Affairs should not be merely passive response to the western position, but should actively participate in international competition, telling Chinese stories through Chinese history, building their own “value position”, “discourse system”, and “public products”.

With the development of globalization, the international political struggle for power competes in addition to the military hard power and economic resources, but also competing in values, social systems, cultural soft
power resources. Whether it’s hard competition, or soft power competition, international discourse power competition increases importantly, and is increasingly becoming an important phenomenon in international politics. Nowadays, the distribution of international discourse power is very uneven; Europe and USA occupy significant mainstream and a strong position in the west of the main body. In recent years, China’s awareness of international discourse power has been rising, but at the same time, there are many difficulties in the practical situation and power utilization of the international discourse power, which contains profound reasons:

(1) “Western Center Theory” has led to China’s international identity “being defined”, and China takes western discourse as a judge, without their own words system.

Since the end of the Cold War, the west has been the mainstream and strong international discourse right, China disadvantaged. The root of the problem lies in “Western Center Theory”. “Western Center Theory” is a natural expression of western countries in their own values, the world outlook for the eastern society; it is the way to see the world from the western culture, the essence of the western point of view or the position.

(2) Chinese discourse did not form theoretical norms, so the right of discourse is restricted.

So-called discourse and discourse power are produced by historical and social sciences. Compared with the west, the quality of Chinese discourse is not high. China’s history of humanities and social science in general is in a low level, the mainstream discourse in the disciplines of economics, law, political science, sociology, pedagogy, history, international relations, originated in the west; hardly a core concept is “China”. China’s academic community input a large number of western concepts and words, and rarely output their own original and influential concepts and words.

(3) The western society and China’s “otherness” shape associated with the west reality, restricted the creation of China’s discourse power.

Western in their global colonial expansion led to a discourse on the east, namely Orientalism in western culture. Cognitive and describe Oriental of Orientalism is only present in the western view of the Orient and is using words distorted and obscured in the west to the east, rather than a real Oriental. “The East is no longer the European interlocutors, but the silence of others”. So, Orientalism has a strong western-leaning away from the Center and is a full of cultural imperialism; it claimed that western culture is superior to eastern culture; western culture is not only the west, but for all mankind, its universality makes it a model of human culture. All these constraint the creation of Chinese discourse.

(4) The discourse predicament of “Connecting the world” as well as “the Theory of China Collapse” and “the Theory of China Menace” seriously undermined China’s international discourse power.

With the reform and opening up, great amount of western discourse come inside of China. Settings topic in the west becomes the focus of discussion in China; western discourse became a mainstream in all disciplines. Due to the lack of established cultural and economic foundation of the dominant discourse to contend with, “Chinese words” have become weak words. Result is that we criticized the west’s “Theory of China Menace”, but also often trapped in western discourse and logic. China after the Cold War, with the economic development and “international standards”, also has put forward a series of important words, such as theories of peaceful rise and harmonious world and the new world order theory, but its influence is weaker than clear theoretical defects of “the end of history” and the “clash of civilizations” and other western discourse. Not only that, China is constantly being provoked and slandered by western discourse.

International history of Science Conference chose China with its inevitable logic. This is recognition of China’s achievements since reform and opening up. President of the Chinese Historical Society at the
Conference, Haipeng Zhang stressed the fact that history is the common heritage of mankind, guards of history, and is guarding the human justice and peace. President of the Chinese Academic of Social Science, Weiguang Wang also points out that history is built on the practice and the book of wisdom, described their scientific and cultural knowledge, lessons on governance ideas, successes and failures should be absorbed using the scientific method, or as a reference, or a warning. In the week-long discussions in the General Assembly, from more than 90 countries and regions of more than 2,600 delegates it discussed the 175 human history and the future of international historians frontier issues, its significance for our common future, as Maliyata Xitala said, “in my opinion, nothing can take the place of people from different countries and regions face to face”.

**Thirdly, Understand China: Using Chinese History Tell Chinese Stories**

History is not the national burden, but the wealth of the nation, so you should pay attention to history and the importance to the study of history and heritage; generations of people are aware of their nation’s history, and world history. At the opening ceremony, Jinping Xi, China’s President to the General Assembly a congratulatory letter, pointed out that historical research is the foundation of all social sciences, carrying a “heaven and Earth, through ancient and modern” mission. History is the best teacher. Since ancient times, the Chinese people attach importance to historical research, which has always emphasized taking history as a mirror. He pointed out that, history of China is an important point of observing contemporary China. Not understanding the Chinese history and culture, especially since modern understanding of Chinese history and culture, it is difficult to fully grasp of contemporary China’s social conditions, it is difficult to fully grasp the ambitions and dreams of the contemporary Chinese people, and difficult to fully grasp the development path chosen by the Chinese people.

The construction of contemporary China’s international discourse power is a complicated systematic process. In addition to awareness, the right to explore the specific path of the construction also cannot be separated from the enlightenment of method. On the current research situation, we should take note of these interrelated issues.

1. **Beyond the “Western Center Theory”, understand and grasp the construction of China’s international discourse power from the perspective of scientific world history.**

   To reflect on the contemporary Chinese discourse power in the international situation, to carry out dialogue and exchanges between the contemporary China in various fields of study, and actively participate in the dialogue and exchanges among various civilizations in the world, the right response times challenge, construction Chinese discourse with national style is the basic path of China international discourse development. To go smoothly along this path, need a series of conditions; one of the important condition is to break the shackles of “western theory”, beyond “the Western Center Theory”.

