

Original Research Article

Overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works in the new media era

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Abstract: In the context of frequent global cultural exchanges, the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works is crucial for cultural exchange, enhancing national cultural soft power, and promoting mutual learning among civilizations. With the development of the new media era, the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works has encountered issues such as comprehension barriers and value gaps. This can be addressed by strengthening cultural interpretation and value communication to facilitate the international voice of contemporary Chinese literary works, thereby amplifying the contemporary Chinese voice.

Keywords: new media; China literature; overseas communication; cross-cultural communication

1. Introduction

In the current era of increasingly frequent global cultural exchanges, the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works is not only an important avenue for cultural exchange but also a crucial link in enhancing national cultural soft power and promoting mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations. Under the new era context, the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works exhibits many new characteristics and trends. However, it also faces multiple challenges such as cultural differences, channel limitations, and complex market environments during the dissemination process. A thorough analysis of the current status and existing issues in the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works in the new era, along with the proposal of practical strategies to break through these barriers, holds significant importance for advancing Chinese literature onto the global stage and enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture.

2. A realistic review of the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works in the new era

The first transformation lies in the shift of content creation from cultural symbol output to narrative paradigm development. The overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literature has evolved from traditional literary exports represented by "Dream of the Red Chamber" and "Complete Works of Lu Xun" to genre-oriented creations dominated by online literature, science fiction, and children's literature. Taking "Tian Dao Library" as an example, its core premise of "knowledge is power" breaks through the framework of traditional immortal cultivation novels by integrating the modern cultural symbol of "library" with the Eastern cultivation system, creating a unique worldview of "proving the Dao through books." This narrative innovation not only lowers the comprehension threshold for overseas readers but also achieves implicit dialogue between Eastern and Western cultural values through the universal theme of "knowledge inheritance." Meanwhile, realistic-themed works have achieved international breakthroughs through film and television adaptations. For instance, the TV series adapted from the web novel "Joy of Life" was globally distributed by Disney, "With Feng Xing" reached over 180 countries, and "Longing for Each Other" garnered 4.1 billion views on TikTok. The cultural phenomena sparked by works like "The Reluctant Son-in-Law" and "Heavenly Blessings" in Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia are particularly notable. Through their narrative structure combining "business warfare + political intrigue,"

these works transform the traditional Chinese concept of "homeland isomorphism" into metaphors for modern business ethics, subtly instilling Chinese values into overseas audiences' entertainment consumption. This "soft communication" model effectively avoids cultural discount effects while achieving cross-cultural penetration of value concepts.

Second, the dissemination channels have evolved from unidirectional output to a further development of ecological co-construction. Digital technology has become a significant force in overseas communication. The popularization of AI translation technology has not only improved translation efficiency but also reduced translation costs across the board, propelling Chinese online literature into an era of "instant translation and real-time updates". Technological progress is reflected not only in efficiency gains but also in the emergence of new communication models. For instance, the "interactive fiction" feature launched by Webnovel platform allows readers to influence story development through branching plot choices. This participatory creation model has significantly enhanced overseas users' immersion and engagement. Data shows that works adopting interactive formats achieve 40% higher user retention rates than traditional texts, demonstrating technology's transformative role in reshaping communication paradigms.^[1]

Third, the international situation has shifted from cultural deficit to two-way interaction. The government has promoted contemporary literature into multiple countries and regions through projects such as the "Classic China International Publishing Project" and the "Sino-Foreign Book Translation Initiative". Moreover, dissemination strategies across different regions have shown significant variations. The Southeast Asian market primarily focuses on ancient-style romance and xianxia themes, with female readers constituting a larger proportion; the European and American markets favor fantasy and urban supernatural genres, predominantly attracting male readers; while the East Asian market demonstrates greater preference for high-concept works and ancient-style xianxia.

3. The real dilemma of overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works in the new era

The first is the barrier to understanding and value gap caused by cultural differences. Chinese literary works are rich in local cultural symbols, such as traditional festivals, folk customs, and historical allusions. These symbols carry profound cultural connotations and emotional resonance for Chinese readers, but often prove difficult for overseas readers to comprehend due to a lack of relevant cultural background knowledge.^[2] This has, to some extent, affected overseas readers' acceptance of contemporary Chinese literary works.

Secondly, the limitations and inefficiencies in dissemination channels. In the past, the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works mainly relied on traditional channels such as print books. However, the development of digital technology has provided new opportunities for the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works, but also brought some challenges. On one hand, there are numerous overseas digital dissemination platforms with intense competition, making it no easy task for Chinese literary works to stand out on these platforms. On the other hand, some overseas digital platforms lack sufficient promotion efforts for Chinese literary works and targeted marketing strategies, resulting in poor exposure and dissemination effectiveness. Additionally, digital copyright protection issues remain an urgent challenge that needs to be addressed, as piracy severely damages the interests of authors and publishing institutions, dampening enthusiasm for overseas dissemination. The shortage of translation professionals and uneven quality standards also pose significant difficulties for the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works.

Thirdly, the uncertainty of market environment and competitive pressure. The uncertainty of overseas market demand increases the risks of overseas dissemination of works, making it difficult for publishing institutions and writers to accurately grasp market demands and formulate effective marketing strategies. Moreover, contemporary Chinese literary works face competition from literary works across the world. European and American literature dominates the global cultural market with profound cultural heritage and extensive readership. Literary works from Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea also hold certain influence in the international market, sharing similarities with Chinese literary works in themes, styles, and marketing strategies, thus forming direct competition. Some countries and regions have even established various cultural trade barriers to protect their domestic cultural industries, such as import quotas, censorship systems, and subsidy policies.

These trade barriers restrict the quantity and channels through which contemporary Chinese literary works can enter the international market, increasing the difficulty and cost of overseas dissemination.

4. The breakthrough path for the overseas dissemination of contemporary Chinese literary works in the new era

First, strengthen cultural interpretation and value communication. To address the barriers to understanding and value gaps caused by cultural differences, it is essential to enhance the interpretation and communication of cultural symbols and values in contemporary Chinese literary works. This can be achieved by adding annotations, writing prefaces and postscripts to help overseas readers comprehend the cultural connotations within these works. Simultaneously, actively organizing cultural exchange activities such as literary lectures and cultural exhibitions will deepen overseas readers' understanding and recognition of Chinese culture, thereby eliminating cultural barriers.

Second, expand diversified communication channels. Make full use of the development of digital technology to broaden diverse communication channels. On one hand, strengthen cooperation with overseas digital communication platforms, formulate targeted marketing strategies, and enhance the exposure and dissemination effectiveness of works.^[3] On the other hand, establish our own digital communication platform, integrate resources, and build a literary communication brand with Chinese characteristics. Additionally, we can interact with overseas readers through social media, online reading communities, and other channels to enhance their sense of participation and loyalty.

Thirdly, cultivating high-caliber translation professionals. We should intensify efforts to develop translation talent by establishing a comprehensive training system. Through higher education and vocational programs, we can nurture versatile translators who are proficient in both Chinese and target-language cultures and literatures. Simultaneously, implementing quality assessment mechanisms will enhance the review and oversight of translated works to improve quality standards. Furthermore, encouraging innovative translation practices^[4] is crucial—Translators should creatively reinterpret content while accurately conveying original meanings, incorporating cultural characteristics and reading habits of target-speaking countries to better cater to overseas readers' preferences.

Fourth, deepen market research in overseas markets. Strengthen market analysis and investigation to gain comprehensive understanding of cultural contexts, reading habits, and market demands across different countries and regions. Develop targeted marketing strategies by selecting and promoting works based on actual market needs. Simultaneously, encourage authors to create works with global perspectives and universal values, enhancing their adaptability and competitiveness in international markets.

Fifth, actively respond to cultural trade barriers. Strengthen communication and consultation with international organizations and relevant countries, actively participate in the formulation of international cultural trade rules, and promote the establishment of a fair, just, and transparent international cultural trade order. At the same time, fully utilize the relevant rules of the World Trade Organization to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of China's literary industry. Additionally, cooperation with target markets can be enhanced through cultural collaboration and industrial alignment to achieve mutual benefits and win-win outcomes, thereby breaking through the constraints of cultural trade barriers.

Fundings

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