2. **Obtain symmetrical discourse competence in intercultural communication, and form specific discourse system to reflect the trend of the contemporary world.**

   Many of China’s key terms are coming from the west; indeed, some western countries want to control the power of discourse through the conversion of the system, established supremacy. But if we can “stand outside the Chinese position”, breaking the western dualistic mode of thinking, critique scientifically to western terms, we can effectively resist western discourse hegemony. In this way, we will gradually grasp the contemporary discourse power. In a certain sense, China has gradually mastered the process of the contemporary discourse
power, and is also the process of the general transformation of China to the world. This discourse is not discourse hegemony, but a symmetry of discourse competence in cross-cultural communication.

(3) Construct the new form of contemporary Chinese discourse by using historical and cultural and social science research on the problem of the time.

The limitations of traditional Chinese discourse are mainly embodied in the aspects of its function. To break or beyond the traditional forms, formed the research domain as the center of time, must focus first on the new achievements in the history of humanities and social sciences in various fields, refine the reflects of the problems of the times, and use the achievements of the history of humanities and social sciences in various fields to study the problems of the times. Discourse and its western dialogue and exchanges, the final value is based on the world and its development in contemporary China. This does not mean the meaning of discourse in contemporary China only in China, but stresses the right to international discourse in contemporary China and the foundation of development in China, so the legitimacy of its existence and development are also in China. If contemporary China and its development broke away from the world, Chinese discourse would not change the discourse system of the world.

(4) Strengthen research on think-tanks, and seek to shape the initiative of Chinese discourse.

Western think-tank has a broad social impact, not only in a considerable extent about a country’s political, economic, military, and diplomatic decisions but more widely influences public opinion. The research of China-related think-tank also plays an important role in many areas, significantly affecting the international community, “China concept”. China studies about the west think-tank need a long term track, review and judge. Not only to keep track of the major studies, a think-tank, and an in-depth analysis of its main points, spread, impact, accurately determine the overall advantage of public opinion, but also to strengthen exchanges and dialogue with the leading international think-tanks, an active voice of China.

(5) Construct China’s international discourse power by China studies.

China’s rapid economic development in past 30 years aroused great concern overseas, also contributed to the further prosperity of overseas China studies. To study “Chinese culture, Chinese things, Chinese phenomenon, Chinese questions”, China studies overseas rapidly developed and became the fastest-growing in the international academic community of “Graphic”. Restudy of overseas sinology and China studies in China also is on the rise. In 2011, General Office of the CPC Central Committee issued the Ministry of Education on promoting the prosperity and development of philosophy and social sciences in universities, as well as the Ministry of Education to study and publicize the spirit of 17 plenary session priorities, clearly “promote overseas China studies” as the prosperity and development of philosophy and social science and promoting international academic influence and one of its main tasks.

With the increasing world attention on China, different disciplines in the field of research have explosive growth in China, within the framework of the existing western academic subjects, which has failed to overall grasp the cause, connotation, and trends. “China in the world” has obvious advantages of integrated; it is helpful to break down barriers to multiple cultures, borders, and disciplines, communicating at all times and, catch outside the understanding and interpretation of China’s core issues, concepts, tools, and logical discourse. From extraterritorial China research development track view, to now contemporary China for social scientific analysis object, and to area strategy needs for oriented of United States, China research rises fast; China learn (China studies) and rooted European east learn of traditional sinology have no effective convergence, caused
the phenomenon of “two China” in western world: One is “historic China” with a long civilization; another is rising “contemporary China” out of western modern law. China studies in Chinese just interfere “others” position in the western academic field, through the “traditional” and “modern China” research niche, from the perspective of a continuous civilization’s survival and update and restore a complete “image of China”.

For a long time, overseas studies on China issues, essentially thematic studies, which mostly involve events, stage, and regional studies, lack of general studies, and previous research has remained mostly in the description of historical process and interpretation of local issues, the lack of overall grasp and understanding of the nature of historical movement, that findings of the local institute of often contradictory conflict with each other. Now we advocate the “China studies” focus on stereo analysis of China’s history and reality, so as to establish a right of international discourse studies in China. Tomorrow’s world will be further exchanges among civilizations, collision and mutual learning, mutual promotion and common development process. Meanwhile, the process will be a competitive process: competition of road, competition of theory, competition of system, and the basis is competition of culture. “China study” drawing on Chinese excellent traditional culture of summary and inquiry on China’s current economic and social issues, is essential to improving the competitiveness of China’s cultural work.

At present, the road to the rise of China faced more severe challenges of public opinion, “collapse” and “threat” shaping a negative national image of China, reflects China and other countries on the diplomatic strategy at the level of suspicion and struggling of the voice of international public opinion. The fundamental way to solve this dilemma is to eliminate the misunderstanding on the fields of culture and knowledge. Study of overseas Chinese helps us understand the outside view of China and mechanism of China’s image and its value system, reduces strategic miscalculation on the external communication policy, to promote the construction of China’s voice, and provides a solid foundation for external communications.

To sum up, telling Chinese stories through Chinese history, from up the angle of scientific conception of the world to understand and grasp the construction of China’s international voice, and gradually form up a China-specific discourse that reflects the contemporary world system, breaking the traditional forms of discourse, to form up a problem-centered research domain, terminal value is based on the world and its development in contemporary China. The enhancements of international discourse in contemporary China are several of the most important aspects of the right.

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